

Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for June 18, 2009

Carl Bulger presided.

New Member: Gerry Sheidhauer

Last meeting, Bob Blum recommended a free backup application that will do disk imaging.

Carl Bulger said he had Googled "Macrium Reflect". On a PC World website, he found a favorable blog review dated January 15, 2009: http://www.pcworld.com/article/157039/make_drive_imaging_easy_with_macrium_reflect_free.html But on the PCWorld download site, <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,76071-order,3-page,1/description.html> they said 38 users were positive; 58 users were negative. When I tried to read the user reviews by clicking on the thumbs up/thumbs down icon, I was recorded as the 60th negative vote. We could not read the user reviews. On a later CNET.com review of Macrium Reflect v.4.2, Build 2055, user reviews could be read and they were very favorable: http://download.cnet.com/Macrium-Reflect-Free-Ediotn/3000-2242_4-11015803.html CNET editors did not rate it. All of the user reviews are since March 26 when CNET started offering the download.

Ted Tuck received an email this morning from the faculty sponsor of the Bowie High School Robotics Team saying that since this is the last day of school, student and faculty schedules were chaotic. He requested that they be able to tentatively postpone their presentation until July 2.

Bob Rapczynski announced that Bowie will have a Shredding and Electronics Recycling event in Bowie High School's parking lot on July 18 8am-2pm. Check the flyer for details: http://www.cityofbowie.org/News/Shred_electronics_day.pdf

Computer Problems:

Bob Rapczynski said his DSL went out this morning. Cynthia Bravo said hers fails often. Bob Davis complained about video and audio dropouts on Comcast Cable's broadcasts of Wide World of Dancing. Ted Tuck said that Comcast is causing problems for Verizon, MSN.com, and Hot-mail.com emails, especially in the Davidsonville area.

Earl Webb lost all of his address book on Verizon email on his desktop computer. He asked if there is a way to copy his address book from his laptop to his desktop computer. Bob Rapczynski suggested copying his address book to the body of an email message and send it to himself. Open if up on the desktop and copy the contents to his address book.

Earl asked if there is a way that wouldn't require him to type everything into his address book. If he uses Outlook Express, Bob Blum suggested searching for files with .wab extensions. "wab" = "Windows Address Book." Earl had his laptop at the meeting and searched unsuccessfully for *.wab. This prompted several

other suggestions. Do you have a way of doing this?

What is the definition of POP mail, someone asked. Bob Blum said "Post Office Protocol", which is used by client-based email programs like Outlook Express and Thunderbird. IMAP is another email protocol.

Dennis Edgington tried eliminating AOL and lost all of his internet connections. He called Tech Support at Smart Computing Magazine. In about 45 minutes they remotely solved that problem plus five others. And the Tech spoke Lincoln, Nebraska dialect.

Bob Davis recommends using AOL only for email using their web server. Don't download AOL software to your computer. It commands too many resources, slowing your computer.

Carl Bulger says that when he turns on his computer and establishes a wireless connection with Verizon, his wife's wireless connection is shut off.

Whenever Ezio Cerrelli tries to burn a DVD with Rapture, a Nero software error message pops up saying "File Missing". Ezio has tried to remove the program but it is not listed in Add/Remove Programs in Control Panel and it isn't listed under Programs. We suggested that he download the free program Revo Uninstaller. It will search his computer for installed programs. He can then click on the icon for Nero and remove all

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traces from his registry. If Revo doesn't list Nero, Ezio can re-download Nero to show Revo what and where Nero installs. He can then reboot and use Revo to uninstall Nero.

Ted Tuck complained about all of the spam he has been getting on Verizon. He was wondering if he could block email from certain domains. The small, free SpywareBlaster was recommended:

<http://www.javacoolsoftware.com/spywareblaster.html>

Check for updates every two weeks. Also, Mike Burgess' version of the Hosts file: <http://www.mvps.org/win-help2002/hosts.htm> He updates about every two months. You can have him email the updates when they're ready.

Presentation:

Ted Tuck stepped in to substitute for the BHS Robotics Team. Ted has set up the train display in the Senior Center every winter for many years. Now he is infatuated with robots.

He recently purchased a kit for about \$1000 from a Korean firm that he put together that features a man-shaped robot about 10 inches high. He assemble the robot using the manufacturer's instructions written both in Korean and confusing English. Construction was sometimes frustrating. Asked if he had named his robot, Ted replied, "Several times!"

He controlled the robot with a remote similar to a TV remote. The computer language is Robo Basic, a subset of Basic often used to program hardware. It has to be compiled into an object file which must be loaded into the robot's processing unit if he is going to control it with the remote. Whenever he wants to change anything, he has to recompile the file on his computer and load it into the robot's processor.

He could also control it wirelessly from his computer. This doesn't require compilation and loading an object file. Not only can he control the actual robot from his computer, he can try out various moves on an image of the robot.

The robot operates on NiMH batteries. The demonstration required one battery change.

Ted demonstrated a variety of movements: walking, getting up from the floor after lying on either his front or his back, standing on one foot with the other leg straight out behind him and waving his arms like he was trying to fly, and squat bends. Ted has a swivel hip module on order and he still is learning to manipulate the robot's hands.

Ted intends to construct more robots from computer parts he is scavenging from old hard drives, printers, motherboards, etc.

Ted's presentation was witty, entertaining, and informative.