

Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for October 21, 2010

Carl Bulger presided.

We had two visitors:

Pam Holme's husband, Tim, and Judy Naugle. I'm sure they were as disappointed as the rest of us that Best Buy's Home Theater Team didn't show up as promised. Maybe next time.

But Tim participated in an impromptu discussion of Toyota problems precipitated by an interruption of Carl Bulger's vacation trip by an electrical problem which stranded him and his wife in remote Alamosa, Colorado for four days. The original diagnosis was a failed alternator. Because Toyota claims that their alternators "never fail", they had only one spare alternator in the U.S., and that was in New York City. Eventually the independent mechanic discovered that the problem was in the wiring and fuse connected to the alternator, not the alternator.

Eric Hein told us that the "Check Engine" icon lit up in his Prius while he was in Baltimore. The problem in his case was a bad water pump which cost him \$150 for the part but a whopping \$350 for the labor because the pump was located in an almost inaccessible place because, according to Toyota, "they never fail".

Tim Holmes also had a Toyota problem. He ended up sending the defective part to Toyota's U.S. President for reimbursement.

We discussed scam emails, hacks, and phishing and how to respond to them. Some of our members have received some lately as result of friend's email address books being stolen.

Pam Bulger took photos with her Canon camera at her high school reunion. They are in the avi format. She wants to convert them to a format she can view with Apple Quicktime. Eric Hein suggested the WinFF converter which can be downloaded by clicking a link on his Freeware page on our website: <http://bsccub.home.comcast.net/freeware.htm> under Multimedia Tools/Converters.

Dan Lee backed up an 80GB hard drive with Macrium Reflect. He replaced the 80GB hard drive with a new 300GB hard drive. It took an agonizing 27 hours to restore the image to the old hard drive. Dan called up Bob Blum who has given a couple of presentations on Macrium Reflect and uses it himself. Bob speculated that several factors are probably contributing to the long restore time. First, it is a 2003 computer with a slower CPU. Second, virgin hard drives frequently get a low-level format at the factory but no high-level format. Macrium Reflect would have to perform the lengthy high-level format before it could restore the old image to the new hard drive. And, finally, the 80GB image would be expanded to span the 300GB of the new hard drive. Bob predicts that the

next backup and restore will be much quicker.

Carl Bulger says that he and Pam have separate profiles on their computer. Her icons have turned opaque, or "grayed out" and no longer work. But on the same computer they work normally on Carl's profile. Bob Blum suggested that they go into Control Panel >> User Accounts and make both accounts Administrative accounts. Then run a registry cleaner. He recommends Wise Registry cleaner (free) <http://free-registry-cleaner.wisecleaner.com/>. Vic Kiviat recommends CCleaner <http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner>. In the past, Bob Blum has also recommended Glary Utilities, which includes a registry cleaner. <http://www.glarysoft.com/products/utilities/glary-utilities/>. System Mechanic also has a registry cleaner. The free 30-day trial version is available at http://download.cnet.com/System-Mechanic/3000-2094_4-10030183.html.

If registry cleaning doesn't work to restore the icons, try Bob Rappczynski's recommendation: Completely wipe out the profile and re-do it.

Also, explore All Users to see if something has been removed.

One final suggestion: A couple of years ago one of our members lost all of his icons from his XP desktop. Someone suggested right clicking on the desktop. In the resulting menu, click on Ar-

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range Icon By. In the sub menu put a check mark in front of Show Desktop Icons. There is also an option for running the Desktop Cleanup Wizard. In Windows 7 the right-click menu brings up the options of View and Refresh. Clicking on View brings up the sub menu where you can put a check mark beside Show Desktop Icons.

Bob Davis cannot get into his Microsoft WORD 2007.

Charlotte Melichar and others are wondering how router hardware is able to protect us from spam. Someone suggested that if it is a wi-fi router, it can encrypt our transmissions if it is set up correctly with a secure password. Verizon FiOS recently sent users a letter saying that Verizon had reset the password on each router from the default password to the serial number of that router.

Vic Kiviat asked for a show of hands of those interested in attending a holiday party for our December meeting. There were approximately 20 hands. The next question was where to have it. Someone objected to having it at the Old Country Buffet in Laurel because of the crowded meeting room. Last year we had the party close to Christmas which may have conflicted with other parties. If we have it later at 1-3 pm it might be less crowded because there is a different price at that time. For the purchase of a \$1 membership, the price is reduced.

We could also try one of the other Old Country Buffets, for instance, Annapolis, although someone said that the Annapolis site doesn't have a separate meeting room.

Other suggestions: Four Season's Grill at Waugh Chapel (expensive). Nautilus? Chinese buffet restaurants.