

Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for Mar. 4, 2010

Dan Lee presided.

Dan reported that Carl Bulger's hip surgery went well and that he is due home from the hospital tomorrow.

Dale Grant said that he had visited Sam Atcherson at his new home at The Annapolitan Assisted Living Facility, 84 North Old Mill Bottom Road in Annapolis. Driving directions: Follow Route 50 East to Bay Dale Drive Exit, which is the next exit after the MD Route 2/450 exit or the second exit after you pass over the Severn River Bridge. Follow Bay Dale across Route 50 and turn right on Mill Bottom Road North, take this to its end and you will be at the Annapolitan. Sam is in Room 302. Sam's phone number is 410-349-1597 or you can call 410-757-7000 Room 302. His email address remains the same. (I won't write it here because this is posted on our website which gets "Googled".)

Vic Kiviat raffled off the last five free subscriptions of Smart Computing Magazine. The "one free subscription for every five paid subscriptions" promotion has ended.

Vic also reported that he had installed a wireless Netgear router for his son's Comcast TV/Internet/Telephone cable rather than his son paying Comcast to do it.

Joe Clark said that he uses three browsers: Chrome, Internet Ex-

plorer, and Firefox. Yesterday he started having problems with Firefox. He thinks they are caused by a Trojan horse called "Ivy". Bob Blum suggested several things: Try rebooting. Try using an external malware scanner on the internet such as Trend Micro's House Call (free to use). Try downloading and using the free Wise Registry Cleaner. For trojans, he has used a trial version of Trojan Remover by SimplySuper. Vic Kiviat suggested CCleaner (also free), but Bob Blum considers that program too aggressive; it may clean out a lot of things you want to keep.

We had a long discussion of various Anti-Virus, Firewall, and Anti-Malware applications and whether unpaid versions are sufficiently protective. Besides the usual unpaid anti-virus applications such as AVG Free, Avast Free, and Avira AntiVir Free, Microsoft now offers Microsoft Security Essentials as a free download. It is an anti-virus and anti-malware program. A Windows firewall is already available on all Windows computers. (Click on the Security Center icon in Control Panel.

Charlotte Melichar likes to have her files arranged by date when they are listed in Windows Explorer. In one of her file listings there was no Date column and all of the files were listed alphabetically by name. Her solution to the problem: Right click on the "problem folder" while it is still

closed, select "Properties" and correct the problem.

Cherridine Birt was having a problem with Norton 360. The "details" of the Microsoft error report mentioned "Carbonite". I "googled" it and got this description on their web page: "a multifeature add-on developed by game industry veterans to improve and enhance the game playing experience of World of Warcraft." I'll bet one of her grandchildren put that on her computer. Several people suggested that if she has no intention of using Carbonite, she should remove it by opening the Control Panel, selecting Add/Remove Programs, and seeing if it is listed. If it is, remove it from there. If it isn't listed, try searching for it. One program that has worked for me is RevoUninstaller. It's free. If an application resides on your computer, its icon will probably appear in RevoUninstaller. If you click on the icon, you will be given several increasingly aggressive removal choices. I usually select all of them.

Dan Lee said that a guy he has been helping with his computer problems has Earthlink's dial-up internet service. The guy complains about how long it takes to download updates and asks if he should buy a new computer. Everyone's opinion was that a new computer probably wouldn't help; his problem is the slow dial-up service. He should find another way to update. Sometimes updates are available on disks. Or,

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using one of our two public computers at the Senior Center, he could download updates to a portable hard drive or to a flash drive. When I had AT&T Dial Up, I would start lengthy downloads (such as all of the Microsoft security and program updates) just before going to bed. Sometimes overnight still wasn't enough time but a lot was downloaded during the night when the local internet and servers aren't usually busy.

We started discussing Backup applications when someone mentioned that although he is usually successful in using Acronis True Image to image his hard drive, he was unable to get the rescue disk to boot up his Inspiron 1455 Dell laptop.

Someone said that he has begun to use Macrium Reflect for image backups but finds it is less convenient than Acronis True Image when restoring multiple partitions. Acronis will restore all partitions at the same time. With Macrium Reflect (at least the unpaid version) partitions must be restored separately.

Lou Hauf says that Acronis True Image zaps the drive map of his home network preventing him from sharing files or folders between computers on his home network.

Eric Hein had problems partitioning his hard drives with the free Gparted and has reverted to using the paid Partition Magic.

Nancy Lewis asked if image backups are necessary. No. Individual files and folders can be backed up. The advantage of an image file, if everything works as it is supposed to, will save you several hours of reloading all your software back on the hard drive. Usually you will not have copies of everything and will need passwords and license activation codes that you have misplaced. Email and address lists are also a problem. An image backup saves everything just as it was on the drive.

Cherridine Birt said that her HP Printer stopped working. Someone suggested that she go into Control Panel >> Printers and make sure that it is still listed and is designated as the Default Printer. Also, she may have to get an updated driver from HP.com. H-P is notorious, however, for not providing completely updated drivers when new operating systems come out.

Someone said that they have a problem with their printer whenever they have a power outage. When the power to their wireless router is interrupted, the IP address for the printer is changed. They have to manually change the IP address listed for the printer.