

Carl Bulger (left) presided.

Visitors: Thomas Lee

Dave Hackenberg, retired from Alion Science and Technology, now is helping with the computer classes.

Carl Bulger mentioned Simple Safe, a wireless home alert system.

Computer Problems:

Carl recommended Belarc Advisor, www.belarc.com/free_download.html, a free program that analyzes your computer, network, and software and lists all of the hardware and software and determines whether all of the recommended security updates have been installed. We use it on the classroom computers and the two public access computers in the main hallway after we update the software.

If you are having problems with leftover bits and pieces of Norton Antivirus, Internet Security, or other Norton software, try using an uninstaller available as a download from Norton. It will do a more thorough job than trying to uninstall it from Control Panel. An even more thorough job might be done by Revo Uninstaller using the most aggressive removal option. You'll find a link to it on our Freeware webpage: <http://home.comcast.net/~BSCClub/freeware.htm> under "System Tools>>Software Uninstallers". If you've previously tried the Norton Uninstaller or Microsoft's program uninstaller on the Control Panel, the icon for Norton or Symantec may no longer appear in Revo Uninstaller even though its remnants conflict with your present security software. In that case, you may have to download Wise Registry Cleaner. If that doesn't work, try a stronger registry cleaner such as CCleaner. All of these are free downloads. It might be smart to back up your system, or at least set a Restore Point, before you attempt any of these actions.

If you think some computer process is slowing down your computer, try hitting CTRL-ALT-DELETE. In XP this will bring up the Task Manager. In Windows 7 it brings up a list of five items, the last of which is Task Manager. Select "Run Task Manager". Click on the Applications tab to see what is running in the foreground. If there are too many programs running, close some. Now, click on the Processes tab and click on the box at the bottom "Show Processes from All Users". You can now click on the "Image Name" to alphabetize the listing. I like to click on "CPU" at the head of the column that

lists the percentage of CPU cycles that each process is using. You may have to click on “CPU” twice to bring the busiest processes to the head of the list. The listings jump up and down quickly as the processor (CPU) jumps from one task to another. You may have to Google some of the names of the busiest processes to identify them. If some processes are hogging CPU cycles, you may want to shut some of them down.

In Windows XP, select “Run” in the lower right column of the Start Menu. Type in “msconfig”. In Windows 7, type “msconfig” in the search box. Then click on the program listing that appears: “msconfig.exe”. A box labeled “System Configuration” will appear. Select the fourth tab: “Startup” Those programs or processes listed that have checkmarks in front of them, are those that start up when the computer is booted. You can uncheck those that you don’t want to start up right away. You certainly want your security software to startup at bootup. But there are many others, such as Adobe Reader, that you may not need running in the background all of the time. Some computer gurus uncheck everything. Then, only really essential processes will continue to start at bootup.

Presentation:



Dennis Evans brought in several of his mobile devices (Palm, Toshiba Notebook; Scion PSION, Kindle Fire). Dennis likes devices that are small enough to fit in one of his oversize pockets. When he wants to use devices with a separate keyboard, mouse, or other human interface device, he often buys devices that use Bluetooth (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bluetooth>), a low-powered shortwave radio signal than can communicate with interface devices such as a headphone (You've seen these guys walking around with a large earphone hanging on one ear that also includes a microphone, so you think he's talking to you when he comes up behind you in a store. He's talking via Bluetooth over his smartphone or other mobile device.) But Bluetooth can be used by microphones, mice, keyboards, and laser pointers to communicate with notebooks, laptops, tablets, etc. just as standard wireless devices do. Standard wireless devices use a more powerful signal, different hardware, and operate under different communications standards and wavelengths.

Dennis showed us a full size folding keyboard (without a number pad on the end or function (F1-F12) keys on the top row) that costs about \$60 and fits in his pocket. It has both tactile and audible feedback, just as most standard keyboards. It's a Bluetooth keyboard made by Verbatim. Its two AAA batteries last about 80 hours!

When he's creating or referring to documents on his mobile devices, Dennis often uses an Apple app called "Documents to Go" that creates documents compatible with Microsoft Office but doesn't require downloading a large application like Microsoft Office. In fact, Documents to Go probably interacts with software on servers "in the Cloud".

Dennis has a Bluetooth remote control for presentations that costs \$19.95. This frees him from his laptop, or whatever device on which his presentation is running, so that he can walk around and interact more directly with his audience.