



Verde Valley Computer Club

Connections

Volume 25, Issue 9 September 2010

September 18, 2010

MEETING TIME 9:30 AM

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES TO
BE PRINTED IN THE
CONNECTIONS: TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 21, 2010

Exposing the "Weather Underground" and Astrophotography

Our program for September should appeal to anyone interested in the local weather (and who isn't) and those interested in astronomy and astrophotography.


Did you know that the nearest official weather stations operated by the National Weather Service are located in Prescott and Flagstaff? How then do we get accurate weather information for Clarkdale, Cottonwood, Cornville and Camp Verde? We get this critical information from personal weather stations operated by volunteers who are part of the Citizen Weather Observation Program.

Our September program will be presented by local computer club member, **Jerry Madero**, who first developed an interest in weather while having fun as a "storm chaser" back in Iowa. Jerry is part of the Weather Underground network and will be presenting an informative presentation about his personal weather station and the weather data that you can find on your computer via the Weather Underground web sites. Interested in when the sun rises and sets on any day or the amount of rainfall or average temperature since January 1st? Jerry will show us how to find that information plus lots of other valuable data that is used for draught monitoring and fire prevention. Jerry will show us photos of his weather station and explain the strange looking equipment decorating his back yard (his neighbors will be happy to learn that his yard was not invaded by aliens). In addition to his preoccupation with the weather, Jerry is also fascinated by astrophotography and has offered to share some of his most interesting photos with us. Jerry's dramatic photos of the total eclipse of the moon in 2007 were published on the front page of the Verde Independent. He will also show us photos of the center of the Milky Way, as well as breathtaking photos of galaxies far, far away and distant nebulas.

See the SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2010. VVCC Events Calendar on page 3

IMPORTANT!
ALL SIGS ARE RUNNING!
 Check the calendar for times.

For Sale: Unused (New) Copy of MS Works Suite 2006, Includes MS Word, Works 8, Streets & tips, Money, Digital Image & Encarta. \$20 (\$80) Value)
 Contact: Richard Gohman 928-639-4388



Genealogy SIG will start Oct 4th 2010
Leader: Marny Zuercher
 Mark your calendars for the 1st Monday of each month starting October 4th at 6:p.m.
 You will not want to miss this NEW SIG!


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2010 OFFICERS

President: Jerry Miller
Vice President: Bob Efras
Treasurer: Lee Andress
Secretary: Del Rosenwasser

An Interesting Fact:

This August 2010 has
5 Sundays,
5 Mondays,
5 Tuesdays,
All in one month
 It happens once in
823 years.

VVCC Mentors

Windows - Bob Efras:
 646-9182 bob@refros.com

Front Page - Miles Standish:
frontpage@vvclub.com

**Adobe Photoshop Elements,
 WordPerfect, Word 2007**

Marny Zuercher
marny71@gmail.com

Photography-
 Hal Rosenwasser
photography@vvclub.com

**Any others out there
 willing to share their skills?**

**What programs do you
 work with? Share it!**


**Being a Mentor doesn't
 mean you have ALL the an-
 swers just a willingness to
 help someone. Contact**
info@vvclub.com

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| VERDE VALLEY COMPUTER CLUB | | | | SEPTEMBER 2010 | | |
|---|---|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | Lets get started! Find the SIG you want to attend, or come to all of them. | Visit our Board meetings. Give Suggestions, Learn about your club. | 1 | 2 BOARD MEETING 6:30 PM | 3 Windows SIG PC Software Maint 4:00 p.m. | 4 |
| 5 | 6 New SIG GENEALOGY Next month | 7 | 8 BEGINNERS CLASS 4:00 p.m. | 9 | 10 INTERNET SIG 4:00 p.m. | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 BEGINNERS CLASS 4:00 p.m. | 16 | 17 Spreadsheet SIG 4:00 p.m. | 18 GENERAL MEETING |
| 19 | 20 | 21 DEADLINE FOR CONNECTIONS 2:00 PM | 22 BEGINNERS CLASS 4:00 p.m. | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 BEGINNERS CLASS 4:00 p.m. | 30 PHOTOGRAPHY SIG / DIGITAL 6:00 | | |
| VERDE VALLEY COMPUTER CLUB | | | | OCTOBER 2010 | | |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|  | | | | | 1 Windows SIG PC Software Maint 4:00 p.m. | 2 |
| 3 NEW SIG Starts | 4 Genealogy SIG 6:00 p.m. | 5 | 6 BEGINNERS CLASS 4:00 p.m. | 7 BOARD MEETING 6:30 PM | 8 INTERNET SIG 4:00 p.m. | 9 |
| 10 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 Spreadsheet SIG 4:00 p.m. | 16 GENERAL MEETING 9:30 AM |
| 17 | 18 | 19 DEADLINE FOR CONNECTIONS 2:00 PM | 20 BEGINNERS CLASS 4:00 p.m. | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 31 | 25 | 26 | 27 BEGINNERS CLASS 4:00 p.m. | 28 PHOTOGRAPHY /DIGITAL SHUTTERBUG | 29 | 30 |

The VVCC Presidents Bits and Bytes

Meet our New VVCC President Jerry Miller

Hi Everybody, This is my first message to you as President. Perhaps this would be a good time to provide you all with a brief bio.

I was born in San Francisco a very long time ago, lived there till I was nine, and spent the rest of my formative years in San Mateo, California, graduating from Hillsdale High School in 1958. I spent some time in the Marine Corps, did some college at the College of San Mateo majoring in civil engineering, traveled for a year in Europe, got married, did a carpenter's apprenticeship, went back to school, got an AA degree in Chemistry, continued on at San Francisco State College, got a BA in Basic Medical Science, and eventually a Doctorate in Podiatric Medicine from the California College Of Podiatric Medicine. I practiced Podiatry for almost thirty years, at first in Vacaville, CA, and the remainder in Los Angeles.

There was a lot of other stuff in between, but that is the basic outline. (You may take the next few lines lightly). Over the years I have had various position of authority that one might consider qualifies me for this position. For instance, I was president of the Latin club, and vice president of the senior class in high school. While working my way through college, I managed one motel and three different apartment buildings. And of course one must not forget the five thankless years spent as president of a condominium home owners association.

I ended up in this part of Arizona because I was especially fond of Sedona, but could only afford Cottonwood (as of most recently Camp Verde).

My first computer was an iMac, around 1999. For several years prior to my purchase, I had subscribed to a general home computer magazine so that I could become familiar with the lingo and the marketplace. I chose Mac at that time because of the many reports that Macs were easier to use, and since I was new to computing, I wanted easy. I tried my best, but just couldn't find a happy place with that computer, so eventually I moved to a PC in 2000. It was a Sony laptop with Windows XP home, a 1 Gigahertz AMD Athlon 4 processor, 512 MB of RAM and initially a 20 GB hard drive (since replaced with a 128 GB drive). It cost \$1,500 at that time. Actually, it is the computer I am using right now to create this message. Yes, this computer and I have been through a lot. It's really a dinosaur, but I keep nursing it along. I plan to get a new computer in the not too distant future. Possibly a desktop with a 6 core super fast 64 bit processor, 8 GB of DDR 3 memory, usb 3.0, high powered video card with multi-monitor capabilities, and maybe even one of the latest solid state hard drives. Wouldn't that be nice?

Well, it's been nice chatting. We'll do it again next month.

Till then,

Jerry Miller

president@vvclub.com

Membership Corner by Myrelle McHale

Hello Members,

Well, here we are almost at the end of summer...
Time sure flies when you are having fun !!!

Thanks to a very good presenter, Mark Aksamit, we had a very interesting and enlightening program. in August. Thank you Mark.

Next month promises to be another time to learn. Jerry Madero has put together a most enlightening program on weather reporting. If you missed it the first time around, please be sure to come to the September General Meeting on the 18th. You won't be disappointed. Great program.

I am starting to receive notes from some of you on things you want to know about and suggestions on possible new programs. Some for the General Meeting and some for a one-night class in a SIG meeting. Please keep these notes and suggestions coming. They are ways we need to hear from you as to how we can make the programs more interesting and things you really want to learn about. If you send in a specific question on something you need to know about now, let me know. I will get an answer and send it back to you asap. Then I will print it in a column to share with other members. You would be surprised at how many people are curious about the same things.

The address to use to contact me is: membership@vvcclub.com

I am still looking for a title for the column. Any creative minds out there ??? Let me know.

Some of the suggested titles are:

Glitches Galore – Ask the Techie – Help Desk – HELP !!

Users Helping Users – Info Bytes – Stump the Chumps – Ask a Geek – Byte This!

I also received a link (from Chuck LeBeau) for downloading free programs.
www.giveawayoftheday.com Might be something of use for you there.

I would like to mention, we had a LOT of visitors this month. For those of you who signed in on the Visitors List and gave us a legible address, we will be mailing you a courtesy copy of our newsletter, the Connections, for a month or two. We hope it will spark an interest and you come back to see other interesting programs. We also have a great Q&A session at the end of each meeting. Many interesting questions and solutions from our mentors and members.

Look on page 11 of this issue of Connections where Richard G. put together notes of the Q&A and the URL's of the free programs.

Education is our primary goal. Helping each other is a way to accomplish this. That is why our motto is: "Users Helping Users."

Bye for now. Hope to see you all in September.

Myrelle



CHOOSING A COMPUTER

"The following is a reprint of an article written by Sharon H. Fitzgerald and printed in the August 8-14, 2010, issue of the American Profile Magazine

What computer should I buy? Computer expert Mark Kyrnin says that's the most common question he received from the readers of his online column and newsletter at *About.com*. Because there isn't a one-size-fits-all computer, answering the questions can be tricky.

The most typical computer user is the casual user, Kyrnin says. "This is someone who intends to use the computer primarily for the Web and e-mail." Such users don't require much in the way of computer power and "can get by with almost any of today's modern computers," he explains.

LIST YOUR NEEDS

If you're in the market for a computer, Kyrnin suggests starting your search by answering these questions:

What's my budget? Good starter computers are available at well under \$1000.00.

What will I do with my computer? Check e-mail? Keep the household books?

Browse the Internet? Write a letter?

Will I use my computer only at my desk or will I want to use it at various locations?

Will I want to save music or data onto a CD?

Will I watch DVD movies on my computer?

Will I want to connect to wireless networks? In other words, will I want to read and send e-mail while sitting in a coffee shop, on a park bench or at the airport?

Your answers to these questions will help a salesperson identify the hardware you need and some of the software too.

BYTES and HERTZ

Buying a computer can be daunting, especially if you don't understand some basic computer hardware terminology,

Bill Detwiler, head technology editor for *TechRepublic.com*, says one source of confusion is the difference between random access memory, called RAM, and hard disk space. Today, both usually are measured in gigabytes (GB). Detwiler likens hard disk space to the storage in an office's filing cabinets. The more gigabytes, the more information your computer can hold. RAM, on the other hand, can be compared to the space on top of the desk. "The larger your desk is, the more things you can have open and be working on at the same time," he says. A basic laptop computer might have 2 GB of RAM.

Gigahertz (GHz) is another term to know. The higher your computer's gigahertz rating, the faster it operates. Laptops, for example, are available with speeds ranging from around 1.3 GHz to 2.8 GHz, Kyrnin notes.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.

"Computers allow you to mix and match in ways that other consumer products and devices don't," Detwiler says. It's like buying a Chevrolet, then choosing a stereo system from Mercedes-Benz, an acceleration system from Chrysler and a Saab dashboard. Nearly all computer consumers choose from two models: an Apple product or a Microsoft Windows-compatible product. Apple makes the Macintosh computers, and their operating system--the software that makes the computer run-- is the Mac OS X. Many manufacturers such as Dell, HP and Gateway, design computers that use Microsoft Windows as their operating system. Yet much of the software available today, and much of it made by Microsoft, works on either an Apple or a Windows-based machine. Detwiler advises not to sweat too much about the details. "There are still millions of baby boomers who don't know exactly how fuel injections works, and they don't want to know," he says. Nonetheless, they still drive their cars.

Thanks Myrelle McHale for contributing this article.

Preparing for a Newer Computer

Richard Gohman

The following is a suggestion from one member who wishes she had known this tip before she got a newer computer.

If you are going to transfer your computer data files, email, address book, etc. to a new computer, think about the copy process. Typically, you copy all of your data files, etc. to some form of removable drive (CD-R, flash drive, external hard drive, etc.). Moreover, if you have not cleaned out the old "JUNK" files, that process can take a lot of time and a lot of removable drive storage space. If you are having a technician doing this for you, that time is your money.

The suggestion is to do some house cleaning and organization:

Before you get the newer computer, delete those email messages that you do not really need to keep and empty the email trash bin. Then check the email program HELP menu to find out how to "compress" the folder storage files to get rid of "dead" space.

Then look at the files in your "MY DOCUMENTS" folder*. Are there files there that you really do not need to keep? Delete any unnecessary files.

* On a Vista computer the folder is called "DOCUMENTS".

Then look in the folders on your hard drive that might have data you want to keep, but that data is not in your "MY DOCUMENTS" folder. You might want to make a copy of that data to a folder within "MY DOCUMENTS" so that these files are not accidentally forgotten. Example: Quicken typically stores the financial records within its program folders and not in MY DOCUMENTS. A number of the genealogy programs also store the data files outside of MY DOCUMENTS. Keeping all of your personal files in the MY DOCUMENTS folder makes it easier to make the backup copies as well as assuring that you do not miss some critical file.

Locate the CD's that came with any programs you installed on your computer. You cannot copy PROGRAM operating files to a newer computer. You have to re-install the Programs from the original CDs. Remember also to locate the CD's for printers, scanners, cameras, etc. You have to re-install the software for these hardware units as well. If your Program requires a KEY CODE to complete the installation, make sure you have the key code label that came with the CD's**

** If you have not done so yet, download and install a copy of Belarc Adviser (www.belarc.com). This free program will inventory your computer and let you print a copy of the inventory. That inventory includes the all the KEY CODES required to install programs on your computer. It also lists every program installed on your computer so you know what to programs files you should be looking for.

Finally, make sure you know the password to your email account and any other protected program. Most of us have the computer memorize our email account password and then we forget it. Without the password, the email programs cannot be setup on the newer computer and it can be a big hassle to get that old password or to get a new password assigned from your email provider.

VVCC Beginners

Class

A popular series of six **hands-on** sessions designed for the *beginning* computer users. Classes are held on Wednesdays from 4:15 to 6:15 PM at the Cottonwood Middle School Computer Lab, Mingus & 6th. More information is on our web site!

Please call **Sharon Skinner** at
649-2993 after 3:00pm

Or Barbara Wall at 567-4222

**To preregister for each series
of classes**

The Series repeats.

VVCC

Mailing Address:

Mail inquires,
suggestions and items
of interest, to the club,

VVCC

PO BOX 3023
COTTONWOOD, AZ
86326

Or e-mail us at
info@vvccclub.com

Passwords

Richard Gohman

Part of using a computer on the Internet and using email is the necessity for passwords. Now I often work with club members that claim they have no email password. However, that only means their email program automatically enters it for them and they have forgotten the password. Of course, if there is a problem with the email program or they change computers and have to re-enter the password they are lost.

Having a strong-secure password may not be extremely important for most email programs (who would want to read your email anyway), but a strong-secure password is an absolute necessity if it is used for your online banking or shopping. A strong-secure password should be at least eight (8) characters long, use both UPPER CASE LETTERS and lower case letters and include some numbers. It should never be a person's, or pets, name and it should not even be a word that found in a standard dictionary.

So, how do you create a secure-strong password that you can remember?

Posting it on a note attached to your computer screen is not the answer! Here is what I tell computer club members about making and remembering a secure-strong password. Think of a sentence, using at least eight words and numbers and then use the first letter of each word, plus the numbers, as your password. Use Capital Letters if the sentence would normally capitalize the word.

Example: IlmvtMMi1954

This password would take years of computer support to break and it appears to make no sense. However, what it means to me is "**I lost my virginity to Marlin Monroe in 1954**" I have long since forgotten the event, but I remember the sentence! (Hey, it is a joke!) Note that the first word of a sentence is always capitalized and of course, proper names are capitalized.

The idea is you can remember the sentence and you do not have to try to remember the exact combination of letters. Maybe for your bank password you use the sentence: "I have banked at Chase Bank since 98". Your password would be: "IhbaCBs98"

Uncle Ole uses the password:

MickyMinniePlutoDonaldDaisyHeweyLouieDewiePhoenix.

When asked why, he said it had to have eight characters and a capital.

Join Us for a Special Interest Group (SIG)

Learn from *each other!*

Spreadsheets:

Dick Gohman

Internet:

Dick Gohman

Windows: Bob Efos

Beginner Classes:

Starting in September

Digital Camera:& Photography:

Leo Zuercher

Hal Rosenwasser.

Web Site Team:

Lisa Packard

Richard Gohman

Miles Standish

Handouts for the sessions can be downloaded from the club website:

Attendees are encouraged to print out handouts prior to classes.

Visit our Web site for more SIG information

www.vvclub.com

ALL SIGS WILL BEGIN AGAIN IN SEPTEMBER!

The Secretary's Corner

By Del Rosenwasser



PITY THE POOR TECH SUPPORT FOLKS

Tech Support: What kind of computer do you have?

Customer: A white one....

Tech Support: What's on your monitor now, ma'am?

Customer: A teddy bear my boyfriend bought for me at the 7-11.

Tech Support: Your password is the small letter 'a' as in apple, a capital letter 'V' as in Victor and the number '7'.

Customer: Is that 7 in capital letters?

Customer: I can't get on the Internet.

Tech Support: Are you sure you used the right password?

Customer: Yes, I'm sure. I saw my colleague do it.

Tech Support: Can you tell me what the password was?

Customer: Five dots

NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS - DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

Battista Leather Task Chair - Myrelle McHale

Gemalto 4gh Flash Drives - Raymond Fousel and Warren Peterson

Lasko 20" Box Fan - Henry Melody

SkyScan Atomic Clock - Adrienne Pritchard

Lexmark Z2300 Color Photo Printer - John Settle

2 Reams of Boise Paper - Warren Peterson and Louise Evans

SEE YOU AT OUR SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING:

Exposing the "Weather Underground" and
Astrophotography

Coming Changes - Ready or Not !

Get ready to imagine a world without the post office. They are so deeply in financial trouble that there is probably no way to sustain it long term. Email, Fed Ex, and UPS have just about wiped out the minimum revenue needed to keep the post office alive. Most of your mail every day is junk mail and bills.

1. The Check.

Britain is already laying the groundwork to do away with checks by 2018. It costs the financial system billions of dollars a year to process checks. Plastic cards and online transactions will lead to the eventual demise of the check. This plays right into the death of the post office. If you never paid your bills by mail and never received them by mail, the post office would absolutely go out of business.

2. The Newspaper.

The younger generation simply doesn't read the newspaper. They certainly don't subscribe to a daily delivered print edition. That may go the way of the milkman and the laundry man. As for reading the paper online, get ready to pay for it. The rise in mobile Internet devices and e-readers has caused all the newspaper and magazine publishers to form an alliance. They have met with Apple, Amazon, and the major cell phone companies to develop a model for paid subscription services.

3. The Book.

You say you will never give up the physical book that you hold in your hand and turn the literal pages. I said the same thing about downloading music from iTunes. I wanted my hard copy CD. But I quickly changed my mind when I discovered that I could get albums for half the price without ever leaving home to get the latest music. The same thing will happen with books. You can browse a bookstore online and even read a preview chapter before you buy. And the price is less than half that of a real book. And think of the convenience! Once you start flicking your fingers on the screen instead of the book, you find that you are lost in the story, can't wait to see what happens next, and you forget that you're holding a gadget instead of a book.

4. The Land Line Telephone.

Unless you have a large family and make a lot of local calls, you don't need it anymore. Most people keep it simply because they have always had it. But you are paying double charges for that extra service. All the cell phone companies will let you call customers using the same cell provider for no charge against your minutes.

August VVCC General Meeting 2010 Notes

During Q&A there was some very good discussion on FREE tools that the technical representative use. Not everyone could copy fast enough, so I am giving you a list, with web addresses.

Ccleaner is an excellent tool for removing trash files, removing trash from the registry and controlling what programs automatically load and start when Windows boots. It also has a Program Uninstaller feature that is much faster than any of the Windows Control Panel tools.

You can download a copy at www.ccleaner.com

Malwarebytes is an excellent tool for cleaning out Trojan Horse malware and the Rogue Antivirus Programs that have been especially painful this past year. The basic program is Free, but does not run in the background to provide active protection. A paid version does run in the background to give active protection and it is compatible with most antivirus programs. Like most antivirus and anti-spyware programs it has to be updated regularly or it will miss the latest bad-guy work-around.

You can download a copy at www.malwarebytes.org

Smart Defrag is a nice Defrag program that provides the option to "Optimize" your hard drive to move frequently used program to the outer rings of the hard drive for faster response.

You can download a copy at www.iobit.com/iobitsmartdefrag.html

Auslogic Defrag is another nice Defrag program that provides the option to "Optimize" your hard drive by moving frequently used programs to the outer rings of the hard drive. The program was recommended in Smart Computing Magazine.

You can download a copy at www.auslogics.com/en/software/disk-defrag/

Comments:

Both "Smart Defrag" and "Auslogic Defrag" can entertain (?) you by showing you the flashing sector indicators as program moves files around during the defrag. Both programs require that you select the "Optimization" mode as it is not the default mode. By the way you can load both of these Defrag Programs and see which one you like better. I found that Smart Defrag was slower than Auslogic Defrag, but have not yet determined which does the better Optimization since the first one I ran did most of the file optimization.

Both Bob Efos and I think Ccleaner is a "Must Have" program on your computer and it works on XP, Vista, and Win 7.

Malwarebytes is one I use to fix infected computers, but sometimes you have to run it from the SAFE MODE if the computer has already been infected. A lot of the Rogue Antivirus programs know about Malwarebytes and will prevent it from running if they get started first. Typically the Rogue programs do not start when the computer is running in the SAFE MODE. (Hint: Do a Google, Yahoo or BING search for SAFE MODE and learn a little about it. You will be glad you did someday.)

Submitted by Richard Gohman

Verde Valley Computer Club
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 PO Box 3023
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Pass It On

When you are done
 reading
 this



Verify that your e-mail and
 mailing addresses are correct.
 Send corrections or

changes to

membership@vvclub.com



PLEASE WELCOME NEW MEMBER!

"No new members to report this month but we are offering a really **good deal** if you join in October.

\$7.50 will pay you through the end of the year.

"All memberships renew in January."

Note from the Editor...

The next newsletter deadline for all
 submissions: September 21st, 2:00 p.m.

