

Carl Bulger presided.

Presentation:

Several years ago Dick Henthorn put aside an old laptop computer that was no longer functioning. Recently, he asked Dan Lee if there was a way to access the data on the laptop's hard drive. Dan Lee removed the hard drive and showed how he hooked up Dick's old hard drive to another computer using a USB 2.0 to SATA/IDE Hard Drive Adapter. Dan had taken photos of what he was doing and showed them during the demonstration as PowerPoint slides. This allowed everyone to see what was, or had been, done.

Someone asked why it is so expensive and difficult to replace the CMOS battery in a laptop. When the computer is off, the CMOS battery powers the BIOS chip on which the boot data and machine instructions are stored. Dan pointed to the CMOS battery on the laptop which was about as large as two AA-size batteries, much larger than the small disk-shaped batteries in desktops. The reason is that a laptop may be disconnected from external power sources for many hours. A larger CMOS battery is less draining for the main laptop battery and does not have to be recharged as often. It also appeared to be soldered in place, making it more difficult to replace.

Dick showed some of the old files he rediscovered on that hard disk after several years of inaccessibility.

Discussion:

Carl reported on a meeting that Kathy White, Senior Center Manager, had called to determine policy for the Computer Lab. Senior Center Management wants to get use of the lab. There aren't as many people signing up for advanced computer courses as there once was. One partial solution might be to have Prince George's Community College provide SAGE instructors to teach a few courses. The rationale is that the \$50 SAGE registration fee allows someone to sign up for as many courses as he or she wants to take as long as there are no scheduling conflicts. Therefore, students might be more likely to sign up for a computer course if it was "free". They may be disappointed to find that there would be a lab fee for the computer courses. Another suggestion is to open the computer lab to the "public". (I assume this means seniors wanting to use a fast, modern computer with Windows 7, not young gamers.)

Submitted by Barry Hammond, Secretary

Center Management would also like to get rid of the old Dell computers as soon as is practical.

Someone mentioned that he purchased a SONY Blu-Ray Player with lots of additional features available when it is hooked up to the internet, including automatically checking for updates online.

Carl Bulger mentioned that laptops are being redesigned to better compete with the multitude of tablets, iPads, Nooks, Xooms, etc. His advice: If you're thinking of buying a laptop or netbook, wait until the new designs come out with Solid State Drives, Interactive Screens, 4G compatibility, etc.

Computer Problems:

Jerry Kursban gave us an update on what he did with the non-working HP printer that he brought to a recent meeting. He took it to Staples. They either couldn't fix it or the cost was more than it would cost to buy a new one. After he had traded it in, one of the store's employees punched something with her finger and the printer started working. Why couldn't she have walked by BEFORE the trade-in?

Jerry mentioned that you can trade in your old ink cartridges both at Staples and Office Depot for a \$2 rebate. Dale Grant took advantage of a recent HP/Staples promotion to trade in several old cartridges for \$5 apiece. Bob Blum suggested that we do some research to find out if there are some quality printers that have inexpensive ink cartridges. Jerry Kursban mentioned that Brothers laserjet printers are relatively cheap for black-and-white copies. For inkjet color printers, choices are more difficult. Consumer Reports last issue rating printers was December 2011, pp. 42-43.

Bob Blum's Windows 7 computer has been taking a long time to shut down since the 28 Microsoft updates were installed on Patch Tuesday (April 12). Anybody else have this problem? I didn't then, but I had the problem temporarily the following Tuesday after downloading and installing the latest version of the Malicious Software Removal Tool - April 2011 on Tuesday, April 26th. (Microsoft's so-called "out-of-band" Patch Tuesday is the fourth Tuesday of the month.) Microsoft found it desirable to modify the Tool twice in the same month for the first time ever. They are in an intense battle with the major botnets of the world. Some bloggers speculate that Microsoft was issued the extra update to combat a "zero

day" threat, one that was initiated on the first Patch Tuesday, too late for Microsoft to develop a patch for it. My computer must have been slowed down temporarily while the Malicious Software Removal Tool scanned the computer in the background.

I mentioned that I had trouble getting updates of Adobe's Flash Player to install correctly. I found some advice online that Internet Explorer must be made the default browser for the updates to register correctly. Bob Blum suggested downloading the ietab extension <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/ie-tab-plus-ff-36/> in FireFox to make it compatible with Internet Explorer. I'm not sure that would work for this particular problem since I had downloaded both the new IE and non-IE versions of FlashPlayer. Anyway, the problem went away the next week when Adobe downloaded still newer versions of both. Frequent hacks, bugs, and updates in Adobe software led me to long ago use Foxit Reader instead of Adobe Acrobat Reader. Is there an alternative for FlashPlayer?

Dan Lee mentioned that he only got two responses to the questionnaire that Bob Blum and he generated about a month ago listing suggested topics for presentations.

Bob says, "Don't let inability to use PowerPoint or Open Office's Impress be a 'show stopper'. You can do a live demo using the Center's laptop and projector. Also, Eric Hein has a tutorial on using Powerpoint and Impress on the Training page of our website. If any of you know Lorraine Warner, the Photo Elements instructor, she has a tutorial on organizing and presenting photos, etc. Dick Henthorn recommended Google's Presentation software.

For those of us still using Windows XP, the Freeware page on our website has a link for downloading an early, free version of WinSnap which will allow you to capture images for your presentations. For Vista and Windows 7 computers, the Snipping Tool in the Accessories folder can be used for image capture.