Bits and Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

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Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center

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Happy New Year! We want to start by bringing you up to date on what's new around your computer club. The Club now has a Programs Committee. Members are Tom Gelselschap. Bob Coleman, Debbie Edmunds, and John Kelly. These folks will be lining up the presentations for our monthly meetings. At the February meeting we'll be demonstrating Skype, a free Internet telephone service. If there's a topic you think would be of interest to the general membership, be sure to let one of the Committee member know. We've added a new section to our Web site titled, Tips for XP and Vista. Currently you'll find three different kinds of information here; procedures on how to do something, tips that make it easier to use the computer, and information about recent issues related to the operating system or a program you might be using. The Special Announcements page on the Web site will be used to post important information that comes up during the month. If you have some old electronic stuff you want to dispose of, go home and check the Special Announcements page. The training center has a new look with the addition of nine new Dell computer systems running Vista Home Premium. Financial support from AARP, Chapter 108, made it possible for us to purchase these new computers. We need to show our appreciation for their support by helping them at the Recycling Center. Our goal is to have half of the membership help for four hours sometime during the next eight months. Finally, be sure to let your friends and neighbors know that we'll be holding our monthly membership meetings on the second Monday of the month in the Community Room at the Highlands Crossing Center.

PC Tools has released a free malicious software detection program called, ThreatFire 3. Here is a short review by Neil J. Rubenking that appeared in the November 20, 2007 issue of *PC Magazine*.

PC Tools' ThreatFire 3 (TF3) detects malicious software entirely based on its behavior, so the utility can block threats that are too new for signature-based scanners. The software requires no configuration, making it a snap to use. Finally, unlike Symantec's Norton AntiBot (NAB), it's free.

If TF3 spots suspicious behavior, it enhances its analysis by referring to a database of known threats. The utility quarantines known high-risk items immediately and, for known lower-risk items, gives you the choice of actions. For unknowns, TF3 offers an informative yellow alert and asks permission to quarantine – almost always the right choice.

In my testing, the product successfully blocked installation of every malware sample in every category except rogue antispyware. Its overall success rate was significantly higher than NAB's and also higher than that of Spy Sweeper, our Editor's Choice for signature-based antispyware. And TF3 issued no false positives when I installed *PC Magazine* utilities that hook into the system deep enough to be suspicious.

The $29.95-per-year Pro edition, however, failed dismally at cleaning up my infected system. On some, it couldn't even install, scan, or quarantine malware. But, definitely add the free utility to your security collection.

If you want to know more about this program go to
http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2704,2191336,00.asp

If you haven't heard of Flixxy, The Best Videos On The Net, check it out.
http://www.flixxy.com
Start with "Bianca Ryan Singing Sensation", "Sensational Dancing Horse", and "Cutting Edge Magic".

Do you have something around the house you no longer use but can't bring yourself to throw away because it's in good condition? Here's an alternative to Helping Hands.
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BentonCountyFreecycle/

Having a problem with your computer? Having a problem doing something on the computer? Stop by one of the Open House Help Clinics we have at the John Ruehle Center and see if we can solve your problem. These clinics are from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the first Saturday and the third Wednesday of the month. The clinics are open to the public so you can invite a friend or neighbor.