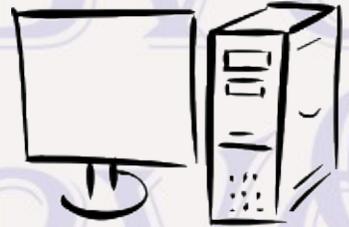


# Bits & Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club



## April 2020

**Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center**

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

Website: <http://BVComputerClub.org>

Email: [editor@bvcomputerclub.org](mailto:editor@bvcomputerclub.org)

### HOW TO FIND US

All meetings are on the lower level of the Highlands Crossing Center in Bella Vista. You may use entrance A on the West side or entrance C on the South side and take the elevator or stairs to the lower level. Turn left (West) to reach the General Meeting room, right for the John Ruehle Training Center. **The lower-level NE entrance is also now available again.**

### MEETINGS

**Board Meeting & General Meeting:** Physical in-person meetings **CANCELED for April**. We are exploring possibility of using Zoom for on-line meetings.

**Genealogy SIG:** **CANCELED for April**. (3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday).

### MEMBERSHIP

Single membership is \$25; \$10 for each additional family member. Join by mailing an application (from the web site) with check, or complete an application and pay at any meeting.

### CLASSES

**No scheduled classes for April**

**Check the monthly calendar and announcements for any last minute schedule changes at <http://bvcomputerclub.org> .**

### HELP CLINICS

**April Help Clinics at John Ruehle center**

**CANCELED**

**We will make on-line remote help accessible to members**

### COVID-19 VIRUS ADJUSTMENTS

Like many organization we are having to make hopefully-temporary adjustments to cope with the current health threat. We have canceled all physical meeting events during April and will evaluate sometime in April how long that needs to continue. Our Vice President, Woody Ogden, is stranded in Hawaii by flight cancellations, but will still be able to provide remote help via the Internet.

If the advisories against group meetings continue beyond April 30, we will find ways to continue to serve our membership by alternative means, using Internet-based tools to provide monthly program content, classes, and remote help to our membership.

Two tools that hold promise for that support are Zoom for Internet virtual meetings, and AnyDesk for remote help over the Internet.

During the month of April we will experiment with holding the April Board meeting using Zoom, and  
(continued next page)

possibly even a class later in the month. If we are still in this mode by May we will plan on providing General Meetings and some classes using Zoom.

While some user problems are impossible to resolve without hands-on-the hardware, many software related issues are susceptible to resolution using remote help – provided the computer and Internet access are sufficiently functional to establish a remote desktop connection over the Internet. In the past we have provided some remote help support over the Internet, but it has been by informal arrangements. With 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday Help Clinics suspended, we will formalize the procedures for requesting on-line remote help to make it more widely known and available to our members. The procedures for members to request remote help will be published on the BVCC web site when they are finalized.

See the following two articles for additional information about the Zoom and AnyDesk applications. I would recommend that you give consideration to installing these two free applications on your computers, if you have not already done so.

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## REMOTE HELP AS A TEMPORARY REPLACEMENT FOR HELP CLINICS

*By Joel Ewing, President BVCC  
April 2020, Bits & Bytes,  
president (at) bvcomputerclub.org*

While regular Help Clinics are suspended for the COVID-19 virus, it may still be possible for BVCC to resolve many issues remotely for our members using AnyDesk ( <https://anydesk.com> ) or possibly some similar remote desktop application. Members can install a personal copy of AnyDesk on their devices free of charge.

AnyDesk seems to have features similar to TeamViewer, including secure encrypted communication with the remotely controlled device, but has a much more reasonable pricing policy for our usage. The default setting (no password set in the security options) will not allow unattended connections to your computer – connection requests must be accepted by a person at the client device being remotely controlled. As long as session requests are manually accepted by the owner of the remote device and verified to be from a known and trusted BVCC Help Clinic technician, this process is secure.

When I terminate an AnyDesk session on Windows 10, I get a "recommended" offer to install the Chrome Browser which defaults to "Accept", so you must explicitly select "Decline" if not wanted. Not that I have anything against Chrome, its just that the particular system I was using at the time is not one from which I do any web browsing, so the overhead of installing and updating yet another browser was unreasonable.

AnyDesk can be installed on an IOS device or android. From an iPhone just go to the App Store, search for AnyDesk, and install it. When you open AnyDesk, it will show your device's 9-digit numeric address. I tried out accessing the iPhone from AnyDesk on a laptop. If a remote AnyDesk access request is made to your ID, the AnyDesk running on the iPhone will identify who is attempting to connect, and your can accept or decline. It does allow the remote computer to display your current iPhone screen; but if there is any to remotely control the iPhone, it's not obvious. The other problem is that if the iPhone user displays anything other than the AnyDesk app, which of course you would want to do if the object is to get help on how to do something, the connection

automatically times out and drops after 60 seconds unless the iPhone user touches an expiration warning within the last 5 seconds to extend the connection time. This is apparently based on the default length of time AnyDesk is allowed to run as a background application. Conclusion: This could be useful for showing a remote help person a few screen sequences on a iPhone to explain a problem, but appears to be of much less use for actual problem resolution than remote desktop to a PC, where you can actually control the remote device to fix a problem. and easily maintain a connection for the extended time likely needed to resolve a problem. Perhaps you can do more if you remote connect to an iPhone from another IOS device with a touch screen, but I'm not able to test that easily.

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## USING ZOOM APPLICATION FOR VIRTUAL INTERNET MEETINGS

*By Joel Ewing, President BVCC,  
April 2020, Bits & Bytes,  
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The zoom application allows a host-user to conduct a virtual meeting over the Internet with up to 100 participant-users (more participants are possible, but that costs significant amounts). It is possible to hold meetings or give presentations involving live audio and video, share PowerPoint or Impress Slide presentations, share a whiteboard, any desktop window, or an entire desktop as part of a presentation. Participants can be invited to share images or audio as well; although, it is easier to manage if you restrict the allowed participant video to just a web camera feed, and perhaps use built-in chat support for short comments. Many can be typing chat messages at the same time without disrupting each other's messages, but if several participants have open mics and talk at the same time, that doesn't work well.

The Zoom application is free and supported on many different platforms: PC-Windows, PC-Linux, Mac, IOS device s(iPhone, iPad), Android devices, and probably others. To host a meeting you must have a Zoom account. That hosting account can be a free account, but if you want to host a continuous meeting longer than 40 minutes, you will need to upgrade to a non-free account. To host a meeting, you pretty much must have a device with a built-in or external microphone. A built-in camera or external webcam is a nice touch, but not essential if the presentation is primarily focused on a digital presentation or other digital media. Meeting participants don't necessarily need a device with either a microphone or a webcam if they are just going to watch a presentation or submit an occasional remark via a chat message; but, if it is a meeting where the participants are expected to contribute significant content to the meeting, they may need a microphone and webcam as well.

To download the zoom application for Windows (or other Operating Systems), go to <https://zoom.us/support/download> (a Windows search for "zoom download" will also get you there). Your Operating system type should be automatically detected and after the download is complete you should see an option to "Open file" for Zoominstaller.exe to initiate the install. You DO NOT need to "Sign Up" for Zoom just to participate in meetings. That is only required if you plan to host a meeting. You may however want to select the "Opt-Out" button on the download page for making information available to third parties or various advertising activities (the default is of course to "Accept"). When running the install file you will have to approve ("Yes") for the Zoom Video Communications app to make changes to your device before it will proceed with installation. After installation, if you search for Zoom it will find "Start Zoom App" which may be selected to

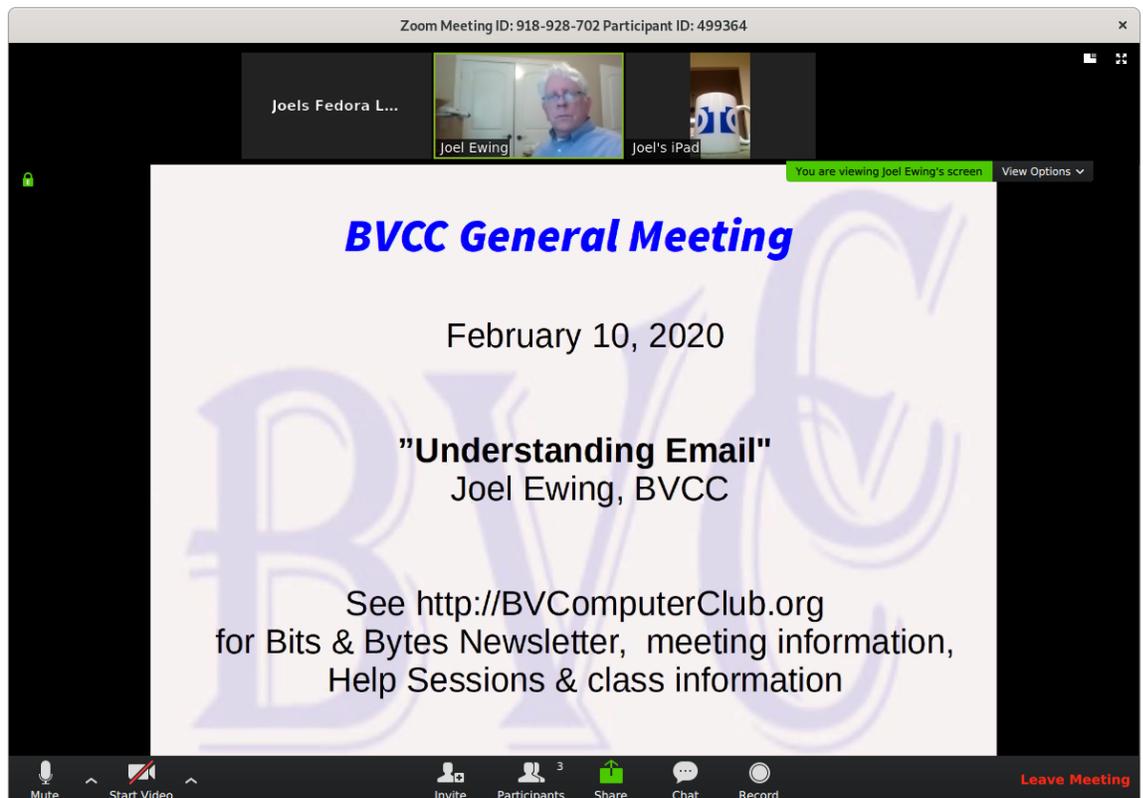
start Zoom. If you plan to use it frequently, you can right click on "Start Zoom App" and pin it to your Taskbar. The Zoom icon looks like this:



All smart phones, pads, and laptops these days have a built-in microphone and camera. Many desktop computers and older laptops may have neither. Relatively inexpensive but adequate headsets with a microphone can be purchased -- these are best for presenting because they prevent head movement from adversely affecting audio volume, and running with your speakers disabled eliminates any feedback and echos. In normal times you should have no problem finding a webcam in the \$50 - \$100 range; but because of current high demand, you will likely find they are either "out of stock" or marked up 300% - 400% over normal retail.

A meeting host-person does a login to his Zoom account and either creates an instant meeting or schedules a future meeting. That process assigns a numeric meeting-ID and possibly a password to the meeting, which the host person must then provide to the intended participants in order for them to join the meeting. When the time for the meeting is near, each participant must start their Zoom application on the device they will use, select the "Join a meeting" button, and on the next screen provide the numeric meeting ID and the digital "name" you will be identified by during the meeting. For meeting open to unknown participants, you might have reason to use an incomplete name, but for closed meetings, there is no reason not to use your actual name. Meeting hosts may request when you join a closed meeting that you send a host-only chat message giving your actual name, if it is not obvious from your digital name.

The image to the right is from an actual Zoom meeting window with three participants (including the host), all of which in this case happen to be on different devices in my house. The video feeds from the participants are displayed at the top in reduced size (they can optionally be moved to the side). The one on the left only shows the "name" of the participant ("Joels Fedora L[inux]") as this is a desktop system



with no web-camera hardware. The middle image is from my laptop, the device of the meeting host. The green

line around that image means that the video image being displayed in the large area is coming from that participant. My laptop is currently sharing a desktop window that contains a digital slide presentation ( using LibreOffice Impress), so the larger zoom display window shows that shared window rather than the live webcam feed of the participant. The green-highlighted "share" at the bottom center and green-highlighted text at the upper-right of the large window also indicates the video display is a shared screen coming from the meeting host. The third image at the top is the video feed coming an unattended iPad device, appropriated displaying for its user's "mug shot" a coffee mug sitting in front of the iPad. The iPad is actually upside down, but since an iPad can sense its physical position, the app knows to send the built-in camera image rotated by 180°.

I think this demonstrates how zoom can easily be used to give a presentation remotely – The APCUG virtual Technical Conferences are an example of using Zoom and require minimal skills to use as a passive viewer, where the meeting host controls the viewing content. Participatory meetings can also be done with Zoom, allowing different participants to have the "floor" and possibly even share an application window from their device at different times; but this also requires some additional usage familiarity with using the mic and video features of Zoom.

Some classes that require minimal participant interaction can be treated like a meeting presentation. Those classes which were designed for user interactions with a specific application on the Training Center computers could be a little tricky: the user may need to have the actual application installed (which might not be free, or the version expected) on his own computer to get the full benefit. To work with an application and follow a presentation about how to use the application at the same time requires either a large enough monitor or dual monitors so that both the zoom presentation and the application window(s) can be viewed at the same time.

## REVISED BVCC WEB SITE

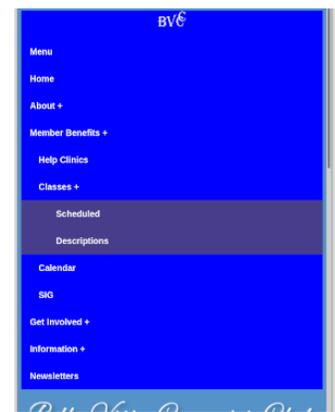
By Joel Ewing, President BVCC,  
 April 2020, president (at) bvcomputerclub.org

The BVCC web site at <http://bvcomputerclub.org> has been completely redesigned to hopefully make things easier to find, to have a more consistent appearance across all pages, and to make the site more responsive to smaller display sizes, especially mobile devices. The newly designed web site went live around March 28. The new home page is shown on the right.



The basic color scheme, content of the home page and reduced content of individual pages is based on a website prototype designed by one of our members, Julie Storm. The old Table of Contents frame on the left side, which took up a large chunk of the display, has been replaced with a top menu bar, which will appear on all screens.

The top menu bar and most page content will now dynamically adjust to the display size without the need



for scrolling. If the display size gets below a certain minimal width like on an iPhone, the menu bar will be replaced by a "Menu" button (see above figure on the left), which is used to toggle the display of a larger complete menu from which selections may be made (see above figure on the right).



Some menu items have sub menus, indicated by the presence of the "▶" character (oops, see I still have a "+" in the small-screen menu). In the small screen menu, clicking an a menu item with a sub menu

will toggle the display of the sub menu. On the larger screen top menu, hovering over a menu item with a sub menu will cause the sub menu to appear. Clicking (or tapping, on a mobile device) on a menu item will take you to that item. The figure above with the larger-width-display top menu shows the result of hovering over the "Member Benefits ▶" menu item and then moving the mouse down to hover over the "Classes ▶" menu item.

The old web site pages are still there, but they are no longer displayed by default. Selecting the "OldWebsite" link on the top right of the new home page will open a new browser tab at the old BVCC web site home page. The old pages are essentially frozen – content updates will only be made to the new web site pages. This link to the old site was primarily for my benefit during the transition and will eventually be removed.

The new home page has a small white "alerts" window near the top that will display a terse description of upcoming events (scrollable if more events than will fit), and the intent is to add immediately after that the announcement of the next scheduled General Meeting. The picture gallery at the bottom left is designed for manual cycling through the pictures. I personally find automatically advancing picture galleries distracting, because the site-chosen timing is always different from what I would prefer. The location map image is also a link to Goggle Maps, so you can go to Goggle Maps and select your desired map scale, driving directions, satellite view, street view, etc. as desired.

All the new web pages were defined as server-dynamic PHP pages to simplify implementation, both because of since-resolved issues with my home Apache web server that I was using for initial testing, and because I didn't want the bother of renaming web pages and all links to them during the initial implementation if I later found PHP support was needed. Some of the pages ended up to not actually require PHP support and could use Apache SSI (Server Side Includes) as an alternative, primarily for including a common menu and the web page modification date on all pages.

I learned enough new things about HTML and CSS coding in the process of the conversion to realize near the end that there are much better ways of doing some of the things I wanted to do that would improve the clarity of the design and require less work during future updates. So, there will probably be additional changes to the new web site internal design, but the intent will be to not affect the appearance or displayed content of the pages.