Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for Feb. 19, 2009

Carl Bulger, Presided

New Member: Jess Mitchell

The Website Committee, chaired by Vic Kiviat, reported that it is "making progress", and will report details when the new website is ready to be viewed.

Program Chairman Dan Lee is soliciting those experienced with Voice over the Internet Protocol (VOIP) and anyone with a portable computer with a webcam who would be willing to bring it to a meeting. Dan wants to demonstrate Skype (a free VOIP application) by calling the volunteer's computer from his laptop.

He also relayed an offer by Mark Llewellen to put on a GPS Geocaching Workshop that would be four hours of lectures plus a field exercise using GPS's to find geocache's. A "geocache" is a hidden container that has a description on the internet of its surroundings and, sometimes, its GPS coordinates. Other clues, often in the form of puzzles, are sometimes offered. Searchers who find a cache are expected to leave a small memento and to take one. Because Mr. Llewellen insists on presenting the full workshop, Dan told him that a BSCC meeting wouldn't provide enough time. Geocaching seems to appeal to the younger crowd. There was no groundswell of enthusiasm for the workshop.

Vic Kiviat raffled off three new or extended subscriptions to Smart

Computing Magazine. Winners were Bob Blum, Don Shycoff, and Ted Tuck.

Eric Hein described what he did to set up the live presentation of President Obama's Inauguration on a screen in the Senior Center's Great Room. Initially, he thought he could display a webcast of the inauguration, but could not find any scheduled to run live. He then decided to run a long TV cable from the TV room to the Great Room through the ceiling. He installed a TV jack in the center of Great Room's ceiling. From there an RF cable connected to a TV tuner. An USB cable connected the tuner's TV output to a computer which connected to the Center's projector.

Eric purchased the TV tuner from Hauppauge for $55. It is about the size of a computer thumb drive and will process analog, digital, and high definition TV signals. It will also allow video to be recorded to disk as MPEG files.

Minimum requirements for the computer were a 2.2GHz Pentium single-core processor and dedicated video RAM of 32MB.

Bob Davis said that he has an ATI tuner which will render analog, digital, and high definition over the air TV signals into pictures viewable on his Gateway computer with Vista.

Computer Problems:

Ted Tuck's ALPS Printer is no longer manufactured. It requires a parallel port, Port 1 on his XP computer, but it keeps going to Port 2. How does he get it to stay connected to Port 1? Someone suggested that he go to System > Hardware > Device Manager > Ports and make sure that Port 1 is enabled and has the proper driver.

Bob Davis had a driver problem with a DVD player/burner. The controller wouldn't work. He had to reload the driver. He thinks part of the problem was because he didn't pay attention to a "SCSI" notation. **SCSI** (pronounced "scuzzy") is an ultra-fast, high-power communications bus that connects up to 15 devices to your computer. Wikipedia defines it as "Small Computer System Interface, or **SCSI** is a set of standards for physically connecting and transferring data between computers and peripheral devices. The **SCSI** standards define commands, protocols, and electrical and optical interfaces. **SCSI** is most commonly used for hard disks and tape drives, but it can connect a wide range of other devices, including scanners and CD drives.

I have a problem with one of my computers being unable to use System Restore. I've gone through all of the trouble-shooting procedures recommended by Microsoft. Charlotte Melichar said she had the same problem. She found it was caused by some

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Norton software. That may be what caused my problem, because I just installed Norton's Internet Security 2009 on that computer last month.

Carl Bulger has a subscription to PC Tools' Registry Mechanic which is supposed to cover three PC's. It won't install on a second PC and PC Tools won't honor the agreement. Any suggestions? Bob Blum suggested two free-ware registry maintaining pro-grams: Wise Registry Cleaner and Glary Registry Cleaner (glarysoft.com). He says these are "gentle" registry cleaners. (Registry Mechanic has a reputa-tion for sometimes being a little too aggressive, cleaning out some things that shouldn't be removed.)

Other software and hardware re-commendations:

Someone else noted that Newegg had a refurbished Pentium 4 com-puter for sale for $130.

Bob Rapczynski said he saw a 22-inch AOC brand LCD monitor on sale at Staples for $149.

Each of the three brands of free anti-virus software, AGV Free (free.avg.com), Avast! Home Edi-tion (www.avast.com), and Avira AntiVir (www.free-av.com) were recommended.

Bob Blum recently recommended the Gnome Partition Editor, also called GParted or GParted Live, available as a free download from gparted.sourceforge.net for parti-tioning or resizing harddrives. An excellent tutorial is available on the Bleeping Computer website: www.bleepingcomputer.com/tu-torials/tutorial152.html