Bits & Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

March 2022

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

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MEETINGS

Board Meeting: March 14, 6pm, in John Ruehle Training Center, Highlands Crossing Center.

General Meeting: March 14, 7pm, "Fraud-Scams", This is a presentation by Carolyn Grieve of Arvest Bank on the many kinds of financial frauds and scams you may encounter today.

 We will meet in-person in Room 1001 on the lower level of The Highlands Crossing Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd, Bella Vista, or you may attend the meeting on-line via Zoom. Zoom access information is published on our website.

Visitors or Guests are welcome.

Because of COVID-19, we recommend observing current masking and social-distancing guidelines as much as possible. Consider attending by Zoom if you or others in your family are in a high risk category.

Genealogy SIG: **No meeting** (3rd Saturday).

HELP CLINICS

March 5, 9am - noon at John Ruehle center
March 16, 9am - noon at John Ruehle center
Members may request Remote Help on our website at https://bvcomputerclub.org at menu path Member Benefits ►Remote Help .

MEMBERSHIP

Single membership is $25; $10 for each additional family member in the same household.

Join on our website at https://bvcomputerclub.org at menu path Get Involved ►Join/Renew, by mailing an application (from the web site) with check, or complete an application and pay in person at any meeting.

CLASSES

(At BVCC Training Center)

Wednesday, March 16, 2pm-4pm, "Slow PC? Let's Upgrade or Buy New", with Pete Opland.

Wednesday March 23, 4pm-6pm, "Computer Security for Regular People, Part 2", with Justin Sell.

Wednesday, March 30, 9am-11am, "Data: Where Is It and What To Do With It", with Pete Opland.

Advance sign up required for each listed class (**Maximum attendance 8**): For reservations: email to edu@bvcomputerclub.org, or sign up at the General Meeting. Classes are **free to Computer Club members.** Class access information will be emailed to those signed up for the class the day before class.

Check the monthly calendar and announcements for any last minute schedule changes at https://bvcomputerclub.org .

NEW OR RETURNING BVCC MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members or members returning to BVCC after an absence since last month's newsletter:

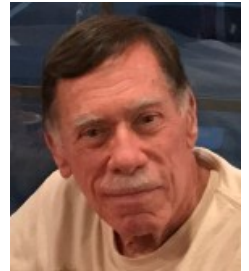Wayne Saarela   James Blass   Katy Young

Judi Shannon

AND THE SCAMS JUST KEEP COMING

David Kretchmar, Computer Technician
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
https://www.scscc.club dkretch (at) gmail.com

If you're on the phone with some nice, polite person who asks you to download some software onto your computer that will allow them to remotely fix something that has been a problem, please think twice about it. Then do not do it. The chances are high that you are dealing with a scammer trying to get financial and personal data about you.

It is probably generally a very bad idea to give a stranger access to your computer. Yes, there are exceptions; I

have allowed a Microsoft Tech to access my computer remotely to fix an Operating System installation problem. But anything short of that, such as reactivating a permanent version of Microsoft Office after a hard drive failure, did not require me to relinquish control of my computer to a stranger. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that any issue you might be having would require you to give a stranger remote access to your computer.

My Experience

I was having problems installing AOL Gold on a client's new computer. A Google search led me to what appeared to be a legitimate AOL site, or at least it fooled me. I called the number and spoke to a nice, polite young lady, who might have been on the other side of the world. She explained that to fix the problem preventing AOL Gold from loading, I would have to give her access to my computer.

She asked me to download and install a program that would allow her to access my computer, which I foolishly did. She then sent me a code by text or email, which I had to enter to activate a remote session.

Then for the first time, I wondered, why does she need to do that? I told her I was a computer tech who could probably follow her instructions, and she gave me an unsatisfactory answer. So, I terminated the call and uninstalled the remote access software.

Remote access programs such as TeamViewer, AnyDesk, LogMein, and dozens of others are legitimate programs, but they can be used for nefarious purposes

Scammers expertly reproduce the logos of legitimate software providers, such as AOL and McAfee. They can even spoof their email address, so an email appears to be coming from a legitimate company.

Fake antivirus email scam

Scammers might come at you via your email. For example, one message I have seen purports to be from McAfee or Norton, stating that your credit card will be charged for another year's subscription unless you contact them via a phone number or hotlink in the email. This message sounds authentic to many users, who might have had McAfee or Norton in the past, or who got a free trial that comes with many new computers.
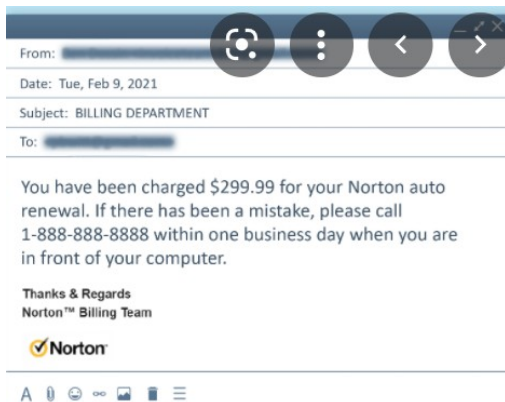
When contacted, the scammer will state that for you to avoid additional charges, the scammer must remotely access your system. They will try to get you to download remote access software to give the scammer access to your computer. Just say no. There is no legitimate reason someone needs to access your computer to remove a program.

As we approach the holidays, computer scammers and hackers seem to step up their attacks on computer systems. Users are especially vulnerable to messages from vendors such as Amazon stating there is a problem with their order since many of us do order gifts from online vendors this time of the year. So don't let your guard down!

ADVENTURES WITH APPLE AND APPLECARE SUPPORT

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor, Region 2
APCUG Rep, PATACS & WAP
Gabe (at) gold.com

Having collected several Apple devices -- my and wife's iPhones/iPads, my Apple Watch, three HomePod Minis -- plus six outlets controlled by the Home app -- I've also collected a (very) few gripes, frustrations, irritations, and wishes:

• After the most recent Watch/iPhone software updates, very simple automation stopped working.

• Grouped notifications no longer indicate how many are stacked.

• The Zoom app didn't update on iPad with other apps; it had to be done manually.

• Siri Intercom messages only play on HomePods, not on iOS/iPadOS devices as I'd expected.

I finally called Apple to address at least the most annoying first two problems, especially the failed automation.

After negotiating the obligatory (but not ghastly) phone robot, I reached a very pleasant woman who quite thoroughly researched the automation problem -- putting me on hold for a bit, returning and apologizing for the hold, researching more. She finally said she'd have to escalate to Level 2.

In the process of doing that, I was disconnected. I sighed, not wanting to repeat the entire process. Then my phone rang, and I was called back and connected to the same person. That's NEVER happened when talking to customer support and disconnected -- it's ALWAYS involved calling again and starting from scratch.

I was then connected to John, "Senior Advisor" or some such title. He was great; he understood the problem, reviewed steps I'd taken to research/resolve it, and said I needn't repeat them (again, contrasted with most customer support, which follows rigid scripts and insists that steps be followed for them even if they've already been done).

When I mentioned that a local Apple employee had replicated the problem (likely with a newer iPhone than mine), he agreed that probably meant the problem wasn't specific to my hardware/software. He spent quite a while documenting the problem, during which he put me on hold and apologized for the wait; I joked that he might be writing a book about the problem and said I was keeping busy on my computer while waiting. I said that I hoped he wouldn't hold against me because I was using a Windows PC; he laughed and said he had one too.

He sent me an email giving his contact information and a link to upload a screenshot of the failure message on my Watch when he finished. Finally, he said he'd take ownership of the problem and made an appointment to call back with updates from engineering.

He called back on the designated day and apologized for being nearly an hour late. I laughed and said that he was so far ahead of support from that other technology company (whose name starts with "M") that I hadn't noticed. He said the problem was understood and would be fixed in an upcoming operating system update -- either the next or the one after that. It wasn't fixed in one just installed -- there likely wasn't time for it to get in that one -- so I assume it will be along shortly.

So that's more strong contrasts with other tech support experiences -- individual problem ownership, contact information provided without being requested, and definite checkpoint provided.

The Zoom app now appears to be updating normally, with other apps (and it's not clear where that problem was); not displaying the number of stacked notifications seems to have been a deliberate (though puzzling) decision, and I'm still researching the Intercom issue.

Despite my product(s) being out of warranty coverage, Apple provided complimentary phone support. This support is available for questions, and product problems after the warranty and AppleCare (if purchased) have expired.