COMPUTER CLUB MEETING PROGRAMS

Projected Bella Vista Computer Club meeting programs presently proposed for each month are as follows:

August 2011: " Protect Your Computer From Dangerous Programs"

September 2011: "Review Computer Classes"

October 2011: "Identity Theft By The Police Dept."

November 2011: "Addressing Envelopes and Xmas Letters"

December 2011: "Windows 8 Program"

January 2012: "Questions and Answers"

February 2012: "Do A Tax Return, Such As Turbo Tax"

These are the projected programs presented to the Board by the Programs Committee and may be changed or modified by your Board of Directors prior to general membership meeting. Be sure to plan to attend each meeting and bring friends and neighbors on the second Monday of each month.

"**Genealogy SIG members meet 10 a.m. August 20th at John Ruehle Center, Highlands Crossing**"

SAFELY LOGGING ON FROM PUBLIC COMPUTERS

As summer proceeds, many computer users travel using their computers in places that have public networks like McDonalds and hotels, motels or even use waiting areas at the airport.

If you access the internet from a public place such as an internet café, hotel or airport, don't log into private pages that need your personal passwords. It's not secure because even if you log in safely and it's a secure server, you don't know what's installed on that public computer. There could be a key logger installed - if so, someone could inspect and extract sensitive information from the browser cache. Don't ever login to your bank account or credit card account from a public computer. Checking your email from a public computer may present a risk but you can change your password or set up temporary email account if you're going to be on vacation for a substantial amount of time. You can have your email forwarded to your temporary account while you're away. And Gmail accounts are free - so a temporary account is quick and easy to set up - and you protect your permanent email accounts. If you absolutely have to login to a private page (banking site, PayPal, or other sensitive financial site) here's

Safely Logging On.....(continued)

a tip you can use that will help you minimize the risk of a key logger capturing your passwords and user ID's.

When entering your log-in information on a public computer, do this:

1. Type the beginning portion of, say your password, and then place the mouse cursor over the empty space of a web page, and type something there. Of course no text will appear, but the key logger would think this text was part of your secret phrase. The key logger tells the difference between what you type on what part of the page it just logs all keystrokes. Therefore, the key logger will just record a succession of entries without knowing where the entries belong.

2. After typing a string of random characters in the empty space, switch back to your password field and continue entering valid information there.

3. Repeat the procedure a few more times so that the valid password becomes impossible to recognize.

4. Never type your password when on a public computer without at least attempting to defeat any key logger installed. There probably isn't one but always assume there is.

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Renew your membership now!

Join the Bella Vista Computer Club and receive computer club member benefits (free classes until January, open house assistance for your computers and information to help you use your computer). **New year begins September 1st**

HOW TO FIND YOUR MOUSE

AFTER YOU HAVE LOST IT?

We move our mouse but the cursor is no where to be found. Sometimes it camouflages with the background while other times, our eyes just play tricks on us. Nonetheless, it has happened to the best of us.

Windows XP, Windows Vista, and Windows 7 have a simple trick to help out in situations like these. It involves enabling an option in your mouse settings so every time you press the Ctrl key (left or right), your mouse cursor will be highlighted with circles so you can easily find it.

To enable this feature follow these simple directions:

♦ Open "Start Menu"

♦ Go to "Control Panel"

♦ Find "Mouse" and click on it. On the resulting sub-menu open "Mouse Properties"

♦ Go to "Pointer Options" and check "Show location of pointer when I press the CTRL key"

♦ Click "Apply" and "OK"

Now every time you press the CTRL key, the round circles will surround your mouse.

LAPTOP TIPS

Conserving laptop battery power is a necessity when you're using a laptop without a power source. If you have an on-off switch for your Wi-Fi on your laptop, get in the habit of turning it off when you do not need to be online, or if you are in a location without internet access. Your computer is always searching for connections, and it will conserve battery power if your computer is not actively searching.

Disconnect any USB devices that you are not using as these will drain your battery over time. (Using a USB Flash drive on a laptop with a low battery can actually corrupt the USB flash drive making it unusable.)

Try setting your LCD display to a dimmer setting; the brighter the display, the more battery power it drains and it is a laptop's biggest power drain. Getting low on power and need to squeeze a little more time out of your charge? Dim your screen even more and you will be surprised how much extra time it stays powered up.

Good ventilation keeps the fan from powering on as much, which in turn conserves battery power. Sitting your laptop on a desk vs. your lap will actually give your battery more life.

NEVER put your laptop in a laptop bag unless it is completely shut down! There is no circulation at all so it is not even safe to leave it in hibernate or sleep mode.

If your laptop has been in a cold place, like in your car in the winter, wait for it to get to room temperature before you boot up so that condensation does not form inside, it could damage delicate components.

Laptops are constantly being moved around - things like setting it down on a table, transferring to your lap, putting it in a case, etc. This puts a lot more wear and tear on them vs. a PC, so be sure EVERYTHING is always backed up. Don't take chances on losing everything.

There is a lot of controversy on whether you really need to shut down a PC; after all, refrigerators and other appliances run non-stop without being turned off.

But, when it comes to laptops, always shut down completely when you are not going to be using it for an extended time.

Check air vents for dust or particles and keep it clean.

While it is nice to keep your laptop in your lap, using it on a hard surface is really the best way to extend the life of your laptop, and it helps to control overheating or over use of the internal fan.

Never reposition your laptop from one spot to the next, or from your lap to a table, without unplugging USB flash drives, leaving them in can bend them and ruin not only the flash drive, but the USB port on the laptop as well.

Use a strong password on your laptop; theft is more of a concern with portable devices. If you travel a lot, you should also password protect your BIOS settings; the manufacturer of your computer will have instructions for this. Find out if your BIOS password also protects your hard drive......otherwise a thief could simply remove the hard drive from your laptop and install it as a secondary drive on another machine or on a similar laptop, and access it.

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Club Officers		
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Ryan Smith	876-2881	Webmaster
Marie Herr	273-2558	Education
Earl Cummings	855-0192	Librarian

QUESTION: Brenda has everything else, does she need "WinPatrol" if I already have Avast, Spy Doctor, Zappit, Spybot? Of course these show up on the toolbar at the bottom of startup along with my picture programs, Dell Support, music jukebox, HP digital imaging monitor and I have tried to get rid of these to no avail.

ANSWER: WinPatrol is not an anti-virus, anti-spyware, or a cleaner program. Its functions do not overlap those of Spyware Doctor, Avast or Zappit. What WinPatrol does (among may other things) is allow you to configure your computer and manage start ups. Unlike using Windows built-in "Config" tool, WinPatrol tells you what every program starting with Windows is. MS Config gives you only the program's name, it does not give you many details. Hence you won't be exactly sure of what you're disabling.

You don't need your picture programs, Dell Support, Music Jukebox, HP Imaging Monitor starting with Windows. All those programs do is use up precious resources and therefore adversely affect your computer's performance - in simple terms - they slow down your computer.

At Windows Start-up, less is always more. The less you have starting with Windows the faster your computer will be. The reason? Programs which start with Windows always run in the background - and programs that always run in the background are silently sucking up your computer's resources often for no other reason than to be "on call" should you need them.

When disabling start up programs follow this rule-of-thumb: Never disable your anti-virus program, one anti-spyware program or Microsoft system files. Always allow these to start with Windows. Everything else can be disabled - you will need to make decisions as to which programs you would need to start with Windows (we allow CalenderPal and LastPass to start with Windows). Each person will have to have their own preferences.

We highly recommend WinPatrol. It's one of the first programs we install on any new PC or laptop we buy. We allow it to start with Windows because it is always on patrol. Its startup manager is second to none. It's easy to use, and allows you to easily take control of your startup programs.

WinPatrol also lets you see tasks that are running and if one of them is "frozen" you can kill the task from within WinPatrol. You can see any super hidden files on your computer (like BOOT.INI). You can manage Internet Explorer add-ons with WinPatrol, add file types, change the program associated with certain file types, control scheduled tasks, and review, disable, or activate Windows services.

WinPatrol is unlike any other program. It's a wonderful addition to any Windows computer. It's like a Swiss Army Knife - it has a myriad of different uses. Best of all, WinPatrol offers a free version which is wonderfully capable. And while the Pro version offers even more details about your system and the programs and services running on it and more features, the free version is one of the best, if not THE best freeware program of them all.

WinPatrol is one of our most trusted programs. You can read more about and/or download WinPatrol by visiting Bill P's WinPatrol home page.

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Note: **Several computer club members maintain WinPatrol on their computers. WinPatrol is also referred to as "Scotty the Dog".**

Open House Help Clinic on August 17th (Wednesday) and September 3rd (Saturday) at the Computer Club Classroom or John Ruehle Center, Highlands Crossing Center. ONLY club members are invited to participate between 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Someone will be available to help with problems and/or questions. Bring only desktop towers and laptops with power cords.