

Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for Sept. 17, 2009

Carl Bulger presided.

Our presentation was by Asst. Prof. Mark Matties of the Bowie State University's Department of Computer Science. The department has a B.S., M.S. and, soon, a D.S. Degree. Dr. Matties has a Ph.D. in Polymer Science. He began taking IT engineering courses at Bowie State while he was working at Goddard Space Flight Center. A few years after earning an M.S. degree in Computer Science at Bowie State, he was invited to join the faculty.

One of his first projects was the BSU Xseed project to design and build a supercomputer for the engineering program to increase research grant opportunities and help attract business partnerships to the school.

They connected 224 Apple Xserve G5 rack-mounted computers via a fast fiberoptic Myrinet-2000 network into a high performing cluster controlled by two Apple servers. One of the "head node" servers has the Mac OS X operating system; the other has a Yellow Dog Linux 5 operating system. The cost of the supercomputers was approximately \$1Million.

Each of the 224 Computer had a dual 2 GHz CPU, 2 GB RAM, and 80GB local disk. Network storage is two 3.5 Terabyte Apple Xraid hard disks.

As soon as the system was built, BSU tested the system on Lin-

PACK, a computer program which tests and ranks computers worldwide. BSU's computer tested at > 2.1 Teraflops (1 trillion floating point computations per second), ranking them 166th in the TOP500 listing of the world's fastest computers, placing Bowie State in the top 25 universities worldwide and the top 15 in the United States.

Students and faculty rendered an eleven minute animated movie called Elephant's Dream using a computer animation program called Blender.

One of their current projects is augmented reality to train battle-field medics.

Dr. Matties invited us to visit their facilities and invited interactions between the Senior Center and the University. He can be contacted by email: mmaties@bowestate.edu or by telephone: (301) 860-3974

We had a visitor: Ruth Yawber, guest of Flo Strawser.

Vic Kiviat invited suggestions for the website <http://bscclub.home.comcast.net>

Dick Henthorn is now posting info to the website for us including the Minutes and Announcements of Upcoming Meetings. Dick's email address is: Rhenthorn1@aol.com Dick is encouraging members to suggest links to websites which may be of interest to other mem-

bers. He has posted a link to one of his blogs and Eric Hein has posted a link describing exhibits at the National Aquarium in Baltimore.

On the Training page, they have listed the course offerings, synopses of the courses, and a few archives from previous courses in PDF format.

A list of excellent Freeware is maintained by Eric. Feel free to suggest your favorite freeware if it is not listed. Be prepared to back up your recommendation with a list of features and comparisons with similar software.

Dick Henthorn had mouse problems. I suggested that he go into Control Panel >> Mouse to customize the settings to his satisfaction. He may also have to reload the proper drivers for his mouse and operating system.

Ted Tuck asked if anyone had experience with Computer-Aided Design software. He's using TurboCAD 14 to design a chain sprocket he is going to install on one of the motors in his Christmas train display that he always sets up in the Main Room of the Senior Center..

Vic Kiviat's computer with the Vista operating system hangs up when there are too many programs running simultaneously. The problem went away when he uninstalled Spyware Doctor, a respected anti-malware program, but apparently a system hog.

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We will have our annual election at the October 1st meeting. We would especially like to have a volunteer for Vice President, who also happens to be Program Chairman, probably the most difficult job in the Club. Dan Lee has done an excellent job for the past two years, but he is “burned out” in his words.

The remaining officers will continue to serve unless volunteers step forward to replace us.

To encourage a turnout, Vic Kivi-at will raffle off three subscriptions to Smart Computing magazine.

The October 15th meeting will feature Bob Blum and Norman Bohrer with presentations on Windows 7. Microsoft will begin selling Windows 7 to the general public on October 22nd.