

## **Minutes for the Bowie Seniors Computer Club meeting on February 4, 2016**

Verna Teasdale brought her old printer to the meeting. Bob Rapczynski took it home. Dan Lee brought in a 17-inch monitor and gave it to Janice Holland.

The hard drive failed on one of Tom McCabe's friend's computers. It contained lots of data, including pictures that he wanted to retrieve. Bob Blum attempted unsuccessfully to use Linux to retrieve it. He has a couple more ideas that he would like to pursue. He would like to use TEST DISC to find and rebuild the partition table which may have been eliminated or corrupted when the hard drive failed. He would also like to try to determine if it is a mechanical problem.

**Moral: DO FREQUENT BACKUPS!**

Best Buy and Staples will attempt data recovery. Prices start at \$35 for diagnosis and estimates and can run up to \$1000 for recovery. Russ Vaughn had a local guy recover his email for \$200-\$300. Dick Henthorn had his data recovered and copied to a flash drive by PC RETRO (next door to Behnke's Nursery on Rt. 1 in Beltsville).

Bob Rapczynski couldn't backup with Acronis to a hard disk that had been "wiped". Tom McCabe said he should have reformatted the hard disk, and then used the Acronis boot disk before restoring the backup.

Dan Lee checked on the status of the City's installation of WiFi in several buildings including the Senior Center. An employee of the Bowie IT Department told him that the Head of the IT Department now has the contractor proposals and the recommendations of her staff. Hopefully, a decision to award the job to one of them will be made soon.

Dan also reminded us that one or more Microsoft employees from the Microsoft Store in Montgomery County will be at our March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

He's also planning to invite the Samsung specialist from Best Buy to make a presentation at some later time.

Someone commented that the WeatherBug app is free and gives weather reports from several locations in Bowie.

MalwareBytes Anti-Malware: Tom McCabe has noticed that the first time this program runs it sometimes damages the operating system. Before installing it, Tom advises setting a RESTORE point and making Macrium Reflect or Acronis backup, just in case.

Windows Defender in Windows 10 is much improved. Tom wonders whether it is still necessary to run MalwareBytes or some other program like it to detect milder forms of malware that might be missed by strong AntiVirus programs.

Russ Vaughn says CCleaner is running slower now that it has the capability to actively monitoring the computer. Bob Blum suggested going into Settings > Tools and uncheck "Monitoring". It puts too much of a load on the computer. Also, make sure that CCleaner is not in StartUp.

Bob Blum mentioned that Gibson Research Corp. (grc.com) provides a free online service called ShieldsUp that will probe your computer's router for PlugNPlay vulnerabilities and 65,536( $=2^{16}$ ) ports for holes in your firewall. Vic Kiviat demonstrated the PlugNPlay router test using the laptop in the front. It found no open vulnerabilities, meaning that the router was invisible to hackers searching the internet. ShieldsUp provides several other security checks.

Vic Kiviat asked for a show of hands of attendees that had upgraded to Windows 10. A majority had. **By the way, it is rumored that Microsoft will soon start automatically downloading Windows 10 to Windows 7, 8, and 8.1 computers and automatically installing it.**

Dale Grant mentioned that Windows 10 is a lot more stable on the Dell computers in the Computer classroom than was Windows 7. His students experienced frequent crashes with Windows 7; so far, no crashes with Windows 10.

If you are not ready to upgrade to Windows 10, you may be able to prevent automatic downloading and upgrading by using GWX Control Panel, downloadable from the Major Geeks website.

Someone commented that the Windows 10 upgrade is not always successful, whether it is done automatically or manually. We are advised to do a full image backup before upgrading so that you can revert to your previous operating system if necessary.

When you're ready to upgrade, download the Media Creation Tool from Microsoft and use it to create a Windows 10.iso file which you can use to create a bootable copy of the Windows 10 installation program on a disc or a flash drive. You then will be able to wipe your hard disk clean and do a clean install of Windows 10. You can store this copy until you have a computer or hard disk failure and need to reinstall Windows 10.

Russ Vaughn has also been experiencing slow searches in Windows 7 when he is searching his thousands of pictures of tanks for a particular category of tank. Searching is CPU intensive. Russ has 2GB of RAM on his 3 year old computer. Vic Kiviat suggested he go to Crucial.com to use their computer RAM scanning program to tell him how much RAM his computer can accommodate, what kind of RAM, and how much it will cost. Indexing will also help. Group tags on the pictures will also speed up the search. A separate dedicated search program will also help.

Irv Salzberg was unable to recall the name of the software database system he uses to swiftly retrieve specific photos from his 12,000 picture collection. The next day he emailed that he has been using, with great satisfaction, "FotoAlbum Pro" version 5.5 by FotoTime (<https://www.fototime.com/fotoalbum>) for the last decade or so. The initial database creation takes about an hour but after that updates and specific photo searches take less than 2 seconds.

Jerry Kursban asked about "cord cutting", i.e., substituting program streaming for cable or FIOS TV and Voice Over the Internet Protocol (VOIP) for telephone services. Irv Salzberg gave a demonstration and presentation on VOIP several

years ago. His presentation is on the website. He said that he has explored streaming. He already gets local TV over the air with an antenna and he gets Netflix which he likes. He considers Apple TV and Amazon too expensive. He recently tried Sling TV at \$9-\$10 a week. It had poor quality pictures; certainly not High Definition and it had extremely long commercials. One was 15 minutes long. Also it was difficult to get channels like National Geographic.

He also bought a ROKU brand streaming device that attaches to the TV. This device he considers to be "Great!" One channel he gets on that he highly recommends is TED which features 15-30 minute talks and demonstrations by experts, famous people, inventors, and various enthusiasts.