

# Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for June 4, 2009

Carl Bulger presided.

Treasurer Ken Godstrey reported that there had been no change in the Treasury balance of \$172.89. One reason is that now our web-site is hosted by Comcast under a contract that we already have for the two public computers in the Senior Center hallway so we don't have to pay our former ISP provider \$80.55 every year.

We have three new members:

Flo Strawser

Vail Clemence. Vail was in the computer business for 30 years before he retired 17 years ago. Most of his employment was with Honeywell. The first computer he used was an IBM 360 with 12K of memory on a revolving drum. He now helps people with their personal computer problems. He also plays on the same baseball team as Bob Blum.

Marsha and Gene Richard from Crofton. She is a former school counselor. When they have a computer problem, she does the troubleshooting. Vic Kiviat, our Publicity Chairman, was pleased to find out that they learned of our club from one of his announcements in the local papers.

Ted Tuck has contacted the Bowie High School Robotics Team regarding a presentation before our club. The faculty sponsor said that the June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting would probably be the best time, but nothing was final.

## Computer Problems:

Service techs ran a scan on Earl Webb's computer and concluded that he had 179 viruses or other instances of malware on his computer. Earl asked club members for antimalware and antivirus recommendations. As usual, AVG Free antivirus, <http://free.avg.-com/>, was most recommended. Bob Blum recommended the free version of Avast, <http://www.avast.com/eng/download-avast-home.html>. For best protection, he recommends using any antivirus application in "resident mode", loaded into RAM when the computer is turned on and left there to actively watch for harmful intrusions or suspicious actions. I use a third free antivirus program called Avira AntiVir, <http://www.free-av.com/>. All three of these will regularly remind you they also have paid versions with more features.

If you feel the need for more security and want to buy an antivirus application or an internet security suite, check the results of comparative tests of sixteen of the better antivirus programs: <http://www.av-comparative.org/>. That website also provides links to other test sites. One compares fourteen 2009 Internet Security Suites: <http://www.protectstar-testlab.org/>

Earl Webb's computer service technician recommended Norton Internet Security 2009. Rarely do service technicians that work for a

store such as Best Buy, Staples, etc., recommend free software. Norton's developer, Symantec, earned a reputation for producing software that slows a computer and is difficult to uninstall. In 2008 they improved. After reading favorable reviews of the 2008 and 2009 versions of Norton Internet Security, I installed it on one of my computers. It does not overload the computer's resources, requires very little operator intervention, and does a good job of protecting the computer.

Windows Defender is a free Microsoft antispymware application that does a quick daily scan and automatically downloads updates twice a week. <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/windowsfamily/defender/default.msp>. You may not want to rely entirely on Windows Defender. You can have more than one antispymware application running simultaneously.

However, only one anti-virus application and one firewall may run simultaneously. If you're using another firewall, turn off your Windows Firewall (Control Panel >>Security Center >>Windows >>Firewall >>Off). Windows Firewall will only prevent incoming malware. If malware is loaded on your computer by something it missed or from a CD, DVD, or flash drive, it will not prevent the malware from communicating with the criminals that wrote it. Zone Alarm, Comodo, Outpost, Online Armor and Sunbelt have free firewalls.

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Quality ratings of blank DVDs?. Google "DVD Quality Check". All high quality DVD disks are manufactured in Japan.

What programs would be good for streaming audio. Two suggestions were Goldwave and Audigy, depending on your computer's sound card.

Bob Blum replaced a motherboard and discovered that he couldn't transfer the Original Equipment Manufacturer's (OEM) version of Vista to the new motherboard. Microsoft will sometimes activate the old OS on the new motherboard if you call them and explain your situation. Another approach: Buy a new motherboard online from Newegg along with an OEM version of the operating system which Newegg will sell you for about half price. The reason it is half price is because Microsoft delegates support of the operating system, except for "critical security updates" to the Original Equipment Manufacturer. If you upgrade your system using a new OEM version, you assume responsibility for your own software support because you become the OEM..

Earl Webb suggested that we have another program/presentation on How to Back Up.

Bob Blum has had problems restoring backups using Acronis True Image. (Me, too.) Bob said he's found a free backup program that will do full image backups:

Macrium Reflect, developed by Paramount Software UK Ltd. <http://www.macrium.com/reflect-free.asp>

Windows 7 RC1 (Release Candidate 1) is now available for downloading. Microsoft announced that Windows 7 will be available to computer manufacturers in July and for sale to the general public on October 22.

Deleting old emails. Ezio Cerrelli asked if there is a convenient way to scan old emails prior to selecting those to delete. Click above the date column to select whether you want the list to start with the latest or oldest messages. Then click above the subject column so they are grouped by subject and sender. Put a check mark in the box beside those you want to delete. If there is a group of messages of the same type or from the same sender to be deleted, check the first message in the group, hold down the SHIFT key and check the box beside the last item in the group, then click on Delete in the email program. If you want to delete almost everything, saving only a few messages, you can check the box at the top of the listing that selects or puts a check mark beside everything, then go through the list to deselect the few messages you want to keep.

Dick Henthorn said that Prince George's Library system has made changes to its online service. He was wondering if anybody has learned how to access their personal history of books they've

checked out. The librarians at his local library couldn't help him. He likes the online service for notifications of due dates, and the convenience of renewing online. We had a presentation about three years ago by the person in charge of the library system's IT department. Perhaps we should have another.

Albin Bielawsky said he's ready for another program/presentation on writing DVDs.

Some members missed recent presentations on PDAs, GPSs, Wii, Skype, and netbooks, and are requesting repeats. If we recorded programs/presentations with a camcorder, we could satisfy some of the requesters of frequent repeats with videos.

Also requested: a presentation on cellphones (cellphones with internet capability for email, googling, texting, news, etc.)

An interesting prediction: Approximately one-third of GPS satellites are coming to the end of their lives. Will they be quickly replaced to allow our GPSs to continue to function accurately?