COMPUTER USERS OF ERIE

CUE Newsletter – January 2024 (Volume 41 Number 1)

January CUE Meeting

The next general meeting is on Thursday January 18th at 7:00 PM, by a Zoom link in your email. Check the CUE website (www.cuerie.com) for more information.

Visit the CUE Website at:

www.cuerie.com

CUE is a member of APCUG

Member of

apcug An International Association of Technology & Computer User Groups

CUE Calendar

Calendar events are subject to change. SIG stands for Special Interest Group.
(look for notices outside of the newsletter for delays or special news on meetings)

CUE Membership Meetings (typically 3rd Thursday of each month)
Thursday January 18th at 7 PM
Thursday February 15th at 7 PM

Chromebook SIG Meetings
No current local meetings but weekly national meetings at techforsenior.com
Chromebook tips from APCUG at apcug2.org/chromebook-tips-and-tricks

Digital Photo SIG Meetings
No current local meetings for now

Genealogy SIG Meetings (typically 1st Tuesday of each month)
Tuesday January 2nd at 7 PM
Tuesday February 6th at 7 PM

MAC SIG Meetings
No current local meetings for now

Smartphone & Tablet SIG Meetings (typically 4th Monday of each month) (RSVP John Fair)
Monday January 22nd at 7 PM
Monday February 26th at 7 PM

Windows / Beginner's User Group (BUG) Meetings
No current local meetings for now

CUE Picnic
Sometime in September

CUE Christmas / Holiday Party
Sometime in December

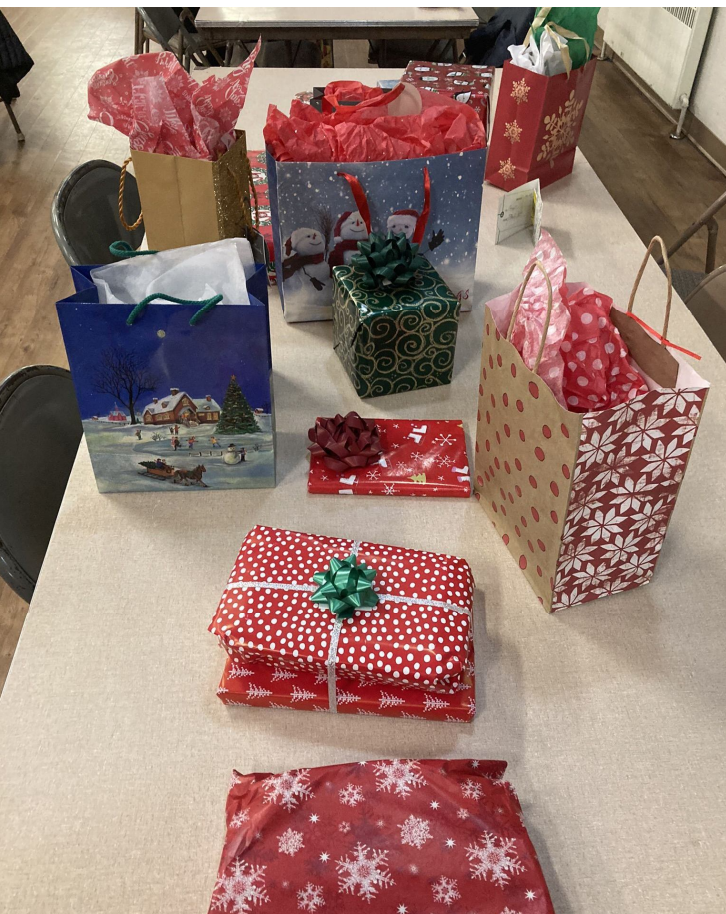# CUE Holiday Pictures from John Szympruch's Camera

Great Food!

Peaceful Gift Exchange!

Nice People!

Wonderful Party!

Wi-Fi Hotspot and USB Tether

By John Krout at Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (www.patacs.org)

If you use a smartphone Wi-Fi hotspot to provide an internet connection to a single computer, the tether option may provide advantages.

Introduction

Many environments do not provide either reliable Wi-Fi or high-speed Wi-Fi. In those environments, some find that the only way to provide internet access for a computer is to enable a smartphone to provide a Wi-Fi hotspot.

From the viewpoint of the computer user, that hotspot is just like any Wi-Fi service. The hotspot shows up in the computer's list of available Wi-Fi services. Connection to the hotspot usually requires a password; you can find that password on the smartphone's screen.

Any Wi-Fi hotspot does face issues affecting its performance.

First, the Wi-Fi hotspot drains the smartphone battery at an increased rate, more rapidly than when the smartphone hotspot is disabled.

Second, the smartphone's Wi-Fi hotspot offers no competition for a Wi-Fi router. A router typically has two or more antennae and supplies much greater Wi-Fi signal power than a smartphone Wi-Fi hotspot.

Since a smartphone's Wi-Fi signal is weaker than a router's signal, the distance between the smartphone hotspot and the computer is critical. Put the phone as close as possible to the computer. Move the smartphone a bit farther away, and the speed of the Wi-Fi connection available to the computer declines.

Third, due to the weak Wi-Fi signal from a smartphone, the Wi-Fi signal strength and, therefore, the internet speeds may vary because of intermittent nearby interference beyond anyone's control.

In short, tether options overcome those three issues.

If your smartphone already enables you to create a Wi-Fi Hotspot, then your smartphone likely provides one or more options to use a tether.

Bluetooth tether

Both recent iPhones and recent Android phones also include Bluetooth tethering capability. However, since Bluetooth involves no cable, the capability is better described as a Bluetooth hotspot.

Again, like Wi-Fi hotspots, your carrier contract may or may not allow your use of Bluetooth tethering. Also, like Wi-Fi hotspots, Bluetooth has disadvantages. For example, Bluetooth usage accelerates smartphone battery drainage. Also, Bluetooth range for useful internet data rates is quite limited and degrades over distance.

USB Tether advantages

USB tether simply means that the smartphone provides internet service to the computer through a USB cable. The Windows 10 and 11 operating systems

automatically recognize that the USB tether provides an internet connection.

The USB cable connection provides power from the computer to the smartphone, reducing battery drainage. In addition, USB cable communication requires less power than Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, reducing battery drainage.

How to enable an Android phone's USB Tether

First, attach the smartphone to a USB cable, then connect that USB cable to a USB-A socket on a computer. Most recent smartphones support USB3, so plug that cable into a USB3 socket on the computer.

After that, you use Settings on your smartphone to enable the USB Tether behavior.

Illustration 1
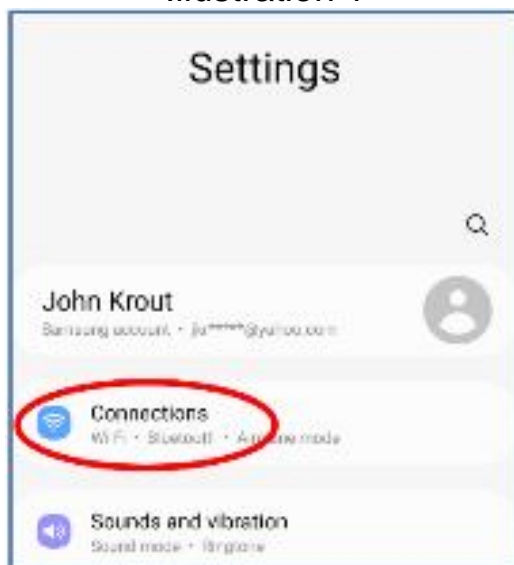
Here I will show you how to enable USB Tethering behavior on my Samsung Galaxy S10 smartphone running Android 12. The main Settings app screen, shown in **illustration 1**, is the place to start.

Then, on that screen, tap Connections, which is circled in the illustration.

Illustration 2
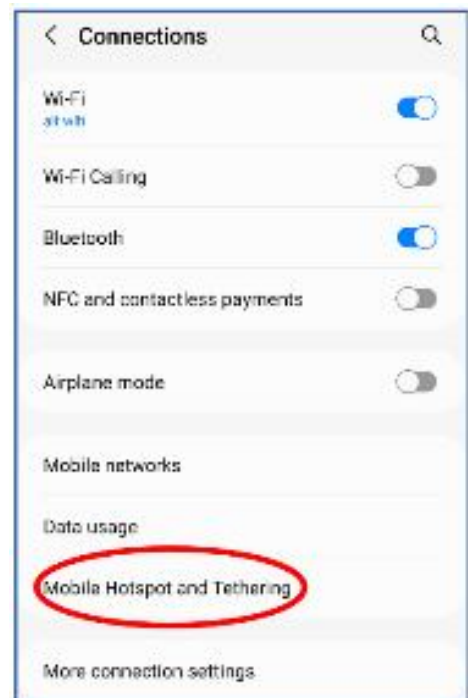
In **illustration 2**, you can see the Connections screen. On that screen, tap Mobile Hotspot and Tethering which is circled in the illustration.

Illustration 3

In **Illustration 3**, you can see the Mobile Hotspot and Tethering screen. As shown, the USB Tethering switch is disabled. However, if a USB cable connects your smartphone and the computer, that USB Tethering switch will be enabled, like the Mobile Hotspot switch in the illustration.

After connecting the USB cable to the smartphone and the computer, tap the enabled USB Tethering switch to turn it on.

When you do so, the computer should recognize the available internet connection via the connected USB cable within a few seconds.

How to enable an iPhone's USB Tether

On my iPhone X, the equivalent Settings screen sequence to turn on a hotspot are Settings / Cellular / Personal Hotspot. Unfortunately, my iPhone is not currently on a carrier contract. Therefore, Cellular is ghosted (disabled) in Settings, so I cannot enable and test an iPhone personal hotspot.

The iPhone user's manual ebook on my iPhone does not document a USB tether capability. However, USB tether documentation on this iPhone support web page seems to indicate that a USB tether connecting an iPhone running iOS 15 to a computer can be accomplished without turning on any Settings switch:

support.apple.com/en-us/HT204023

Ethernet tether

You might think: my smartphone cannot connect to an Ethernet cable! On the contrary, perhaps it can, but you must spend some money to make it happen.

As you can see in illustration 3, my Samsung Galaxy S10 phone supports an Ethernet tether. To use that Ethernet tether, a smartphone must support On-The-Go (OTG) capability. The existence of

that Settings Ethernet Tether switch may indicate that OTG is, in fact, supported. I happen to know by testing my S10 phone that the phone does support OTG. To use OTG with Ethernet, you must obtain a 3-way OTG adapter and a USB-to-Ethernet adapter. With the OTG connected to the phone to power, the USB side of the USB to Ethernet adapter, and an Ethernet cable connected to the Ethernet adapter and to a computer, the Ethernet Tether switch will be enabled.

Most of us already have the USB cable for a USB tether, so the USB Tether method is essentially more straightforward and cost-free than Ethernet Tether. Therefore, I suspect that the USB Tether method will be preferable for all readers of this article.

Final Notes

A smartphone hotspot or tether will **never be any faster than the available speed provided by the nearest cell tower**. The very nature of cell towers means that factors beyond the control of any one person will cause the download and upload speed to vary. I have measured the 4G download speed from the cell tower about two blocks away from my suburban home a few times. The speed has been as high as 12 megabits per second and as low as 1.8 megabits per second.

Carrier companies claim that 5G will improve the speeds, but there are still caveats: 5G runs at a rate greater than 4G only if you are close to a 5G-compatible cell tower. Also, for maximum speed, the cell tower must not be overloaded. Unfortunately, that condition is beyond the control of anyone other than the carrier

company. Nevertheless, carrier companies are marketing 5G hotspots to businesses to use as an alternative to wired Internet connections. If that marketing succeeds, then 5G-compatible cell tower overloading may become the new 5G normal in cell towers serving residential and commercial customers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout has been writing about the creative uses of personal computers since the early 1980s and now writes about the creative uses of smartphones, tablets, and digital cameras. He is a retired software engineer who spent his career collecting requirements, developing designs, coding in C and C++, and writing documentation for systems large and small used by Federal government agencies. He lives in Arlington, VA, and is a member of the APCUG Speaker's Bureau.

Genealogy Report for 12/5/23 SIG Meeting

The genealogy group met via Zoom on the first Tuesday of December. Sue suggested we share stories about our ancestors. She started us off by telling about her grandmother, Dessie, who raised and sold canneries in Kittanning, PA. She used a phonograph record to teach them how to sing. Dessie saved $38.00 from her sales and bought her husband a vacant lot next door as a birthday present.

Carl's story was about a holiday tradition still practiced today. His family gets together for a progressive dinner on Christmas Eve. Each course is served at a different home, so the holiday cooking is shared. Lots of visiting, laughter, and a gift for every kid under eighteen at each home fills the evening. After the meal they all go to Christmas Mass.

Conrad related the story of his maternal grandmother, who would have been 130 years old on the day of our meeting. She had been a protester in what used to be Poland and spent some time in jail. She immigrated to America with an uncle and ended up in Chicago.

John S.'s story was about his grandmother's repeated admonition to not work for the railroad, sometimes smacking him with her purse to emphasize her point. Most of you know that John did work for the railroad for thirty-eight years. His father worked for them for forty-two years and his grandfather for forty-five.

Connie told of a family legend involving her 2x great-grandmother traveling by stagecoach from Ft. LeBeouf to Central City, Colorado in 1873. She went to collect her two grandsons after the death of their mother at age 28. The trio returned home on the newly constructed transcontinental railroad. She raised the youngest boy, and Connie's grandfather was raised in Columbus, PA, by a Marble family. While the exact method of travel hasn't been verified, the boys were born in Colorado and definitely raised in NW Pennsylvania.

Some miscellaneous notes from the evening:

• Most stonecutters will give a discount for replacing historic stones and often have end cuts for small stones at a reduced price.

• Paul has a sister-in-law in Ohio who grew up in Poland and can do translations if someone in the group needs help.

• A DAR website with links to free genealogy websites:

http://learnwebskills.com/patriot/vitalrecords2.htm#ny

• https://sampubco.com/ is a site that has links to information on wills, probate, guardianship, and more.

Submitted by Connie Edwards

A Note from the Editor

As usual, feel free to contribute information for the CUE newsletter. Whether it is small, large, an article, a tip, information, or pictures, you can send it to me and I will plan to include it in the newsletter. You can reach me at grimcyber@yahoo.com.

Remember that you can find recent news at the CUE website (cuerie.com). At times, the website will have more recent news than the CUE newsletter since the website is updated continuously and the newsletter is updated monthly.

Stay Safe!

Editorially Speaking, Don Grim
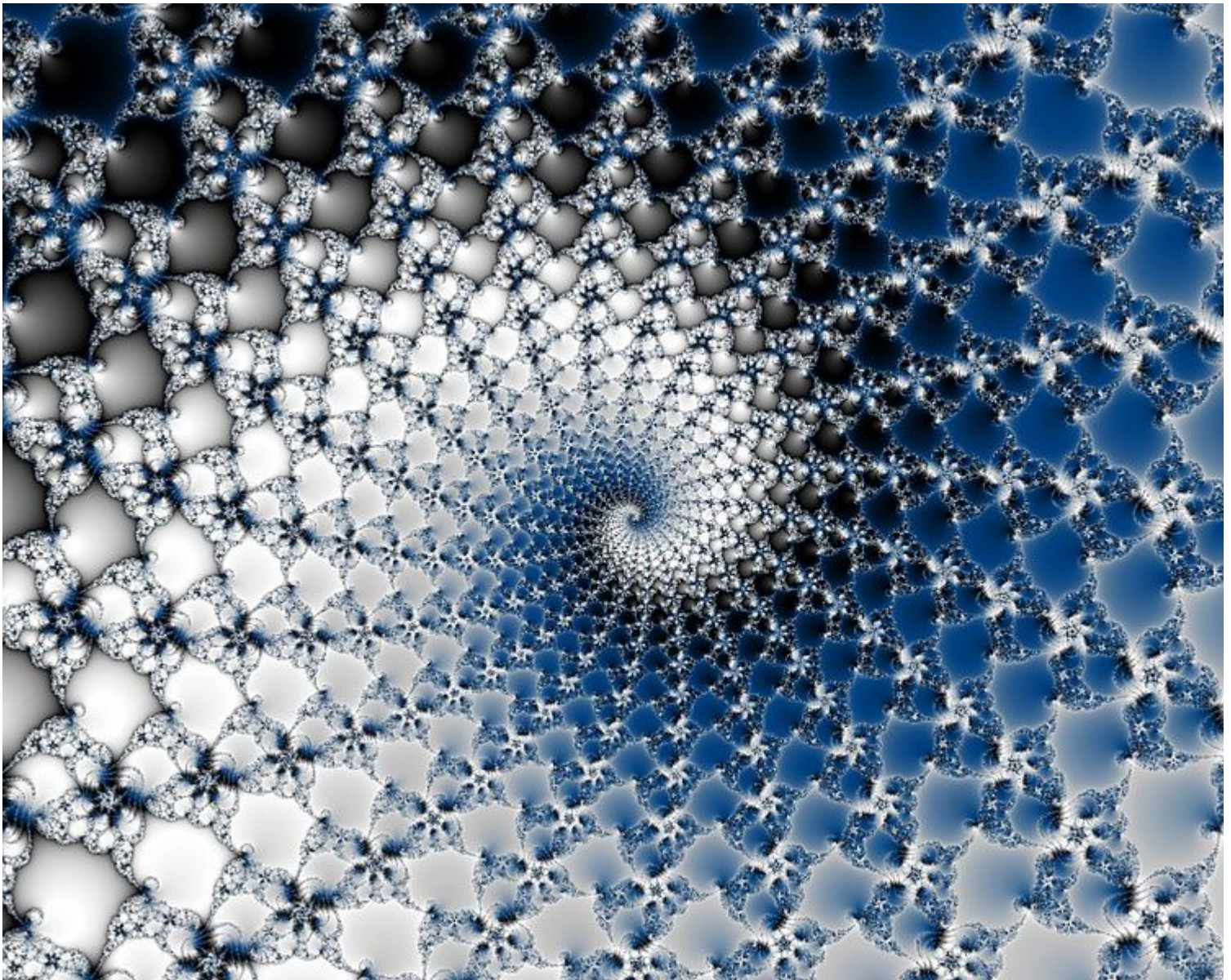
COMPUTER USERS OF ERIE

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Today's Date_____

Last Name		First Name	
Address			
City, State		Zip	
Home Phone		Cell Phone	
Your Email			

The yearly dues are payable in August of each year. The dues are $24 annual.

For NEW members only, when you join outside the annual cycle your initial dues are based upon the month you join. Follow the schedule below.

August $24	September $22	October $20	November $18
December $16	January $14	February $12	March $10
April $8	May $6	June $4	July $2

Information provided on this form will be placed into a CUE Membership Directory

What is your Computer or Device: (Circle)
Windows   Mac   Android   iPhone   iPad   Tablet   Linux   Other

Send your completed application to:

Computer Users of Erie

PO BOX 8941

Erie, Pa 16505-0941

What is you level of expertise? (Circle)
Novice   I know some   I want to learn more   Expert   Geek

What do you wish to gain by joining Computer Users of Erie?

Student membership is just $15 per year (provide proof of student status)
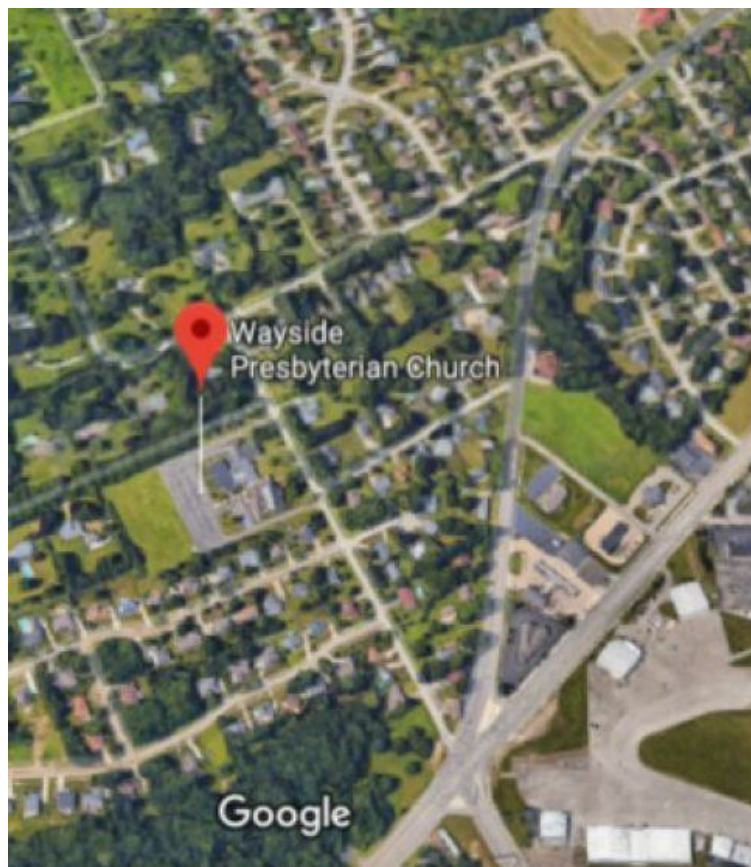
CUE Officer Information

Directions to Wayside Presbyterian Church for Special Meetings

Wayside Presbyterian Church, at 1208 Asbury Road, is approximately three blocks north of the intersection of Asbury Road and Route 5. This intersection is at the northwest corner of the Erie International Airport property. Following Asbury, turn left at the first marked driveway for the church. Sometimes, the entry is through the two sets of blue double doors. Use the buzzer to gain entry if the doors are locked. At other times, use the double doors on the south side of the Christian Education wing. Signs are posted in the building to direct you to the meeting room.

From West of Erie International Airport: Follow Route 5 to the intersection of Asbury and Route 5. Turn hard left onto Asbury Road. Look for the church on the left approximately 3 blocks north of the intersection.

From South of Erie: Take Interstate 79 north to the 26th Street (Route 20) Exit. Bear left onto 26th Street (Route 20) west. Follow Route 20 about 3.4 miles west to Asbury Road. Turn right (at the Sheetz Gas Station) onto Asbury and follow it straight across Route 5. Look for the church on the left approximately 3 blocks north of the intersection.

From East of Erie International Airport: Follow 26th Street (Route 20) west to Asbury Road. Turn right onto Asbury and follow it straight across Route 5. Look for the church on the left approximately 3 blocks north of the intersection. OR, follow 12th Street (Route 5) west past the airport to Asbury Road. Turn right onto Asbury Road. Look for the church on the left approximately 3 blocks north of the intersection.

About the Newsletter

CUE Membership Benefits

As the largest computer users group in northwest Pennsylvania, CUE has served Erie and surrounding communities since 1982. CUE provides a forum for people to learn about computers and have fun doing so. The group meets the third Thursday each month, with the exception of the special occasions like, possibly (dates can vary), a Spring Break meeting in April, a Picnic in September, and a Holiday meeting in December. CUE meetings are normally by Zoom but can possibly be at Wayside Presbyterian Church, 1205 Asbury Road, Erie.

Our monthly meetings are open to the public regardless of age or ability. Many of our members are senior citizens who span a wide range of capabilities and interests but share a desire to know more about how to use computer related technology. Our role is to provide a forum for continuous learning from each other. CUE has a closed Google gmail group that is used to communicate with members and to post questions/problems to seek answers from the membership. Members pay an annual membership fee of $24 to receive a membership directory, monthly newsletter, availability to monthly general meetings, and any of the Special Interest Group (SIGs) meetings, usually held in a member's home. Locations and times vary, so check the online EVENTS Calendar on the website for the latest information. SIG topics include:

- Digital photography [and photo safari]
- Genealogy
- Macintosh computers
- Computer troubleshooting
- Beginners users group (BUG)
- Handheld smartphones and tablets

CUE is a member of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG). APCUG is an International, platform-independent, volunteer-run, non-profit organization devoted to helping member User Groups offer enhanced services to their members. Some of the membership benefits include:

- Speakers bureau
- Free virtual technology conferences
- Regional conference
- Push newsletter articles
- Discounts and special offers from vendors
- User group newsletters online

Find us online at http://www.cuerie.com/. And Facebook @curerie

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Computer Users of Erie
PO Box 8941
Erie, PA 16505-0941

| Postmaster: |
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