



Verde Valley Computer Club

Connections

Volume 28, Issue 6 June 2011

June 18, 2011

MEETING TIME 9:30 AM

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES TO
BE PRINTED IN THE
CONNECTIONS: TUESDAY,
June 21, 2011
AT 2:00 PM

Questions and Answers

Wondering how to do this or that?

Software confusing?

Hardware has a glitch?

Provide as much information you can about your system
like XP, Vista, Win 7, type of problem, etc.

The more specific the better.

Send your information to info@vvclub.com
as soon as possible to give time for research

In presenting this program, the Verde Valley Computer Club is neither implying an endorsement of any product offered nor validation of any information provided."

See the JUNE/JULY 2011. VVCC Events Calendar on page 3



Marny Zuercher has had to resign as VVCC Editor due to her doctor's orders; and we are looking for a volunteer to take her place. She will help train the replacement.

Our club would like to take this opportunity to thank Marny for the many years she has been editor of our clubs Newsletter, CONNECTIONS.

Marny has made us all laugh a thousand times by her little trade mark jokes, sayings and plenty of reminders. She is truly one of the happiest, fun loving and multi

talented people in our club. She makes her best friend and husband smile

CALENDAR OF UP-COMING VVCC EVENTS

*

SIG meetings will resume September 2011.

*****SEE MAP ON BACK PAGE*****

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2011 OFFICERS

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Marny Zuercher
marny71@gmail.com

Photography-

Hal Rosenwasser
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Being a Mentor doesn't mean you have ALL the answers just a willingness to help someone. Join us!



The VVCC President's Bits and Bytes

Hi Everybody,
Our General Meeting presentation was a real winner. Entitled 'Printers, Inks, and Papers', our presenter, Jeffery Iams really came through with a vast supply of useful information. We all use printers. We all use printer ink. We all use printer paper. How much more practical can it get? The takeaway I got from our meeting is this: If you need a printer and you want to save money on printer ink, the trick is to first do some research on the cost of ink. Find replacement ink that is reasonable to purchase and then buy that brand and model of printer.

That is the opposite of what most do. Typically, we buy a printer, then look for ink. If you are unlucky, you will find you just bought a printer with the most expensive ink there is. Call Jeffery's office, Think4Inc, for their current printer suggestions. (1-800-786-5521) They currently have two stores in the Prescott area and plan to have a Cottonwood store within the next six months or so.

The following story is true. The names have been changed to protect the innocent. Well, there I was, happily checking my online e-mail. It was just like any other day. I've been expecting a package from someone who lives overseas. I've been watching out for some sort of delivery notification, but it hasn't arrived in my inbox yet.

Since I routinely check my junk mail (Spam) folder from time to time, I figured now would be a good time. The junk mail filters for the e-mail applications do their best, and for the most part do a pretty decent job. The trouble is, once in a while they catch and label as junk mail, a needed e-mail from a trusted source. So, to protect against that, we are required to occasionally open that junk mail folder and see if any trusted or expected e-mail got caught. If we find such a wanted e-mail, we can identify it as not junk mail or Spam, so the next time it will show up in your Inbox. Well, in this instance, I found an e-mail saying it was a DHL delivery notice. It could have been what I had been waiting for, so I clicked on it to open. Big mistake!

Actually, at first the message seemed benign and was not specific, so I closed it, deleted all the other Spam messages and shut down my computer. Apparently the simple act of opening it was all it took for the worst to take place. Upon restarting later, all the damage showed up. My computer was hijacked by what must be the worst virus on the face of the earth. Suddenly error messages appeared stating my hard drive was corrupted. All the icons on my desktop vanished and the desktop turned black. I opened the Start menu and found no icons there. I clicked on all programs and it was empty! I clicked on My Computer, then C drive, and it was empty! Everything was gone! The error messages looked like official Microsoft messages said I would have to buy a special module to fix my computer. I called several of my guru friends.

They knew it was a virus, but this one was something new to them. I did what they suggested. I restarted the computer in "Safe Mode" (see your owners manual) and downloaded (the virus let the programs that were running at the time of infection alone, so I still had a browser) Malwarebytes Antimalware and ran it. Ten!!! Viruses were located and deleted. I restarted and no change. Next I ran a disk check on the C drive. That also didn't help. What did help was that I had been backing up my computer data files on a semi-regular basis. It was set to backup automatically every week, but my computer wasn't always on at the scheduled time. My most recent full backup was two weeks old. Not good, but certainly better than losing ALL of my data. Turns out my only solution to this virus attack was to totally overwrite the entire hard drive by reinstalling Windows, then reinstall my personal files from my backup drive.

Then I had the pleasure of reinstalling all the miscellaneous programs that were on my computer such as Firefox, Windows Security Essentials, PowerDVD, Ccleaner, etc from their various sources, such as installation CD's/DVD's, websites, and when I was lucky, any recent installation files still in My Documents/Downloads.

I save all of my downloads to my desktop in a Downloads file, and they came in handy, as I could install them right away, instead of searching the web and redownloading. Of course, I also had to check for and install all the updates for all those programs. And then all my preferences and settings had to be reconfigured. After all this work and many, many hours of my time, my computer was serviceable again. It isn't exactly the same, but as close as I could get.

Be Careful,
Jerry Miller President VVCC

MEMBERSHIP CORNER BY MYRELLE MCHALE

Hello All,

Just a very quick but heartfelt “Thank You” to those who took on my responsibility last Saturday and covered the Sign-In Table(s) for me. Donna Forbes, Gretchen Platt, my ever-reliable Adrienne Pritchard and my daughter Toni - Thanks to you I was able to go to my granddaughter's graduation

from Cal. State University in San Marcos last weekend and what a grand time I had!

Now I am back home and back into the swing of things and am wondering, “What can we do to get some of our members *back* into the VVCC?” This year-to-date we have 90 renewing members - in 2010 we had 115 renewals. What happened to the 25 members who did not renew? This year we have 21 new members -last year we had 25.

We have a great club and we have a lot of mentors who are ready and willing to help other computer users. Our primary aim is to educate and we do that in many ways; we have the Beginners Class which is second to none in taking people from the absolute first introduction to a computer to a point they can actually have fun *using* their computers. We have SIG meetings (Special Interest Groups) in which you can learn how to set up a spreadsheet or word processor, safely and securely navigate the web, operate your digital camera *and* edit the pictures. And don't forget, we have a class in Genealogy to help you find your ancestors and another SIG to help you to learn and understand your computer's operating system- Windows. Add to that, the monthly General Meetings where others come and make presentations to teach us even more.

I almost forgot a bonus that often happens -we make new friends! Isn't it nice to come to a General Meeting on a Saturday morning and as soon as you walk in the door you see people you know? What could be nicer than a friendly “Hello!” and a bit of conversation?

There is something going on almost every week of the month! We have SIG Meetings, the General Meeting PLUS the 6 week Beginners Classes. We have been here for you and computer users in the Verde Valley for 20+ years AND attendance is FREE. But remember - while the education and fun are free, the building and the insurance and the equipment is not. We need your ongoing support and hope that you will renew for just \$30/year!

If you can think of anything we can do to entice you back into the group, let us know. If you have constructive advice for how we can further entice or educate you, please send your suggestions to me at membership@vvclub.com I will personally acknowledge your note and follow-up with it, members and non-members alike.

Again, thanks to all who stepped in to help YOUR club in my absence! I hope to see you at the next General Meeting on Saturday – June 18th when our meeting will be a Q&A Session and you can bring all your questions and get help right then and there. It would be a greater help if you could send your questions ahead of time and that way our mentors will have the answer at their fingertips. Send them to: info@vvclub.com Be sure to mark your calendar, if you forget, you can always go to our Web Site and check it out: www.vvclub.com

Thanks for helping us “grow” our club!

Myrelle

How Would You Like To

How would you like to have your picture in a book that celebrates a part of Verde Valley history ??????

Wouldn't it be great to have your photo in a book, in a museum, on display?

Or get your children or grandchildren in the picture so they will have their mark in history.

Arizona will soon celebrate 100 years of statehood. February 14, 2012, will mark the 100th year anniversary. There will be many celebrations around the State, the County and our City. Some of them marking this special date in our State have already begun. Historical markers are being made, parties are being planned, marching bands and many special events are already on the calendar of things to do this year.

Now, about that first question.....

The Verde Valley Computer Club is dedicating its July Pot Luck Party to celebrate the Centennial. We hope you will join us. Every year we have a Pot Luck and this year we are sure it will be the best ever. One of the special ways we are marking this event will be to welcome to our gathering, Helen Killebrew, from the Clemenceau Historical Society. She is going to give us a brief history of Cottonwood and our Museum and the part it has played in the growth of the State. She will also speak about how computer technology enhances the Museum's ability to record the data for future generations. One of the things on her agenda is to take a few pictures of our group as we celebrate not only our annual July Pot Luck but the anniversary of our statehood. These pictures will be placed into a "Birthday Book" and published at the end of the various celebrations around our County and City. The book will be on display at our Clemenceau Museum for all to see. Wouldn't it be great when you have out of town visitors or relatives come to see you and you take them to see our great Museum and Train Room and then they can see the photo of our Computer Club (with YOU in it) as part of the history....

Please accept our invitation to attend. **Saturday – July 16th, 2011 at 10 a.m..**

Admission is **FREE**.

All you have to do is bring a side dish to share with others. If you are bringing a large family, (or a family of LARGE eaters) perhaps you might want to bring two side dishes. It is a day to share not only some of the history as being told by Helen, but the food and friendship.

We hope you will join us.

Inserting Tomorrow's Date

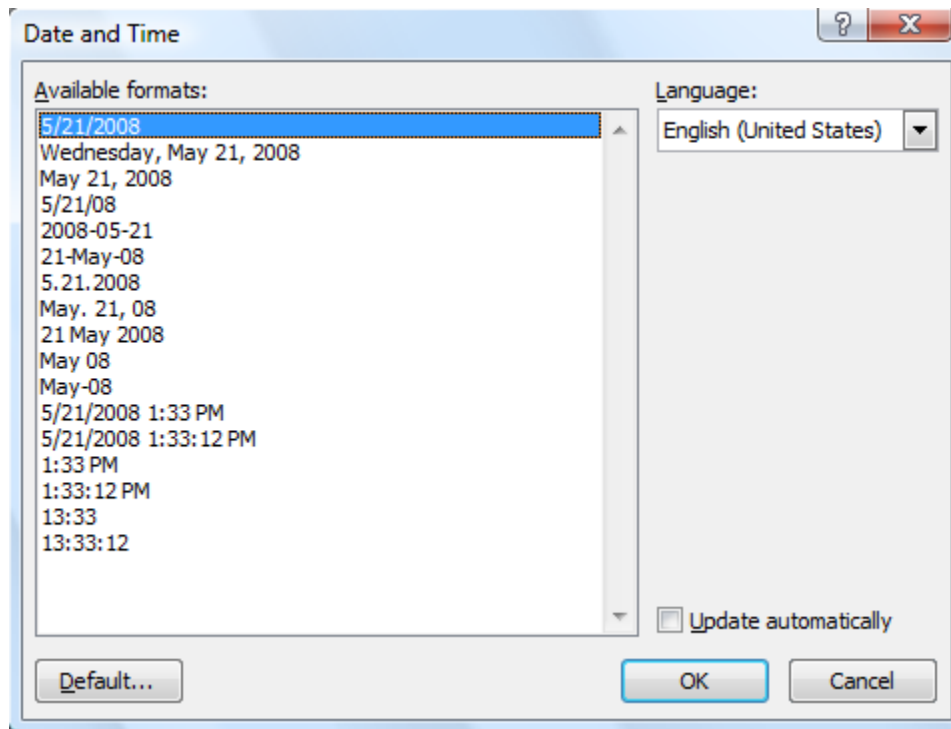
You may want to insert tomorrow's date into a cell in your worksheet. This is easily done by simply creating a formula that includes the function for today's date, as in the following:

=TODAY () + 1

This formula first determines today's date and then adds 1 to it, resulting in tomorrow's date. You can then use Excel's formatting features to display the resulting date in any manner desired.

Besides displaying tomorrow's date, you can modify the formula to display a date at any time in the future. Simply change the formula so the desired number of days are being added to today's date. For instance, if you wanted to determine a date two weeks in the future, you could use the following:

=TODAY () + 14



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 **Barbara Wall at 567-4222**

To preregister for each series of classes

The Series repeats.

Beginners class dates:

Will begin in September

Dates to be announced

VVCC Mailing Address:

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

Verde Valley Computer Club

PO Box 3023

Cottonwood, AZ 86326 2540

Or e-mail us at

info@vccclub.com

W A N T E D

GENEALOGY Leader

Requirements:

Have some experience in obtaining ancestor records.

The group can be organized for informal discussion where the attendees are the main contributors.

This position allows you to be part of the Board of Directors with a salary of zero dollars per year.

Also allows the volunteer to have a 3 month time off to enjoy your family and friends.

The meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of the month, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. from September through May

You do not need to be an expert!

Being a mentor doesn't mean you have ALL the answers just a willingness to help others.

**Join Us for a
Special Interest Group
(SIG)**

Learn from *each other!*
Visit our Web site for schedule
and handouts

Digital Camera:

Leo Zuercher

Genealogy

Marny Zuercher

Internet:

Richard Gohman

Spreadsheets:

Richard Gohman

Windows:

Bob Efros

Word Processing:

Richard Gohman

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

www.vvcclub.com

Beginner Classes:

Barbara Wall

Web Site Team:

Bob Efros

Richard Gohman

Dave Olson

The Secretary's Corner

By Barry Adico



May raffle winners

George Foreman grill

Beverly Hansen

Skill Screwdriver Set

Charles Libkie

100 pk TDK DVD-R Discs

Jack Burton

L.E.D. Camping Lantern

Dale Forbes

L.E.D. Camping Lantern

Al Quadracci

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How would you like to track your health
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It might be just the thing you are looking-
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[http://www.google.com/intl/en-us/health/
about/index.html](http://www.google.com/intl/en-us/health/about/index.html)

Personal Experience

Have you heard the saying, **Back Up, Back Up, Back Up?**

I received my first computer in 1990. Never did a back up of data until first part of 2010. Since 2010 I do weekly maintenance of the hard drives along with full image and data back ups. Just something I learned from attending the SIG's and General Meetings.

May 2011 received an error after the Internet computer had been on for a short period of time. Tried some things to remedy it and nothing worked.

The next day entering data on the non-Internet computer an error was received. This was a concern because the hard drive was just replaced in April 2011.

The Internet computer was worked on and seemed to work after restoring the system image a couple times and then failed again.

Was suggested to replace the hard drive so this was done and restored the image to the new drive.

Restoring the image from an external drive took about a hour so that was approximately three hours. This could have been done by restoring each program, providing the discs were readily available, and would have taken much longer reinstalling each program multiple times. The system image on the external drive had all the programs and the data files current to the date of the last back up. Information lost with the Internet computer was minimal and did lose some recent email in the process.

The non-Internet computer problem was a bad Zip drive. Although there was a system image for that computer also, it was not needed. Concern was the data and pictures that had been entered since the back up was lost if the problem would have been the hard drive.

What was learned from this experience? Thirty dollars a year for membership is pretty cheap for the information one can gather. Whether it's a software, hardware or a procedure one needs help with the SIG's and General Meetings have very good topics. We are Users Helping Users. And that saying, Back Up, Back Up, Back Up is so Important. If nothing else, back up your Important data (documents, pictures, music, videos, etc.) Daily.

dave

Flash Drive Limitations

Flash memory, the type of memory used in USB thumb drives and other devices, is very cool. However, there is a dark side that people do not talk about much.

Flash memory "wears out".

Flash memory chips are called "flash" because in order to write to it, the memory is loaded, and then a signal is sent to the memory circuitry that says, "Remember this" kind of like the flash on a camera. (In all honesty, I do not know if modern flash memory uses this exact technique, but it remains an accurate metaphor for the process.) Once the memory has been "flashed", you can remove power and the memory will retain the data.

"Never run disk-intensive applications directly against files stored on the thumb drive." The "problem" is that you can flash memory only so many times with advertised numbers between 10,000 and 100,000 times - though as with anything, I am sure that is increasing over time as well. Regardless, there is a limit. When approaching that limit, some portion of the memory may not properly remember the data, resulting in corruption. It may only take a single bit of information to be wrong, or to "wear out", for the entire contents of a flash memory chip to be lost.

Scary, huh?

Some flash memory chips, perhaps even most, now also include circuitry to avoid "bad bits". Meaning that if portion of the flash memory finally wears out and goes bad, the chip itself can compensate and look like everything is fine. But that only lasts so long ...it doesn't prevent failure, it only postpones it.

Now, if you are using a USB thumb drive as the primary source of a data file, you are using it in perhaps the worst possible way for longevity. Software applications, such as data base programs or financial programs, in particular are notorious for writing to the disk - a lot - as they update tables, fields, indexes and the like. Even if you do not write to your data file, the files may be updated with things like "last access" information and other administration that still results in the USB drive being written to.

With all that writing going on, suddenly 10,000 or 100,000 writes to the same location in the flash memory does not seem that far fetched. Remember, in the unluckiest case, it might only take one worn-out bit of information to render the entire contents unreadable.

The best use of USB thumb drives and other flash memory based devices is simply copy-to and copy-from. By that I mean copy the information to the thumb drive to store it, copy it from the thumb drive to a local hard disk to use it, and then copy it back to the thumb drive to store it. Never run disk-intensive applications directly against files stored on the thumb drive. If you copy to and from even 10 times a day, that's still close to three years of usage for the low end of the flash memory lifespan. (Yes, I know that is not exact. In fact, its way more complex than that, factoring in things like the type of file system, FAT or NTFS, the efficiency of the device driver, and even the circuitry on the specific flash memory device - but it is a good order of magnitude.)

You may also note that your application speeds up when you copy your data to the hard disk for use. While reading flash memory is typically quite fast, writing is not. Finally, if you really need external storage, a thumb drive may simply be the wrong solution to your problem. An external hard drives could do the same job without the write limitations.

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Pass It On

*When you are done reading
 the Connections Pass it on
 to a Friend or Neighbor*



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

Send corrections or
 changes to

membership@vvclub.com



PLEASE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Thank you for joining our Verde Valley Computer Club

Barbara Johnson

L. Annette Larsen

Charles Libkie

Note from the Editor...

The next **newsletter deadline**
 for all submissions:

Tuesday: JUNE 21, 2:00 p.m.

