

Carl Bulger (left) presided.

PRESENTATION:

Sam Gutierrez (Sam.Gutierrez@GeekSquad.com) discussed how the GeekSquad at the Bowie Best Buy store operates and what they charge. Mr. Gutierrez emphasized that the Geek Squad operates fairly uniformly throughout the corporation. Employees are expected to take online training regularly and to conform to uniform procedures.

They use only software licensed either to them or the customer. Privacy is emphasized. No one is allowed inside what they call "The precinct" with a cell phone, camera, tablet, flash drive, or other electronic device that may capture a customer's data. When programs, files, and folders are transferred from a customer's computer, they cannot be read by the technicians. Security scans of the precinct are done weekly.

The Geek Squad is partnering with Target in some markets. Geek Squad service is obtainable online 24/7 at GeekSquad.com or by telephone 1-800-GeekSquad (1-800-433-5778). They can connect with your computer remotely for some problems. For more serious problems, they can either send out a technician or you can take your computer into a store.

Mr. Gutierrez says that if you take a desktop to the Bowie Best Buy store, for no charge they will open it up and quickly examine the components. For example, if your desktop won't start at all, they'll examine the motherboard for blown capacitors. If there are blown capacitors, they'll probably advise you to buy a new computer. They'll listen for beep codes emitted by the PreOperational System Test (POST). They make sure all of the memory modules, cards, connectors, etc. are firmly seated and that the fans are working. If it won't boot up normally they try to boot into Safe Mode with a Linux operating system on a disk and check the Event Viewer. All of this is free. They will then give you an estimate for repair. A complete diagnosis would be \$69.95.

If you have a laptop, they probably won't examine the motherboard, but they will remove the battery, test it, and reseal it.

A year's tech support including remote support for up to three computers belonging to one family or owner is \$199 (\$169 for AARP members).

Mr. Gutierrez has replaced broken laptop screens. He refers the customer to three sources for new screens. When the customer receives the new screen, he will install it.

Hard drive repairs are \$99 - \$150 with a new 150GB hard drive included. If data on the hard drive is valuable, they can send it to the Geek Squad's Data Rescue Center where they will disassemble to the hard drive and examine the platters sector by sector. Data retrieval is usually successful but may cost up to \$1600.

Mr. Gutierrez has even recovered data from flash drives with connectors that have broken off.

To recover operating systems on computers, you will need the activation code that is often on a sticker on the computer case. If you do not have a recovery disk for your computer's operating system or a recovery partition on the hard drive, you can order it from RestoreDisks.com for about \$25. You will need to give them the name, brand, and model of your machine. For iPods or iPads that have been "jail broken" (i.e., have had another operating system installed, for example, Android), go to iTunes and download the Apple operating system for your device.

Newer high capacity hard drives have an advanced format that is incompatible with the older formats. There are conversion algorithms available from the manufacturers that sometimes work. Mr. Gutierrez has found that Western Digital hard drives are problematic; Seagate Drives are easier to convert.

Geek Squad does no printer repairs. If the manufacturer can't help, generally it is cheaper to go buy another.

Geek Squad sends out tablets for battery repairs.

Mr. Gutierrez recommends defragging hard drives regularly (Windows 7 will automatically defrag your hard drives once a week.)

Once every couple of months, run your laptop batteries completely down, then fully recharge them to get the maximum hours per charge.

Most internet connectivity issues are software related.

Mr. Gutierrez recommends replacing the routers with a Netgear 600 router. If your internet provider is a cable company and you are having wireless reception issues, you

can request that they change the channel on your router, which they can do remotely, to improve wireless reception.

COMPUTER PROBLEMS:

If you replace your Verizon or Comcast router, call tech support and ask them to “provision the router” for you. For that, you will need to provide them with the Machine Address Code (MAC). Be sure to change the generic password with your own.

Bob Blum found that the Gadgets in the sidebar of a Windows Vista 64-bit computer kept changing position on the sidebar. Online he found that a Vista Service Pack for 64-bit computers caused the same problem in other Vista user’s computers. Bob is going to try installing the 32-bit version of the Service Pack which is said to not cause the problem.

Bob also wanted to increase the RAM in a four year old laptop from 4GB to 8GB. He went online to Crucial.com and determined what he needed to buy. When it came, he installed it, the computer didn’t work right. Crucial accepted a return of the memory modules.

Dan Lee had trouble connecting a modem/router to a new computer. A firmware update was required.

NEXT MEETING:

There will be no regular meeting in December. We will have the Holiday Luncheon on the second Thursday (The Bowie Seniors Choir will perform on the first Tuesday.) The luncheon will be on Thursday, December 13th, 12noon-2pm at the Osaka Grill and Supreme Buffet in Crofton.

Osaka Grill & Supreme Buffet

The buffet area at Osaka Grill and Buffet offers Italian, American, Japanese and sometimes even Mexican food alongside the traditional Chinese fare.

We have over 250 different items on the bar. Plus, we have an HIBACHI section where you can pick and choose to make up your own menu. Then we can cook it on the Hibachi for you at no additional charge.

We offer Ribeye Steak, Salmon Fish, Butter Shrimp, Ham, Black Pepper Shrimp, Crabmeat, Cheese, General Tso's Chicken, Crawfish, Mussels, Cold Shrimp, Clams, Spare Ribs, Oysters, Sushi, large selection of Salads, Fruit & Desserts.

<http://www.osakagrillbuffet.com>

Buffet: **\$7.49 +tax and Tip ~\$9.10** 10% Senior Discount

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