Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for April 2, 2009

Dan Lee presided.

New Member: Enar Sanders

Vic Kiviat tried www.Crucial.com He was able to download the script from the site that analyzed his computer's memory and suggested that he expand the memory from 2 GB to 4 GB. He was able to order 2GB from Crucial for $28 plus shipping. He installed the memory himself and it works!

Earl Webb said that he got a notice from Grisoft.com that his free AVG antivirus needed to be upgraded soon to version 8.5. Members who also use AVG assured him that this was a legitimate notice. He was cautioned to look for the free version. To be sure, go to http://Free.AVG.com .

Dick Henthorn asked about free programs for writing PDF-formatted documents. I write these minutes in OpenOffice.org's Write program, then export it as a PDF file. Another option is DoPDF. Under Freeware on the BSCC websites is listed GoToPDF. This installs a virtual printer called "GoToPDF". Then, convert any document to PDF format by "printing" it to the GoToPDF printer. For the link, go to the old website at www.bowieseniors.org Three more PDF writers and their links are listed on our new website which resides temporarily at http://home.comcast.net/~bscclub/

The Website Committee requests that you go to both sites, compare them, and if there is something that you want included on the new site, send or voice your suggestions to Vic Kiviat, Chairman, (vkiviat@comcast.net) or to Eric Hein (hein1@verizon.net).

Dan Lee suggests that if you liked Rob Pegararo's presentation on February 5, send him a short email expressing your thanks at robp@washpost.com .

Ted Tuck is still looking for discarded hard drives. He uses the motors to drive his robots.

Charlotte Melichar gets emails that have multiple copies of pictures and text. It also happens to some of her outgoing emails. How can she prevent repetition. Bob Rapcznski suggested composing the email in Microsoft Word or OpenOffice.org's Write and then copying into the email that you are sending.

Presentation:

Bob Blum gave a presentation on Flash Drives. They have lots of names: USB drive, thumb drives, pen drives, key drives, memory keys, etc. Whatever their name, they have replaced floppy drives. They're small, cheap, lightweight, very portable, have non-volatile memory (don't lose data when turned off), and each gigabyte will hold 728.18 times the data stored on one 1.44 MB floppy. For the math, check out the definitions of gigabyte and megabyte on www.Wikipedia.com .

Currently, they fit USB 2.0 ports. Next year USB 3.0 ports will be available. They are ten times faster and flash drives compatible with USB 3.0 are marketed as "U3 compatible". They are backwards compatible with USB 2.0.

USB ports can be multiplied by hubs. Powered hubs are often necessary if several power hungry devices are sharing the hub.

Flash drive capacities range from less than 1GB to at least 64GB. Approximate costs of the more popular sizes:
2 GB $13
4 GB $13 - $25
8 GB $20 - $30
16 GB $40 - $75

Problems with the Senior Center's portable computer which provides input into the projector interfered with the main thrust of Bob's presentation which was to describe how some flash drives can have miniature operating systems and applications allowing you to take your computing environment along with you in your pocket when you travel. You can then plug into someone else's computer and access your email and applications protected by your security software.

For those who did not get one of his handouts, he has provided an electronic copy, which is attached.

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