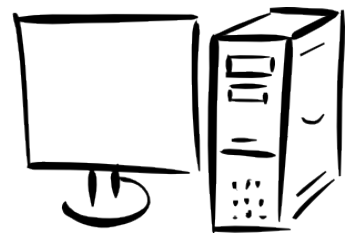


Bits & Bytes



Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

December 2016

Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center

Highlands Crossing Center 1801 Forest Hills Blvd Suite 208 (lower level) Bella Vista, AR 72715

Website: www.bvCompClub.org

Email: jrc@bvcc.arcoxml.com

Meetings

December 12

BVCC Board Meeting

5:30 pm

Computer Club Meeting

Highlands Crossing 7 pm

HELP CLINICS

Wednesday, Dec. 21 9 am-12 noon

Bring your tower, laptop, tablet or smartphone for problem solving.

NEW MEETING ROOM

All meetings are on the lower level of the Center. You may use entrance A on the West side or entrance C on the South side and take the elevator or stairs to the bottom floor. Entrance A (Main entrance) is closer to the stairs. Entrance C (The Apartments) has a covered walkway, is closer to the elevator, and has more parking.

The NE Village House entrance to the lower level will no longer provide access to our rooms.

Monthly meetings are in Community Room A (marked 1001) NW wing lower floor.

Welcome New Members

Frank Yakopec

Barbara Yakopec

PROGRAM

Using SKYPE to connect with family and friends will be explored at the 7 pm meeting of the Bella Vista Computer Club on Monday, Dec. 12. Justin Sell from Bella Vista Computer Services will present the program. Mr. Sell will also address your technology questions.

This public meeting is in Room A at Highlands Crossing Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd., Bella Vista.

New officers have been elected but we still need a volunteer for **Secretary**. It is not hard, I did it for two years and enjoyed working with the Board.

Julie Storm



Merry Christmas &

Happy New Year

Genealogy SIG 10 AM John Ruehle Center

3rd Saturday 10-12 am

Ten Stupid Things You Can Do To Mess Up Your Computer

Okay, I'm using a little reverse psychology on you... If want to keep your computer running smoothly and avoid becoming a target for cyber criminals, here are ten things you should NOT do.

1: Not Using Anti-Malware Protection - This is perhaps the most common way to make a system inoperable, and the easiest problem to avoid. Not using an anti-malware program (or using one that's out of date) is akin to leaving the front door of your house wide open with all of your valuables on prominent display. Having an unprotected system is an invitation to allow all kinds of nasty things like spyware, trojan horses, viruses and root kits to access your system. Virus and spyware creators do this in the hope of gaining control of computers for nefarious purposes, or getting access to sensitive information that may be stored on a hard drive. And of course, viruses and spyware can significantly slow down a machine.

Be safe, use a good anti-virus program to keep out the bad stuff. See my recommendations in [Free Anti-Virus Programs](#) and [Five Free Malware Removal Tools](#).

2: Failing to Apply Security Patches - New computer security threats crop up almost daily, as hackers, crackers and other cyber villians attempt to find and exploit holes in the operating system and application software we use every day. Unpatched vulnerabilities can lead to virus infestations, enslavement in a botnet, or even identity theft. And no software is immune, whether you run Windows, Mac or Linux. You need to configure your system to automatically download and install security patches for your operating system, office software, web browser, Java, email program, PDF reader, media player and other software you use. How do you do that?

Take advantage of the tools built into your operating system -- Windows Update, Mac OS X Software Update, or Ubuntu Update Manager -- and make sure they're set to run on auto-pilot every day. Other software that you've installed may offer the same type of automatic updating capability. Don't ignore the warning messages from the updaters, and apply fixes as soon as they are available. See [Computer Security: The Missing Link](#) to learn more about securing the software on your computer.

3: Clicking on Bogus Popups - Popup ads are intrusive, annoying and seemingly everywhere on the Web. Yet, it is amazing how often some computer users will mindlessly click on them. Popups will promise you anything from a free dinner for two to ridding your machine of viruses with one click. These ads can mask spyware and malware that gets loaded onto your machine behind-the-scenes. Also, a lot of them are just annoying links to endlessly long surveys that offer a free laptop or iPod, with the catch being that you have to sign up for a lot of paid services that you probably really don't need. The use of a good anti-malware program plus using the popup blocker that comes with a lot of browsers, can help keep the popup ads at bay.

Here's a tip to tell the bad popups from the ones that are important. A type of popup called "balloon notifications" are attached to the Windows taskbar at the bottom or side of your screen. These are usually important and should be heeded. Malicious popups typically appear in a window floating in the middle of your screen. (Some good ones, too, though.) If you're unsure, ask a friend, Google the text in the popup, or just close the window by clicking the red button at the top. Don't click inside the popup window, or you could get sucked into a vortex of cyberslime.

4: Not Using a Firewall - Yes, your computer needs a firewall. But probably not the kind everyone is telling you to install. Chances are, you already have an excellent firewall built in to your high-speed modem/router. Find out more about the two kinds of firewalls, and which one you need in my [Do I Need a Firewall?](#) article.

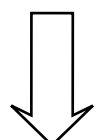
5: Unsafe Downloading - It can be tempting to download "free" pirated versions of games, movies or popular software packages. But beware the warez... tools like Bittorrent, and rogue download sites can lead to nasty surprises. Some downloads have been modified to contain embedded viruses or trojan horses that can compromise your system. Stick with safe download sites such as FileHippo, where you can find tons free software and shareware that's certified malware-free.

To make matters worse, some previously trustworthy downsites have become landmines of unwanted "foistware." My article [Downloading? Watch Out For These Danger Signs](#) will show you how to download safely, while avoiding unwanted toolbars, sneaky spyware, and changes to your settings.

6: Falling for Phishing Scams - The Nigerian email scam has become as well-known a confidence game as the old shell-game. But it still is astonishing how many will fall for it. The news reported recently about a woman who lost almost half a million dollars to email scammers. Also, be on the lookout for those very official looking phishing attempts. An email may come to your inbox that looks like it's from your bank, Ebay or Paypal. You open it up and it is asking you to verify your information by entering your password, social security or account number. And it's scary how precisely the emails (and the sites they link to) match the real ones.

Bottom line: no one has any business asking for your private information via email. If you have any questions about a suspicious email that looks like it came from a place you do business with, call that company to verify, and always use a bookmark or manually key the address of sites that require a login. Read more about phishing, and how to protect yourself from these online scams in [Can You Smell a Phish?](#)

7: Not Securing Your WiFi - Ever notice your Internet connection slowing down? This could be the result of strangers mooching off your wifi bandwidth. If you leave your wireless router wide open and unsecured, it's an open invitation for neighbors and passers-by to connect. But in addition to sharing your internet connection, you're also exposing yourself to hackers and possibly even legal liability. Best practice is to enable encryption on your router by setting up a strong wifi access password as the key. Many users neglect to change the default username and password of their home routers, information which can easily be found online. Why take a chance? Read my article [Wireless Security Checklist](#) for help getting your router secured.



Ten Stupid Things You Can Do To Mess Up Your Computer Continued

8: Haphazard Deleting - It's not so hard to fill up a hard drive these days, even with the large storage capacity that comes with machines. But when you feel like doing some housekeeping on your system, make sure you know what you are deleting. The deletion of files residing in system folders or program folders can cause your operating system or applications to crash. Usually, Windows will not let you delete critical system files, but play it safe: if you are not sure what you are deleting, leave it alone and do some research on it first. When it come to housekeeping, better options for freeing up drive space are removing unnecessary software with Add/Remove Programs, or running the Disk Cleanup utility. For heavy duty disk scrubbing, read my tips for a HOWTO: Clean Up Your Hard Drive.

9: Forgetting to Back Up - This is a heart-breaker because it so easy to avoid. Sooner or later, you WILL accidentally delete an important file, or experience a hard drive failure. Always make sure that you back up any critical files, and on a regular basis. Backing up is so easy now with external drives and online backup services. No messy tapes or piles or floppy disks... Shame on you once if you lose a file, shame on you twice if you didn't remember to back it up. If you don't have a backup plan, check out my ebook *Everything You Need to Know About Backups*.

10: Still Running Windows XP? - Microsoft dropped support for Windows XP on April 8th, 2014. That means no more updates or security patches will be issued for this rusty old operating system. See my article Windows XP: Game Over for details on why you really should upgrade. Then learn about this Free Windows XP Alternative, and a promising Windows clone project

Reminders

Be sure to check the class schedules at the meeting and sign-up for the ones you are interested in. There is no charge for classes to Club members.

Check your Membership to see if it is renewal time. We value each one of you!

The **Bits & Bytes** will be updated as new information comes.

Please check often!

Club Officers:

Sylvia Hill- President

Bob Shewmake Vice-President:

Secretary:

Treasurer: Joel Ewing

Board Members:

Marie Herr, Ken Nelson, Marilyn Russell

Committee Chairs:

Jim Prince, Membership

Julie Storm, Newsletter Editor

John Reese, Programs

Earl Cummings, Librarian

Nancy Jones, Public Relations

Joel Ewing Webmaster

Marie Herr, Education

Bob Shewmake, Genealogy Liaison



Classes and open house clinics are free to Computer Club members. Club membership fee- \$20; ½ price additional family member. Classes and help clinics are held at the John Ruehle Center located in the Highlands Crossings Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd., Suite 208, Bella Vista. Class descriptions at bvcompclub.org