
The Computer Club At Willow Valley

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The President's Pen by Sid Paskowitz

Membership Your Computer Club has 499 members at this writing, including 214 lifetime members.

Welcome Marge Schmieder Marge Schmieder is our new Computer Club Secretary. Please join me in welcoming her. Also, please join me in thanking Joan Burks for her outstanding work as Secretary. .

External Club Website The Computer Club now has an external Website at www.wvrccc.com. The site has video tutorials on Maintaining a Website, Mozilla Firefox, PC Tuneup in mp4 and wmv formats, Photo Story 3 in mp4 and wmv formats, and USB Tuner. It also hosts a Sudoku Puzzle

Solver. We plan to add other tutorial videos that may be beneficial to Computer Club members.

Your Monitor May Cause Problems Recently, we had a problem with the Spring Run Computer Lounge PC. The tower on that PC failed and was turned over to Ed Dahrsnin for rework. Ed repaired the tower and we reinstalled that tower in the Spring Run Computer Lounge. It worked for a while but then started to freeze and the monitor displayed indications that it was not getting signals from the tower. After repeated attempts with the assistance of Tony Poulos to

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Life After the Snowden Revelations by Al Williams

PRISM Most of us know that Edward Snowden has revealed information about the National Security Agency's programs. The first revelation was made June 6 through Glenn Greenwald in the United Kingdom's newspaper the Guardian. The revelation was about the NSA's PRISM program which gathers the telephone records of American citizens. The gathered records are described as metadata about the telephone calls. The metadata includes who called whom

and for how long. For cell phones, also included is the location of the caller's cell phone and the person called. That sounds like a lot of non-useful information.

An online Slate.com article by Kieran Healy dated June 10, 2013, which is titled *Using Metadata to Find Paul Revere*, describes how social network analysis would have identified the terrorists in the colonies just be-

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Coming Programs

September 12, 2013

An Expert Panel

Considerations When Buying A New Computer

Oct 3, 2013

TBD

Cloud Storage

Nov 7, 2013

Willow Valley Staff

WV Sr TV and WiFi

All programs are held in the Theater at the Cultural Center on the 1st Thursday of the month at 2:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

President

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change settings on the monitor and in the computer, we decided to return the tower to Ed for another tower. Tony suggested before returning the tower to try to hook up a different monitor to the tower. A different monitor was hooked up and the tower worked perfectly. The bottom line from that experience was that faulty monitors can make towers look faulty. If you're having a problem with your computer where it freezes, the problem may not be with a tower. Try a different monitor.

Email Delivery Problems When I opened my Computer Club Yahoo email account recently, I noted a number of failed delivery emails in my inbox. It was obvious that my email account had been compromised. In checking further, I noted two other email accounts had been compromised and were used to send out emails from those accounts. My two other remaining Yahoo email accounts did not show signs of compromise; however, to be on the safe side, I immediately changed the passwords in all five of my Yahoo email accounts. The Computer Club account at wvrccc@yahoo.com had been used to send out 34 emails, each to 15 addressees. Some of those emails were blocked to some, but not all, of the addressees. My personal computer was not involved in sending any of the emails or in accessing my Yahoo email account. It became obvious that the Yahoo email server had been broken into and apparently this was not the first time that problem occurred with the Yahoo email server.

On further investigation I found that the 34 emails were sent between 11 and 14 seconds apart and had different email addresses and different links in each email. It was obvious that these were sent from a computer in a very organized manner. Even though the links were different in each email, they all resulted in the display of a web page that contained information about Raspberry Ultra Drops to help weight drop. When I accessed that page using a protected computer, the security software on that computer did not indicate malicious software had been placed on the computer by that web page; however, the links and the emails were considered suspicious by the Willow Valley server and the web pages were not accessible from Willow Valley Kiosk units. An important point to make here is that any time you get suspicious email, use a Willow Valley Kiosk unit to access that email. Willow Valley subscribes to a service that enables its server to block access to suspicious websites and protect Residents from contaminating their personal computers. Kiosk units cannot be permanently infected by malicious software; however, users should restart a Kiosk unit before starting a Kiosk session to assure no prior user put malicious software on that Kiosk unit. Users should also restart the Kiosk unit after their session to assure later users are not affected by what they have done nor can malicious software from a later user access earlier information.

In light of my lack of confidence in Yahoo and its ability to protect its email accounts, I have

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President

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changed the email address for the Computer Club from wvrccc@yahoo.com to wvrccc@gmail.com. I am also not confident in Yahoo's email server in that it blocked some of the addresses in the emails as being suspicious but did not block the entire email. It would seem that if some of the addresses in an email were suspicious and should be blocked, the entire email should be suspicious and should be blocked.

Items From the Last Newsletter The following are repeats for new Club members and those who missed it in the last Newsletter.

Monitor Hours Reduced Due to significantly reduced Resident utilization and limited numbers of Resident volunteers to be Monitors in the Computer Labs in Lakes Manor (E-108) and Manor North (First Floor M Building), the Computer Club has focused on assuring Monitor availability on Mondays at 1:00 p.m. when trips and events open for electronic registration. If no one visits the Lab by 1:30 p.m., the Monitor may close the Lab. Monitors may sign up for other days at their option. A Monthly Monitor schedule and lists of volunteer Monitors will be posted on the Computer Lab doors and Residents may call one of those individuals and arrange for a mutually convenient time to meet in the Lab if no Monitor has signed up. Gene Simasek is our Lakes Computer Room and Monitor Coordinator and JoAnne Phillips is our new Manor North

Computer Room and Monitor Coordinator. Please let Gene or JoAnne know if you are willing to be a Monitor in a Computer Room. You don't need to be a computer expert to be a monitor - you just need to want to help other Residents.

MAC SIG Leader Needed We are still searching for a leader of the MAC Special Interest Group (SIG). Until a MAC person volunteers to take that leadership role, the MAC SIG group meetings on the second Thursday of the month in the Manor North Johnson Auditorium are suspended. If any MAC user is willing to take a leadership role, please let me know. You don't need to be an expert. You only need to coordinate efforts that are beneficial to MAC and Apple product users.

Computer Systems Available Ed Dahrsnin and his team have worked on more than 316 computer systems. The number of available systems changes frequently, so check with Ed if you are interested in receiving a recycled system. Ed's team is accepting the items listed in The Equipment Corner in this newsletter. Leave the items in Manor North's computer room on the first floor of 'M' building Mondays from 1 p.m. to 1:30 p.m

Having Kiosk Problems? If you are having Kiosk problems or problems accessing the Willow Valley website, check with your Campus Manager.

Thank You My thanks to all of you who volunteer your time and knowledge to help other Residents. We need more volunteers! •

Life after the Snowden Revelations

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fore the American Revolution. Using a list of men in the Boston area and the organizations of which they were members – compiled in historian David Hackett Fisher’s book *Paul Revere’s Ride* – Healy shows that with just that information that the most active organizations, the degree of connections between them, and the men who most likely were the key players can be determined. His article is very clear. I highly recommend that you read the article. Google *slate healy paul and revere*.

Healy’s point is that telephone records, the metadata, are like organization membership data. It reveals relationships and the strength of relationships. This is why people are concerned about the collection of the telephone records.

Major Companies The next day, June 7, Greenwald released NSA information through the Guardian documenting the NSA’s direct access to user information at Google, Facebook, Apple, Microsoft, Yahoo, PalTalk, YouTube, Skype, and AOL. In later releases, Greenwald documented that Microsoft was actively involved in working with the NSA to circumvent Microsoft’s own encryption of information.

Boundless Informant On June 11, Greenwald released information about the NSA’s datamining tool called Boundless Informant. This tool collects almost 3 billion pieces of meta data information from countries around the world – every 30 days.

X-KEYSCORE On July 31, Greenwald released information about the NSA’s X-KEYSCORE program. This program allows analysts to search through emails, online chats, and the browsing histories (web sites visited) of millions of individuals. The program works because the NSA collects information through collection points around the world.

Rules and Authority On August 15, the Washington Post wrote that “The National Security Agency has

broken privacy rules or overstepped its legal authority thousands of times each year since Congress granted the agency broad new powers in 2008, according to an internal audit and other top-secret documents. Most of the infractions involve unauthorized surveillance of Americans or foreign intelligence targets in the United States, both of which are restricted by statute and executive order.”

FISA Oversight In another article in the Washington Post on August 15, the chief judge of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court said “the court lacks the tools to independently verify how often the government’s surveillance breaks the court’s rules that aim to protect Americans’ privacy. Without taking drastic steps, it also cannot check the veracity of the government’s assertions that the violations its staff members report are unintentional mistakes.”

Future Reporting Since Glenn Greenwald has stated that he has thousands of documents given him by Edward Snowden and other reporters are also investigating the issues, it seems that headlines will continue to be made for some time. You may read the Guardian articles at www.theguardian.co.uk The Washington Post articles may be read at www.washingtonpost.com

Life for the Reporters So what is life like for Greenwald and the nearly silent reporter who works with him? The New York Times has an online August 13 article titled *How Laura Poitras Helped Snowden Spill His Secrets* which details how she and Greenwald met Edward Snowden. It also details her background, experiences as an investigator, experiences putting the articles about the Snowden revelations together, and the operational security that she and Greenwald follow because they are concerned about surveillance, their physical safety, and the possibility of arrest if they were to come to the United States.

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Life after the Snowden Revelations

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Life for American Citizens What is life like for the average American citizen? Based on previous conversations with residents about other computer security issues, I think it likely that most are unaware of what is happening. Some are resigned. Others are concerned but do not know what to do. Some do not think that there is any problem. And some are actively taking steps to keep their electronic communications anonymous and private.

Being Active For those who are interested in taking steps, a first step is to decide what you want to achieve. Many will say they want privacy. Privacy in turn may mean one or two things: anonymity and/or secure communications. There is a list of software for those purposes at prism-break.org. You'll see that the list is extensive and summary in nature.

I encourage you to try ones that look interesting. Please keep in mind that security professionals consistently say "as far as I know this is secure." Several of the items on the list say that you should not assume that they are totally secure. Nevertheless it does not hurt to try them.

Here are a few suggestions. The Tor Browser Bundle at TorProject.org is especially popular to provide anonymity while browsing web sites. I've tried it. It is very easy to download and use. Do read the information on their web site to learn about its features and limitations.

DuckDuckGo is a search service that searches the web for you, thereby providing anonymity. Similar providers are Startpage and ixquick.

If you are interested in chats, the Off-The-Record protocol is highly regarded. This protocol securely throws away the encryption keys after a conversation making it very very difficult for anyone to put that conversation back together. If someone

should succeed, a feature of the OTR protocol is that you may successfully and legally deny that you said it. The OTR protocol does not provide anonymity.

There are several providers and chat clients that support OTR. The easiest to install and use is CryptoCat which is a browser add-on. Multi-party chatting is supported. CryptoCat works only with other CryptoCat users. Do read their web site.

If you would like to chat with anonymity, use The Amnesic Incognito Live System (Tails). Tails works with Tor to provide the anonymity and includes Pidgin, a chat client, which supports OTR. Pidgin works with several Immediate Message providers.

For anonymous and secure email, try Bitmessage which requires very little user knowledge to set up. You'll find PGP based email clients on the prism-break.org web site but they do not provide anonymity and are not as easy to set up.

As you are exploring, read the documentation to determine the capabilities and limitations of what you are using. If you decide to use anything for sensitive communications, heed the cautions of the developers!

Finally, as time goes on, software which successfully provides the desired anonymity and security while not requiring the user to have a lot of technical knowledge will be developed, vetted by security researchers, and made readily available. •

The Equipment Corner by Ed Dahrsnin

Refurbished Systems The following refurbished systems are available:

318: Dell Dimension 2350, tower, XP Home SP3, 1.8GHz, 95.61GB free space, 512MB RAM, HP DeskJet 6940 printer

391: Dell Dimension 4100, tower, XP Home SP3, 867MHz, 35.41GB free space, 384MB RAM, Konica Minolta PagePro 1380 parallel printer

321: HP Pavilion 7915, tower, XP Home SP3, 1.1GHz, 28.64GB free space, 192MB RAM, HP DeskJet D4260 printer

The systems are free to any club member. You must pick them up. Contact Ed at 464-6591.

Miscellaneous We have 3 volt CR2023 batteries (suitable for motherboards to keep the system clock running) and a variety of CD-ROM's, floppy disk drives, keyboards, 2-button mice, various power supplies, and assorted cables. Please contact Ed Dahrsnin at 464-6591.

Donations We accept used, *working*, tower and laptop computers (with power units and batteries) from club members along with all software CDs. Used printer cartridges also accepted. You may deliver them to the North's Computer Resource room on the first floor of M building after 1 pm on Monday. No Macs or Mac parts, see JoAnne Phillips or Bob Handler for additional information. •

The Mission

The Mission of the Willow Valley Computer Club is to:

- Provide the means to educate beginners or interested non-users on how to use a computer.
- Arrange for speakers to talk to the Club about subjects that would be of interest to those with some background and experience in computer use.
- Provide a forum for interchange of computer information among members.

For more information about the Club, contact Sid Paskowitz at 464-2127 or wvrccc@gmail.com

The Leadership

Officers

President: Sid Paskowitz

Vice President: Ralph Beedle

Secretary: Marge Schmieder

Treasurer: Dick Dressel

Community Representatives

Manor: Larry Gallagher

Manor North: Lee Wermuth

Lakes: Gene Simasek

Committee Chairpersons

Program: Ralph Beedle

Training: Wayne Barner

Equipment: Ed Dahrsnin

Technical Support: Tony Poulos

Website: Sid Paskowitz

Publicity: Wally Gordon

Newsletter: Al Williams

Mac Interest Group:

Computer Room Coordinators:
Gene Simasek JoAnne Phillips

Microsoft Liaison: Ed Dahrsnin

Past Presidents

Larry Gallagher

Reviewer Acknowledgment

The following individual kindly reviewed this issue:

Sid Paskowitz

Thank you,

Al Williams

Interested in reviewing the Computer Club newsletter before it goes to press, or providing advice about the content? Please contact:

Al Williams at atwilliams136@gmail.com
