

# Bits and Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

July 2010

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## Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center

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### Protecting your computer and peripherals during severe thunderstorms

Shut down your computer and all peripherals (printer, scanner, monitor). All of your equipment should be plugged in to a good surge protector. Do not daisy chain surge protectors. Some laser printers should not be connected to a surge protector, check your printer manual. Since a surge protector can't handle a direct lightning strike you might want to remove the plug from the outlet, then move the cord away from the outlet. If you are using Cox Communications for high speed Internet service, disconnect the TV cable from the cable modem and lay it off to the side. If you are using the telephone line for dial-up or Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) high speed Internet service, remove the telephone line from the computer, the DSL cable modem, or remove it from the wall outlet. Uninterruptable Power Supplies (UPS's) provide excellent protection for your equipment. They include surge protection and keep your computer system running if the electricity goes off. They are made with different ratings, so purchase one that will keep your system running for about ten minutes. Two of the more popular brands are APC and Cyber Power.

### Getting the computer to shut down normally if you lose control of the mouse

If you have Windows Vista, here is a procedure you can use if you lose control of the mouse but still have control of the keyboard. To check if you have control of the keyboard, press the Caps Lock key to see if you can turn the Caps Lock Light on and off. If you can turn the Caps Lock Light on and off you can use the keys on the keyboard to do a normal shutdown.

Tap the Windows key to bring up the start menu

Tap the right-arrow key three times to display a shortcut menu that contains the entry "Shut Down"

Shut Down should be highlighted - if it is not, use the arrow keys to highlight

Tap the Enter key

If you have Windows 7 the procedure is a little easier

Tap the Windows key to bring up the start menu

Tap the right-arrow key one time to highlight the "Shut down" button

Tap the Enter key

Pulling the plug on your computer (shutting it down by pressing and holding the power button on the computer) is like playing Russian roulette with your computer. Most of the time everything will be OK, but there is no guarantee.

Computer running slow?

It's common for a computer to run slower as it ages. Over time useless information builds up on your computer. If not removed it can slow down your computer and could cause computer or program malfunctions. You need to know how to remove the "stuff" and keep your computer in good running order. If your computer is running slower than it used to, do your home maintenance and get rid of the "stuff". If it still runs slower than it used to, then you probably have too many things starting when you start your computer. There are a couple of good programs you can use to control the programs that start when you start your computer - WinPatrol and CodeStuff Starter. Or, if you're not using several good spyware detection and removal programs, you might have a serious spyware/adware/malware infection. Then there is the registry. The registry will become cluttered with invalid entries over time and to correct this you will need to use a registry cleaner. Free programs you can use are CCleaner, Regedit, and at the present time Registry Mechanic is available at WalMart for \$20. If it has always run slower than you thought it should, then you probably could use more memory. Adding more memory to a computer is the easiest and least expensive ways to increase performance. It's a do-it-yourself project for the adventurous. If you have Windows Vista or Windows 7 you might try ReadyBoost. This is a feature of the operating system that allows you to use a BeadyBoost capable USB flash drive as additional memory to supplement RAM (Random Access Memory).

#### Do it yourself

If you're serious about taking care of your computer you can do it yourself or pay someone to do it for you. For example, Office Depot will install a single title (program) on your computer for \$29.99. Depending on the program, that might take five minutes, ten at the most. That works out to somewhere between \$359.88 and \$179.94 per hour. Then there are individuals in the local area that will come to your house for \$xx per hour. If you want to do it yourself and save some money (sorry computer repair persons) there are resources like newsletters and magazines that provide helpful information. Consider the newsletter *Cloudeight InfoAve Premium* or the magazine *Smart Computing*. There's an excellent article in the July issue of *Smart Computing* about tuning up your computer. Here's an excerpt from the article, "but in this feature package, we're serious about making your OS hum along like it did once upon a time. From tips and tweaks to ways to gauge the difference they made, there's a lot in store for you in the following pages. We've included information for Windows XP, Vista, and Windows 7."

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Be sure to circle August 9<sup>th</sup> on your calendar. That's the next Computer Club meeting. There will be a lot to do that night that will have an affect on the future of the Club; the election of officers and board members, approval of the revised by-laws, information about the condition of the Club, and a new question and answer format.

If some of the information in this newsletter looks familiar, that's because it's revised information from past newsletters. The editor of the Bits and Bytes is still suffering from a mild case of writers block. If you have a topic you would like to see covered in the newsletter, add it to the Suggested Topics for Bits and Bytes Articles sheet located on the table at the back of the room.

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.