
The Computer Club At Willow Valley

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The President's Pen by Sid Paskowitz

Membership As of this writing, your Computer Club has 533 paid members of the Club including 227 who have signed up as Lifetime members. Dues renewal notices have been sent to members whose membership needs to be renewed this year. Please make sure your email is correct on the renewal form so we can send you important emails on topics such as malware threats, Computer Club Newsletters, computer update information, and helpful information about computers and the Internet. Those emails only go to Computer Club members for whom we have a good email address.

Club Officers Election The Computer Club election of officers will be held in the near future. Wally Gordon is chairperson of the nominating committee. Dick Dressel and Ralph Beeble are on the committee. If you would like to be an officer of the Computer Club or know someone else who would like to be nominated, please contact Wally or Dick or Ralph. Nominations can also be made at the election meeting. Wally will announce the results of the nominating committee at the next Computer Club meeting.

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Microsoft Support for Windows XP Ends April 8 by Al Williams

Microsoft's support for the Windows XP operating system ends April 8. This means no more security updates for XP after that date.

Windows XP on your computer will continue to work. In the January issue, I described what you should do if you want to continue to use XP. However, most people should stop using XP altogether.

If you use your computer for only email and web browsing, an iPad,

iPhone, or iPod will likely meet your needs.

If you do more with your computer than that, most of you should get a new computer. Your current choices are a PC running Windows 8 or a Mac. Note that HP has resumed offering a limited set of new desktops and laptops running Windows 7.

If however, you are willing to install a different operating system on your

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Coming Programs

March 6, 2014

Al Williams, Resident
Passwords

April 3, 2014

Sid Paskowitz, Resident
Skype

May 1, 2014

Sid Paskowitz
Windows 8

*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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Mac SIG We still need a leader for the MAC Special Interest Group (SIG).

Recycling Ed Dahrsnin and his team are accepting working computers and components for recycling. They especially need working monitors. Let Ed know if you would like to help recycle computers. Ed and his team meet on Monday afternoons at Manor North. Working in the recycling effort may also help you deal with your own computer when you have problems.

ByLaws Changes The Computer Club Executive Committee voted to change the Club's bylaws to reflect a specific date on which newly elected officers would take office. The proposed change is attached to this Newsletter and is posted on Information Central at <http://resident.willowvalley.org/kiosk/cclub/p/proposedbylaws.pdf> or by clicking on the Proposed Bylaws link in Information Central. A membership vote to approve the proposed change will be held at the Computer Club meeting following the meeting at which the proposed change is read.

Information Central For those of you who are not familiar with Information Central and the Computer Club Newsletter archive, you can access recent Newsletters and an index to topics in those Newsletters at <http://resident.willowvalley.org/kiosk/cclub/p/Newsletter.pdf>. The Newsletter index page is also available by left-clicking on *Newsletter* in the left column in Information Central.

Personal Protection It is time for me to get on my soapbox again and repeat and re-emphasize information about personal computers and the Internet. I'm going to call it Personal Protection, because that is what it is! I don't care what kind of computer you have or what kind of protection your computer has, no computer can be 100% protected from malicious software. There are "bad guys" all over the world who spend their lives finding ways to infect your computer. Every time a company comes up with a way to help protect you, the "bad guys" look for ways to neutralize or get around those protections.

Social Media One reason I don't like Social Media is that companies in that business feel that they have rights to your personal information, including your email addresses. I got an email from another Resident that reported the following: "Let me alert members to a stupid thing I did. In response to a cousin asking me to join him on Linked In, I began to join, but when they asked for my phone number, I just closed down. However, I guess by that time they had my entire email list and I am now getting puzzled inquiries from friends & relations asking me what I have invited them to join. It is embarrassing." That is just one example of what can happen. The Linked-In phenomena described is fairly typical for social media. During the process of creating an account, you are asked if you would like to let others know. It is quite easy to say yes without really noticing what you have done. This is not just a Linked-In problem. It is a user problem and any-

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President

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one who uses a computer or the Internet is a user.

PopUps If you get an unexpected pop-up, use Alt-F4 to clear it. If you click anywhere on the pop-up (and sometimes if you even put your cursor arrow on the pop-up), you could cause malicious software to run on your computer. There will be times when Alt-F4 will close a program you are running, but that may be better than causing malware to infect your computer. I have received two reports of Residents getting the CryptoLocker ransomware, a really nasty malware program that causes almost all user created files on your computer to be encrypted where you can't get at them without paying a ransom in the hundreds of dollars. The FBI says not to pay a ransom. Use Alt-F4 to close those popups – don't click on them. Files on attached flash drives and external hard drives can also be infected. One Resident said that the only unusual

thing he remembers doing before being infected was to click on a Spam email and ask them to remove his email address from their distribution list. Don't open spam email or other suspicious emails on your computer!!! I have sent two emails to Computer Club members advising them about CryptoLocker.

Another suggestion about popups. If you get a popup advising you that an update is available such as for Firefox or Yahoo or Adobe or Java or Windows, or anything else, don't click on the popup. Use Alt-F4 to clear the popup, then go to the Website for that program by clicking on Help in that application or go to the company's Website and check for updates. The "bad guys" can create popups that look exactly like a legitimate notification; however, when you click on their popup, it takes you to their Website where your computer becomes infected.

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Microsoft Support for Windows XP Ends April 8

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old computer, Xubuntu or Debian 7.2 xfce non-free are excellent choices. These operating systems provide the xfce desktop and come with word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, etc. An overview, including installation steps, of Xubuntu and Debian was given in the Linux presentation to the Computer Club at the February 2013 meeting. A copy of that presentation may be found on Information Central. •

President

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Keep Software Updated Keep your software current, especially Adobe and Java, if you use them. Software companies try to fix the vulnerabilities in their software but they always lag the problem. Avoiding updates will subject you to risks from vulnerabilities that they have already fixed. It is bad enough that they lag, but you should not compound the problem by lagging it even further.

Avoid Malware I personally use a Resident Computer Kiosk unit to access my emails and do Internet searches. I also restart the Kiosk computer when I begin my session so it clears anything that someone using the computer before me may have done, and I restart the computer when I finish my session so someone using the computer after me cannot do anything to access what I have done. Even taking these actions, if you get a Kiosk unit infected during your session, the actions you take during your session will be at risk, but at least if you restart the computer after you session, the malware will be removed and later users will not be adversely affected by your actions.

Recommendations The Computer Club has been asked to provide programs at meetings and classes for Residents to discuss a wider range of protection and administrative software than just Microsoft Security Essentials, Malwarebytes (some recommend the \$25 Pro version), CCleaner and Defraggler, all of which we recommend. We emphasize those applications because they interact well with each other, are easy to use, and don't slow down your computer. Even with that basic approach, we find too many Club members who do not maintain those programs on their computer. As stated earlier, no security software provides 100% protection; however, with the basic protection we recommend and avoiding traps on the Internet, YOU can keep your computer relatively safe. If we

find a better combination of software than what we are recommending, we will let you know. Reminder: keep Windows and other programs up to date, especially before you do any security scans.

Reconnaissance Whenever I am sent a link to a Website that I am not familiar with, I use www.siteadvisor.com to check out the site for malicious software before going to it. For example, someone suggested a "neat program" to me that I found was written by a company called sothinkmedia. I went to siteadvisor and entered that company's domain name and here is what siteadvisor displayed:

sothinkmedia.com

This link might be dangerous. We tested it and found security risks. Beware.

Website Category: Malicious Sites

Siteadvisor is a good tool that I use frequently when I browse the Web or want to check on a Website or company. Use a Kiosk unit to research new software before installing it. For example, I "Google" the product name and the words complaint or problem to see what others have written about that software. Games and music are notorious for infecting computers.

If you get an email that looks unusual or is in your Spam folder, don't open it on your computer. If you are really that curious about it, open it on a Resident Computer Kiosk unit. See what I said earlier about using a Resident Computer Kiosk unit.

Prelude Coming Thanks to Tony Poulos, we plan to display helpful computer and Internet reminders on the screen before Computer Club meetings start. This is something the Camera Club has been successfully doing and we can take a lesson from the Camera Club.

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

The Equipment Corner by Ed Dahrsnin

Refurbished Systems

#341: HP a650y

#342: HP a1355c without monitor

#343: HP Pavilion a510n, updated

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 wvcomputerclub@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, providing advice about the content, or writing an article? Please contact:

Al Williams at atwilliams136@gmail.com