

July, 2007

# BRISTOL VILLAGE COMPUTER CLUB NEWS



## BVCC Officers

Chair: Fred Schneiter  
Vice Chair.: Bob Cunningham  
Treasurer: Jim Hill  
Secretary: Gerry Salisbury  
Newsletter Editor: Len Nasman

## COMPUTER LAB NEWS

A lot has been going on in the Computer Lab lately. This issue will detail some of the changes.

### • Operating System Changes

As our computers are aging, some of them have developed arthritis or other serious maladies. We have had to replace or re-format hard drives in some of them. Also, it has not been possible to keep up with the many security updates on the computers running Windows XP due to registration issues. Therefore, as the computers have developed trouble, we have switched to **Windows 2000**.

**Windows** provides a log-in system that improves security and also gives users the opportunity to maintain a personalized **Desktop** and **Internet** web browser. When you start a club computer running **Windows 2000**, you will see a log-in window. To log-in as a Computer Lab visitor, enter **bvcc** as the **User Name** and also enter **bvcc** as the **Password**.

### • Personalized Desktop

Some people like to fill their **Desktop** with many shortcut icons, while others prefer to keep only frequently used shortcuts on the **Desktop**. The log-in system allows for each user to have their own personalized **Desktop**. If you would like to take advantage of this feature, just ask us to cre-

ate a user name for you. (log-ins are unique to each computer, so if you want to have your own **Desktop** on more than one computer, we will be glad to provide you with a **User Name** for each computer you want to use..

Although personalizing the Desktop *background picture* is one thing a unique User Name allows, there are more important advantages. For example, some folks' eyesight requires that they use a low screen resolution to make things more visible, others prefer to use a resolution that minimizes the need to scroll the display to see everything. In a public lab like ours, this means that we have to set a compromise Desktop resolution. However, if you have your own user log-in name, we can help you customize the resolution and font size that is best for you.

Also controlled by User Name are a number of Internet browser settings. For example the **Favorites** list and the **Home Page** are saved for each user. This can reduce the time spent jumping around looking for stuff, and can minimize the amount of typing you have to do to navigate between web sites.

Having a log-in system in a public lab can also make your use of the computer a little less public. Let us help you set up your own log-in identity.

## • Local Area Network (LAN) Issues Resolved?

If you have been using the lab during the last couple of months you have seen days when various computers were having trouble connecting, or staying connected, to the Internet. This was the result of hardware that had to be added to extend the network to additional computers; including a connection in the shop for fixing computers, a laptop station, and the Genealogy Club computer. Also, wires providing a network connection to the Multi-purpose room and the Main Room had to be plugged in to the router (disconnecting a computer lab computer whenever they were needed). Additionally, it was decided to add a wireless network capability to our lab offerings.

To make a long story short, we had an IP address conflict between the different pieces of network equipment involved. This problem appears to now be resolved.

BTW, our members report successful wireless connections with their laptop computers from various spots from inside the computer lab, from the Main Room stage, and from the Swimming Pool area. This means that if you, or your visiting guests or relatives, would like to connect their laptop computers to the Internet they should be able to get on anywhere within around 200 feet from the computer room. Also, we are establishing a laptop port inside the Computer Room where a laptop user can plug directly into our network.

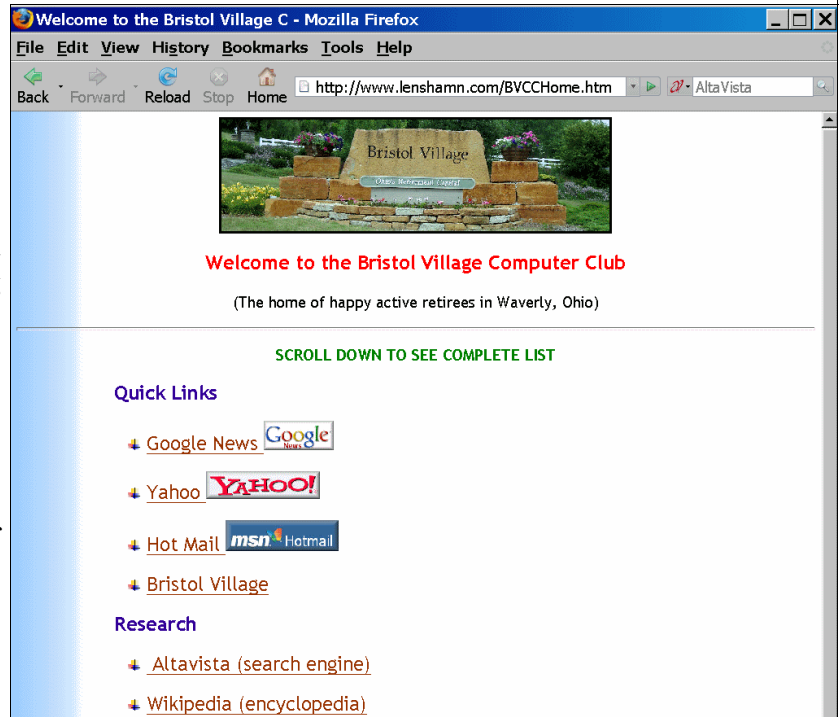
## • New BVCC Home Page

If you log-in to a Computer Lab station with the bvcc user name and then start Internet Explorer, you will find yourself at the new **BVCC Home Page**.

This page provides one-click links to popular web sites such as Google and Yahoo, and also a num-

ber of powerful research web sites. If there is a Quick Link that you think would be handy, let us know and we will see about adding it to our Home Page.

BTW, you can also use the BVCC Home Page with



your home computer. Enter the following address in your network browser address bar:

[www.lenshamn.com/BVCCHome.htm](http://www.lenshamn.com/BVCCHome.htm)

When the page is open on your computer, from the **Menu Bar** select **Tools, Internet Options**. Pick the **General** tab, then click the **Use Current** button in the **Home page Address** section. Then, each time you start your Internet browser, you will open the BVCC Home page.

## • Print Server

The network Print Server allows for printing on the fast black and white laser printer from any station in the Computer Lab. To print to the network printer, from the Menu Bar select **File, Print** and then select the **PCCD316** printer option. The first time you do this it might take a bit of time for the computer to

find its way from your computer station, through the router, then to the switcher, then to the print server, then to the printer. However, the next time will be faster. And, the HP 4050 at up to 12 pages per minute, will print many times faster and cleaner than the average ink jet printer.

## • Open Office

If you have used **Microsoft Word, Excel, or Power Point**, you have used at least part of the Microsoft Office suite of software. We would like to offer this capability in our lab, however, installing Microsoft Office (legally) *would cost several hundred dollars* per station.

A respectable alternative is to use **Open Office**. This is a set of programs that have a very similar look and feel and similar capabilities to MS Office. Because OpenOffice.org is a non-profit organization (with support from Sun Microsystems and thousands of serious programmers) it can be downloaded from the Internet and installed for free on as many computers as we like.

We have installed **Open Office** on the computers in the lab. Just click on the Desktop shortcut and give it a try. If you have used any of the MS Office programs you will not have much trouble adapting to this great free software.

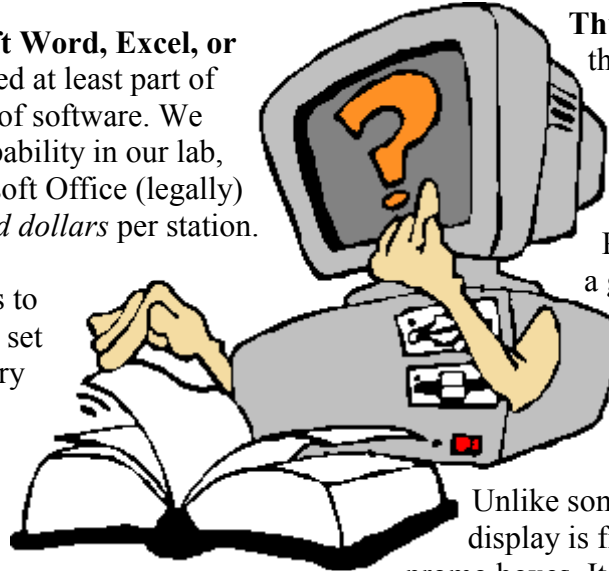
## • Mozilla Firefox and Thunderbird

While on the subject of free software, it is a good time to mention **Firefox** and **Thunderbird**. These are free open source programs that are also supported by thousands of dedicated programmers around the world.

**Firefox** is an *Internet browser* and is an alternative to Microsoft Internet Explorer. It is very popular with computer geeks, and it includes some good anti spyware and anti popup capabilities.

Firefox looks and feels quite a bit like Internet Explorer, but has some features that many find attractive. When it is installed, it provides an option for importing favorites from Internet Explorer.

A shortcut to Firefox is available on the Computer Lab Desktops for you to try it out.



**Thunderbird** is an **email** program that is also provided and maintained by the Mozilla foundation. It is a good replacement for the free proprietary email software that is provided by various Internet Service Providers such as Yahoo. It is also a good replacement for Outlook Express. I have been using Thunderbird as my email program for the better part of a year now, and am very satisfied.

Unlike some email software, the Thunderbird display is free from advertising or annoying promo boxes. It provides for address books, inbox and sent folders and includes most features of good email software. If you are already using Outlook, the Thunderbird install program allows you to import your current address book.

## • Ubuntu Linux Available for Testing

If you have been following the news about computer operating system wars, you might have heard of Linux. Linux is an alternative to Microsoft Windows. It is another example of open source (free) software that is supported by thousands of programmers around the world. It has the reputation of being much more resistant to hackers, and much more stable, than Windows. As a matter of fact companies such as IBM and Hewlett Packard use Linux for operating some of their large networks.

The recent introduction of Windows Vista, and expanded hardware requirements and the many tales of problems with this latest Windows release has

more folks considering Linux as an alternative. Dell recently announced that they would continue to offer both Windows XP and Linux as an alternative to Windows Vista on some of their computers.

Anyway, we have the **Ubuntu** version of **Linux** installed on one computer in our lab for testing. You are welcome to give it a try. Just enter `bvcc` as both the user name and password.

Ubuntu Linux uses a GUI (Graphical User Interface) called X-Windows. X-Windows was originally developed for large networked workstation and looks to the casual user very much like Windows.

Open Office, Firefox, and Thunderbird, men-

tioned earlier, are available for Linux and they have the same look, feel, and file formats as their Windows twins.

Linux is here to stay, and might well become the dominate personal computer operating system.



## BVCC MEETING MINUTES—MAY 14, 2007

This May meeting was called to order by Chairman Fred Schneider at 7:30 P.M. There were 32 members in attendance. Mr. George Hartwell was introduced and he announced and conducted the election of officers for the coming year. Nominees were as follows:

- Chairman: Fred Schneider
- Vice Chair: Bob Cunningham
- Treasurer: Jim Hill
- Secretary: Gerry Salisbury

A show of hands approved the nominations and this election then received a first and second acceptance motion.

Mr. Len Nasman was introduced and presented the program for the

evening. He demonstrated and explained the use of several computer research sites, including Google Earth, Dictionary, Bible Gateway, the Wild Cat Library, and how to use Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, all of which are excellent research sites. He further stated that Snopes.Com is a valuable search engine that can be of great value if you are concerned about material that may or may not be true. A question and answer period followed.

Chairman Schneider then announced that the connections and wiring for the Genealogy Club are now completed and they will

now have access to more in-depth records and wider research.

Members were then invited to tour the recently rearranged BV Club offices and ask any questions they might have. The next meeting of the BV Club will be in September, 2007.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. George Hartwell. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by:

*Gerry Salisbury,*  
Secretary

