



Bristol Village Computer Club - September 2015

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Next Computer Club (BVCC) Meeting

Welcome back. Questions and answer session.

September 14, 2015, 7:30PM Glenn Center

Also on BTV

If you are reading this on your computer display, remember that **Acrobat Reader** has a *zoom* feature (under “**View**” in your top tool bar) for enlarging or reducing text and graphics.

Quick Index

You can jump directly to articles in this newsletter. Just left click on the Index listing.

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Notes from Kent

By Kent Mulliner

Drafted.

Surprise!. After my enjoying a year's sabbatical and faced with a combination of other family obligations for Bill Webb and a reluctance on your part and others, I have found myself drafted back into the Club presidency. We all appreciate the fresh variety of programs that Bill and other officers brought to us

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during the 2014 - 2015 season. While they have left big shoes to fill, we will continue to ask you for your input as to the programs that you want. Please let me or the other officers know what things you most want to know in the coming year. Our programs are unlikely to be better based on what you share with us.

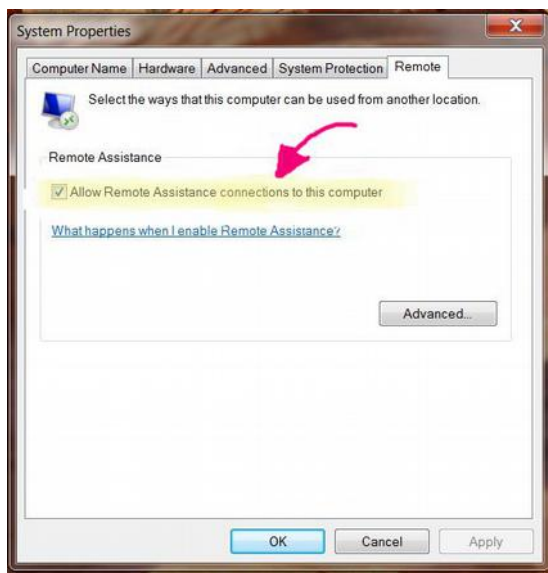
Malware

To start off the Fall season, we will try to clean up clutter left from Summer. On the down side, this includes a continuing proliferation of malware (viruses, hijacking, etc.) **Hijacking** is when a “technical specialist,” allegedly from Microsoft--more likely from India based on the accent, claims that they have found that your computer is infected with viruses, and they will clean it for only \$300-\$400. In its manifestation in the Village over the summer, the claimant takes control of your computer and causes it to show a variety of malware. This is particularly intimidating since they have control of your computer.

Your best defense (in addition to good anti-virus software such as **Microsoft Security Essentials** or **Avast** (both free) is to restrict remote access. On a PC, whether Windows 7 or 8.1 or earlier, there is a control to afford remote access to your computer (so a friend or technician can provide you with assistance without a house visit). As with many good intentions, this leaves a path for evil-doers to take advantage of your machine. As a minimal safeguard, you should close your computer to outsiders except when you are especially seeking assistance.

This is controlled by clicking on the “start” button in the lower left corner of your screen and then on “Control Panel” in the vertical ribbon that will appear to the right and choosing “System” from the alphabetized list.

From the list running down the left-side of your screen under “Control Panel Home,” choose “remote settings” which takes you to “Remote Assistance.” Note that the box for “Allow Remote Assistance Connections to this computer” is checked. Unless you are engaged in a remote assistance session (that you initiated), there is no reason to have this box on your computer checked. I think of it as an open invitation to drive-by hijackers. If you actually need to receive “remote assistance” from an legitimate source, you can check the permission box at that time and uncheck it when completed.



Remote Assistance Properties

Malware For All

In past articles, I've emphasized that Windows is particularly susceptible to malware because it has the largest number of users (with various Window versions accounting for about 90% of PC users and the Apple OS 10 just under 5%). If an evildoer wants to wreak the maximum havoc (probably the primary

motivation for hackers), one need infect a much smaller percentage of the available systems to accomplish that end if attacking Windows systems..

As a new approach, the evildoers have an even broader strategy. This past Summer, **Adobe Acrobat Reader**, has emerged as a favored vector for malware. You've probably noticed an increased emphasis on updating Adobe. Historically, updating has been an effective strategy to combat malware purveyors but now they have apparently turned to these updates as a way of achieving wide distribution of malware which can attack both Microsoft and Apple operating systems. Last year we alerted you to avoid accepting solicitations to update Adobe software.. These may be authentic but you can't tell. The safest tactic is for you to go directly to Adobe (<http://adobe.com>) and request the update rather than rely on drive-by solicitations. This applies to other Adobe products, such as **Flash Player** and **Shock Player**. Similar to telephone security, your initiating a transaction is an important safeguard that the respondent on the other end is who (or, in the case of a computer, what) you intended. Recent reports indicate that the drive-by solicitations to update the Adobe products have also targeted Apple systems with accompanying malware. So obscurity is no sure defense.

Do You Know Where Your Server Is?

By Len

There has been a lot of silliness recently about the location of web servers. The question is... How many people actually know where their email server actually is?

For example, we contract for our BVCC web site and email through a company called Web Hosting Solutions in Westerville, Ohio. This is a small one-man company. So where is the hard drive for our email server physically located? It is pretty much impossible for a normal email user to know, or even find out. It could be in a spare room or garage in Westerville. However, Web Hosting Solutions contracts with a different company to maintain the hard-

ware connected to the websites they operate. The hard drives that contain **bvres.org** data, are probably in more than one location (for backup purposes). They might be in Colorado, or they might even be in the bunker at the Greenbrier in West Virginia. This former congressional emergency bunker, with its air conditioned and secure facilities, is now being used by many different companies to house giant hard drive farms. Google, the parent of gmail, has constructed large facilities to house the hardware for their data all over the world.

So, if someone asks you where your email server is located, you will have to admit that you do not know, and you have no way of finding out. 🖐

Windows 10?

By Len

If you are running Windows 7 or 8, you probably have seen either a new icon on the right side of your taskbar, or a pop up window inviting you to install Windows 10. The question is: Should you install Windows 10?

If you are using a desktop or laptop computer, and you do not have a touch screen monitor, I see no reason to install Windows 10. The Windows 10 interface does have some advantages for tablet or smart phone users. However, there are many complaints from desktop users. One of the features of Windows 10 is that it does automatic updating. As a result, some Windows 10 users have discovered that an update does not work with their particular computer model or accessories. These people have spent a lot of time (and money in some cases) going back to Windows 7.

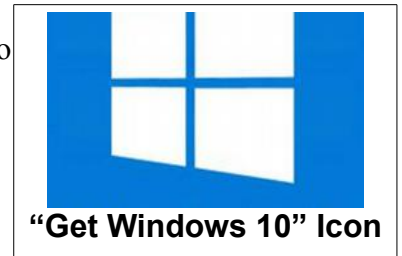
For my purposes (email, Internet surfing, desktop publishing, computer graphics, and computer music) I see no advantage to installing Windows 10. I will stick with the tried and proven Windows 7 until I find a reason to change. 🖐

Another Windows 10 View

By Kent

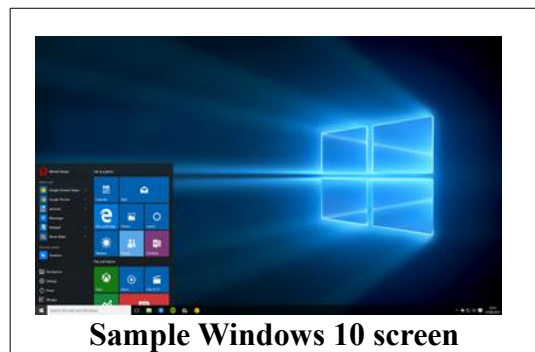
To afford you perspective, let me offer a different view of Windows 10. Having survived, largely through avoidance, **Windows Vista**, **Windows 8**, and **Windows 8.1**, I feel moved to provide a contrary view to Len's. The "reason to change" that I found was that a villager--on her own--installed Windows 10 and then called for assistance. I had been debating how the Club should cope with Windows 10 and procrastinating installing it on my own computer. Absent the alternative of a cruise on the bounding main, I forced myself to install it. It is quite easy. By now, most of the earlier computers that I have encountered have a Windows 10 logo which, when you hover the cursor over it, says "Install Windows 10."

Actual installation is dependent on your clicking on the icon and then responding positively to the option "reserve your free upgrade."



A positive response does not produce immediate results but evidently puts you in a queue to have Windows 10 downloaded (for free if you are running Windows 7, 8, or 8.1--and mostly overnight, I think).

Evidently Microsoft has listened to Len as it has an-



nounced that it is distributing a patch that will prevent the automatic updating that he warns against.

As for the operating system itself, it retains most of the virtues of Windows 7 although it looks like a child of both Windows 7 and Windows 8.1. In using it a couple of weeks, it does seem robust and perhaps a little faster than Windows 7. It also has some helpful self-help features. As an inveterate book user, I regret that there is not yet a “missing manual” or an Idiot’s Guide but expect that they will arrive soon. And will facilitate a fuller demonstration (and enrich your user experience.).

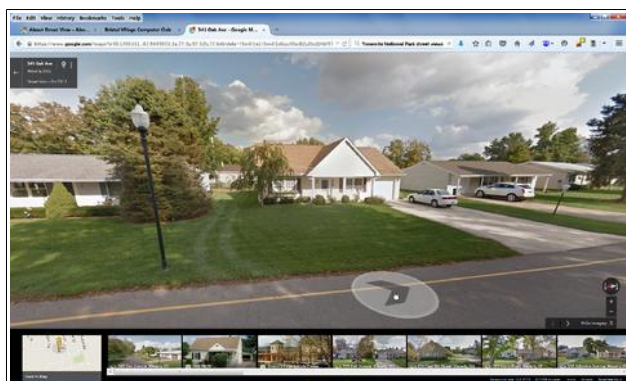
Crazy Climbers?

By Len



Climbing a 3,000 foot rock wall in Yosemite is not at all on my bucket list. But there are folks who think this is a great idea. Here is a video about these rock climbers, and how Google Street Views has added images that show climbing a 3,000 foot rock.

<http://www.google.com/maps/about/behind-the-scenes/streetview/treks/yosemite/#trek>



All About Google Street Views

By Len

Many of you have been enjoying Google Street views. It is fun to enter the address of one of your former or present homes, and see what it looks like.

It is also fun to explore travel destinations before you go there, just to get a preview of the area. This trick can be useful. For example; when Diana and I went to Europe recently, we flew to Amsterdam and then took a train to the central train station. The question was... How do we get to our hotel? I had looked at Street Views of the area before leaving home, and I had a good idea what direction to go, and what it would be like to walk from the station to the Movenpick hotel.

If you have used Google Street Views, you might have wondered how they are created. [Here is a website](#) that explains what Street Views are, and how they are created.

<http://www.google.com/maps/about/behind-the-scenes/streetview/treks/yosemite/>



Thunderbird Update

By Len

A recent update to Thunderbird has caused some confusion for many users. The update is trying to protect users from bogus web sites and requires users to confirm their email server by confirming a security exception.



This has to be done for both incoming and out going mail. There is a check box that will remember the selection, so you should only have to do this once per server (but once for incoming and once for outgoing mail).

Update Firefox?

By Len

I prefer Firefox for my Internet browser. Many use Microsoft Internet Explorer simply because it came with their computer. However, a lot of computer gurus give Internet Explorer (current version 11) bad marks, especially for security. As a matter of fact, Microsoft is abandoning Internet Explorer in Windows 10, and replacing it with something called Edge.

Anyway, if you are using Firefox, you should be sure that you have the latest updates installed. Some updates include patches to prevent hacking and malware, so you need to be sure you are using the latest version. Here is how.

✓ From the **Menu Bar**, select **Help, About Firefox**.

(If you do not see the Menu Bar, right click near the top of the Firefox window and toggle the Menu option on.)

When the **About Firefox** window opens, it will show the current version. If it is not the latest version, a message will show that it is downloading an update. Once the update has been downloaded, the **About Firefox** window will show an option to **restart Firefox**.

