Bits of Bytes

The Prez Sez

by Joe Nuvolini, President, P*PCompAS

Many thanks to Jon Roberts and Kevin Cheek for their presentation on the security issues associated with social networking. I hope they haven't left you all paranoid!

On a more somber note, former member Joe Blades passed away on February 29th at a local care center. He was 89 years old. Though we haven't seen much of Joe in the last few years, he was a member of P*PCompAS for many years.

Our April meeting will feature Gene Barlow doing a Webinar on latest offerings from Acronis: True Image 2012 and Disk Director 11. Acronis True Image 2012 introduced a new function that allows you to easily share certain files with your other computers and with friends across the Internet. Gene will actually demonstrate how easy it is to use the new Synchronization feature of True Image 2012. Gene will introduce you to the more popular backup approaches and point out the advantages and limitations of each approach. He will then describe the backup approach that gives you the best protection of your computer. Finally, Gene will describe the various options you have to better organize your hard drive to serve your needs. He will conclude with a demonstration of the Acronis Disk Director 11 Home utility that will make doing these changes to your computer's hard drive simple and easy to do.

Next P*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 7 April 2012
Gene Barlow will present a Webinar on Acronis True Image 2012. Product will be available after the presentation.

At the end of the meeting, Gene will offer a free software product to each of the attendees to monitor the well being of their own hard drive(s). Ilene will have copies of True Image and Disk Director available after the presentation. The pricing will be $25 for a single copy of True Image 2012 or Disk Director 2011. If you buy any combination of 3 or more copies, they are $20 per copy. This should be a very informative program. Don't miss this one. ☺

Meeting Minutes

by Pat Krieger, Secretary, P*PCompAS

President Joe Nuvolini called the 3 March 2012 meeting to order at 9:00 am. The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

OFFICER REPORT

Treasurer Jim Way gave this report:

Savings:	5800.46
Checking:	758.12
Total:	6558.58

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Joe said our Website is functioning well and asked if members watch the videos. A few members indicated they do.

Chris Walchak was redoing some of his electric devices at home and went to Best Buy for some parts. While there he noticed they had a closeout on many items. He bought boxes of them and brought them to the club: cables, car chargers, chips for cell phones and movies, and much more. He is selling everything very cheaply and will replace anything that doesn't work.

Joe talked of his tribulations in installing Windows 8 as a trial. He finally got it to work and said once one gets used to it, it has nice features. Trials are free if you want to load and experiment with it. Bill Everett said you need a video card that takes X9. Ilene Steinkruger said to go first to a site that checks to see if your computer will run Windows 8. John Pearce said there is an EXE program that tells you if a computer is good enough and which programs won't run. Joe said there are special commands involved in the installation, such as "Keep settings, Y or N?" The

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second time this pops up, say No. Check with Joe if you try to install and get stuck. Windows 8 will be for sale to the public by the end of the year.

AROUND THE ROOM:

Chuck Harris received a file from a friend, and he can't read it because it is formatted for Excel He asked what format he should ask the friend to send it in. Chuck was advised to go to Microsoft and get an Excel viewer. Once installed, he can read Excel documents and print them. Someone suggested going to Google to find the Excel viewer.

Ann Titus has a daughter with a Sony reader. This daughter has downloaded hundreds of books onto her reader, and Ann would like to transfer them to her Kindle, but she is stopped by a digital rights manager (DRM) code. She asked if anyone knows how to get around this code. No one knew. Later, Ann said she thinks she is on the right track for overcoming this obstacle, but it is very complicated.

Dick Steinmier received a notification that Windows XP won't be supported any longer. John Pearce said Microsoft will not be responsible for bugs in the system any longer but will continue security patches for 2 more years.

Phyllis Butler uses Comcast for Internet. She couldn't get any browser to come up. Comcast helped her clear out the settings, but it didn't help. Phyllis hired a software expert (get the name from her) who worked 1 hour and charged $79. Now it works fine. His service is available for $19 a month. See Phyllis if you are interested in more information.

Chuck Kinsley has Excel 2003. He installed a converter program that will convert Excel to the 2007 version. He said he can now open them but can't save to the new format. One suggestion was to get Open Office, which will open and save to the new format. Someone also mentioned Libre Office.

Ilene Steinkruger mentioned a government shutdown that was reputed to be widespread. Chuck Kinsley knew about it. He said it concerned a virus that changed DNS to GoTo. Some organization created this virus and spread it to perhaps millions of computers. The organization had several servers. The virus would send any message from an infected computer to one of their servers, which directed the message to one of their sites where they would steal information from the sender. The government discovered the organization and confiscated all their servers. If your computer has the virus, anything you send is now going to one of these servers, which aren't there any more. You will think something is wrong with your computer, but nothing is. You must get rid of the virus. There is a site that will tell you if you have the virus. See Chuck for information on how to locate this site.

Harvey McMinn says his computer has to do a search for all drivers every time he turns it on; not only that, but a light flashes. John Pearce suggested a diagnosis but said it was only a guess. Joe suggested Ccleaner and defragging all drives, but everyone was puzzled.

Bill Everett has more information on telephone service; this time he told us about Google Voice and magicJack. This is not the same information he had given us previously about magicJack. The Google Voice jack costs $20; a one-time charge. MagicJack is now $30. This new arrangement activates a magicJack dongle for Google Voice. He gave the address as PC Phonecraft.com. This system uses magicJack for hardware and the computer for software; one can go back and forth between magicJack and Google Voice. Google Voice does not have 911 access. Call the police department and tell them you don't have 911 and they will connect you.

(Bill said he'd send me the information he displayed on our big screen and it may be in my gmail, but I am having an absolute nightmare in accessing my g-mail. The devil's lieutenants who say they have straightened up my password (Look, I know my new password—I have it written down) but I still can't get in and I've typed those silly letters (you know what I mean) for the last time. Just tonight I tried to open my gmail and got a screen full of Arabic, and I'm not joking. If I ever get Bill's message, next month I shall send you the rest of his excellent information.--PK)

PROGRAM

Those delightful airmen from Peterson AFB, Kevin Cheek and John Roberts, whom we have had the pleasure of listening to before, talked on the topic of "Safety on Online Social Networking."

We are all familiar with Facebook and how one can create a Facebook page and "friend" someone and then friend a friend of a friend, and so on. Very easy and such a neat way to keep in touch with people and even meet new and interesting people, isn't it? Wouldn't

Our presenters in March

you just know, crooks see this as an oh-so-easy way to steal.

They simply create a Facebook page and make themselves look really cool, then with this fake account they start friending, link into a PowerPoint presentation, and soon they have an opening to an account that breaks into a target computer. From there they find more "friends" and those friends' address books. (This happened to one of our members, who told us about it at the meeting, but so far he had no evidence anyone but a kid was involved.) The crooks soon get people to click on to their fake account, which gives them access to other computers.

Big money is involved. Hackers can sell bank account information and credit card numbers for $100 each. They can use credit card numbers for online shopping. They can also set up extortion plots and some people will pay big fees for the crooks not to tell what they have found out about them.

"Like" icons can be dangerous. Every like adds legitimacy to a site. The person may actually be downloading malware.

You have to trust where you are. Check HTML code and check the address, for it may be another country.

Be careful what you "like" for another reason. Advertisers use these as target sites for ads. The term "like jacking" means a malicious person will redirect to where you go.

Of course, once a crook gets information about you and finds out your friends, he will send you e-mails you think are from a friend. You think you are replying to one address, but actually you are sending to another who sent it to you.

As for banks, their encryption section can be exploited.

Both John and Kevin kept emphasizing **No wireless connection is secure.** Starbucks, McDonalds, and the like are easy pickings. They discussed cross-platform vulnerabilities at length. Combining a phone, Facebook, e-mail, etc. is so convenient, but every layer of convenience increases the risk. Each separate one should have its own antivirus protection. Bluetooth is easy to hack. If all these are turned off, they still receive incoming calls.

About passwords: Change them often (*I should be in good shape here--PK*) and use complicated passwords. John said even then they aren't completely safe. He said he can break any password in 2 minutes. As for those who have password vaults on their computers, he said they are only as safe as the password that protects it. In fact, every protection is only as good as the person using it, depending also on whether it is a good or a bad person.

Ilene asked, "If someone puts my information on their account, am I vulnerable? Answer: Yes, and don't add a picture. Pictures have EXIF info in them that tells where the picture was taken, which could make you a target. You can strip this out of the photo, then copy and paste the picture to a different file to make the picture safer.

John Pearce asked about sending text messages to a bank to ask about his account. John Roberts said different codes give different information, and it's even less secure.

As many of you know, I'm a huge fan of Windows XP and apparently I'm not alone. Microsoft has now extended it support for XP to April 8, 2014. Windows XP Home Edition was released on October 25, 2001. This has to be a record for the length of time Microsoft has provided support for an operating system. With Windows 8 looming in the near future, let's examine the history of Windows once again.

Windows 1.0 was released on November 20, 1985. Instead of typing DOS commands, you now could point and click your way to apps. Windows 2.0 followed on December 9, 1987. The Control Panel made its appearance in this version. May 22,1990 brought Windows 3.0 followed by Windows 3.1 in 1992. This version had advanced graphics (16 colors), and Solitare made its debut. Version 3.11 added network support. Windows NT and the 32-bit operating system arrived in July of 1993. On August 24, 1995 Windows 95 made its appearance. This version brought Internet support, dial-up networking, and Plug and Play.
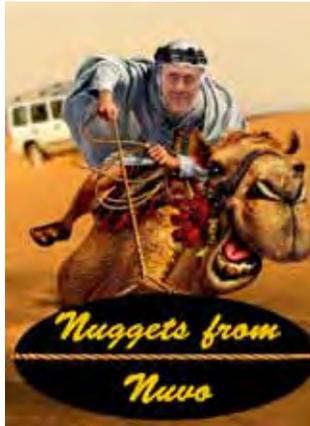
The Start button and taskbar made their first appearance in this version. That summer the first version of Internet Explorer was released. Moving on, Windows 98 was released on June 25, 1998. This version brought DVD and USB support. The Quick Launch bar made its debut in 98. By the way, this is the last version based on MS-DOS. Windows ME showed up on September 14, 2000. This version wasn't very well received and had a shelf-life of just over a year. It did have Windows Media Player 7 and Windows Movie Maker. System Restore made it first appearance in ME. Support for it ended in July of 2006. Windows 2000 was also released in February 2000 but was aimed at the business community.

As stated earlier, Windows XP arrived on October 25th 2001. To this date, it is the most stable home OS that Microsoft has released. It is very easy to use and navigate through. I believe this is why it has held its popularity. Another reason, I'm sure, is that you cannot migrate to Windows 7 easily from XP. I'm not forgetting Windows Vista released on January 30, 2007. It had limited popularity. As of last November it is only installed on about 5% of the world's computers. At the same time, Windows XP was still installed on about 33% of the machines while Windows 7 had a 46% share.

As a matter of interest, Linux's number is about 5%, Mac about 9%, and others account for whatever is left.

Speaking of Windows 7, it was released in October 2009. It looks like it will be around for a while as well, as it is quite stable. Probably one reason for this is that it was evaluated by 8 million beta testers worldwide before its release.

I have a hard time giving a good evaluation of Win 7 as I only have it on my netbook, which I use less frequently than my XP machines. Windows 8 promises to be quite different in appearance from previous versions of Windows. With a projected release date in the September–October time frame, it will be beta tested by millions of users before release, so hopefully it should prove to be quite stable as well. I've loaded the Consumer Preview release on the Dell I bought last year and will report on it next month. ☺

A jolly gathering of digerati met at the Country Buffet on St. Patrick's day. Although a wee bit of blarney could be heard, you could not beat the conversations and camaraderie with a shillelagh.

Create a Free WiFi Hotspot With Your PC
Published with permission from Ira Wilsker, Golden Triangle PC Club, columnist for The Examiner, Beaumont, TX

WEBSITES:
http://www.mhotspot.com
http://www.mhotspot.com/howto.html
http://www.thedailybuggle.com/wifi-hotspot-free-windows-pc
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6ABC5QmTjs (Video about Mhotspot)

I was recently doing one of my cyber security presentations at a professional meeting in a posh Dallas area hotel, and there was a need for several users to get online for research purposes. As the speaker, I had a hard-wired Ethernet connection allowing me to access the Internet, but the available WiFi connections in the room were weak and slow, making it difficult for the others to connect to the internet. This was one of those situations where a common and inexpensive WiFi router connected to the available Ethernet cable would have sufficed, but no one had a WiFi router with them, as that is something that we typically do not carry in our computer bags. I remembered a column about a year ago in the Daily Buggle (**thedailybuggle.com/wifi-hotspot-free-windows-pc**) which explained how to use a modern WiFi capable Windows PC as a WiFi hotspot, without the use of any additional hardware. I searched for that article, found it, and in a matter of minutes, we were all connected to the Internet using our laptops, netbooks, and smart phones.

Most recent versions of Windows include a little known feature called Internet Connection Sharing (ICS), which is especially easy to set up and configure as an ad-hoc wireless network on Windows 7. When used with a freeware utility, Mhotspot (**mhotspot.com**), the Internet connected laptop computer becomes a virtual WiFi router with no additional hardware, and no complicated software configuration. Once installed on the computer, the Mhotspot software does all of the work, and creates a WiFi hotspot without the use of complex configuration; Mhotspot is so simple that a single mouse click creates the hotspot.

The newly released version 4 of Mhotspot was released in February 2012, and is a fast 210 kb download, even though the website still shows it as version 3 (www.mhotspot.com/download.html). The Mhotspot software requires Windows 7, but being the skeptic I downloaded it to an XP laptop, and it would not install on the XP machine. Mhotspot ran flawlessly on my newer Windows 7 laptop.

The setup process was fast and simple, consisting of only two steps, without any intricate configurations. There is no traditional installation, as the program is ready to run when downloaded. First I had to choose a name for my hotspot, and then create a password with a minimum of eight characters. The Mhotspot window appeared, offering the choice to start or stop the hotspot, or setup its properties. If a configuration is necessary, it is a "one time" event,

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Chuck Harris asked if he got out of Facebook, is the information still out there? Answer: Yes. There is no way to remove it.

A hint—The gold part of your credit cards has much information on it. Put them in a metal wallet when going through anything that has a scanner, such as airport security. *(Does it help to wrap them in foil? PK)*

Many thanks to Kevin and John for a very informative and entertaining meeting. We all need to apply what they taught us and pass the word to others.

Really, it was a fascinating meeting, even though it left me feeling distressed. It's a crying shame that the Internet and its related functions such as e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, plus smart phones, iPads, and all the rest, which are so useful and have such wonderful applications and

possibilities, can be spoiled by a bunch of greedy and evil crooks. As I see it, the death penalty is woefully underused.

DRAWING

Convert large to small USB—Doug Livermore
Dash-mount for universal GPS—Bill Everett
HTML5 for Beginners—Bob Blackledge
Zip drive—Bob Blackledge ☺

Choosing a Smartphone
Published with permission from Sandy Berger, www.compukiss.com

There are so many different smartphones available today that choosing between them can be difficult. Each phone and each operating system has many different pluses and minuses. So today, I'll give you a brief rundown of what you can expect in a smartphone.

Windows Mobile cell phones are just coming of age and they may well be a good choice in the future. However, right now the choice will probably come down to choosing between the Apple iPhone and one of the many Android phones that are now available.

The Android operating system is upgraded several times a year and new Android phones are released all the time. Apple, however only releases a new iPhone and a big update to their iOS operating system once a year. The new iPhone and iOS updates were released in October.

I have installed Apple's new iOS 5 operating system on my iPad, so I have been able to take an in-depth look at most of the new features. Now I am ready to make my list of the benefits of each.

There is no doubt that that the camera on the new iPhone is superior to almost all the Android phone cameras. The retinoid screen on the iPhone is superior to most Android phones. The exception is the Samsung line of phones with AMOLED screens that rival the clarity and crispness of the iPhone screen.

Apple's new iCloud service will automatically backup your iPhone to Apple's servers and let you sync your iPhone, iPad, and Mac computer. While using iCloud is easier than some of the Android syncing and backup solutions, there were things that I didn't like about iCloud. For instance, you can't actually see your data in the

Cloud as you can with solutions like Amazon's or Google's online storage.

One of Apple's biggest features is iTunes and the iTunes store. iTunes makes getting music and video on your iPhone easier than any Android application that I've seen. At this time, both the Android Marketplace and the iTunes App Store have hundreds of thousands of apps. The iTunes App Store, however, makes it easier to find the apps that you want. Also because of Apple's stricter app reviews, Apple's apps are more secure. However, the Android Marketplace has a higher percentage of free apps.

Some of the new features on Apple new iPhone are already available on Android phones. The most prominent of these is the Notification Center that Apple just added. This is a feature of Android that has been around for

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and does not have to be repeated in order to use Mhotspot in the future. For those who may need visual instructions on downloading and running Mhotspot, there is a sequential set of graphical instructions on the Mhotspot Website at **mhotspot.com/howto.html**, and a three minute YouTube video clearly demonstrates the process at **youtube.com/watch?v=Y6ABC5QmTjs**.

Using the "how to" instructions on the Mhotspot Website, it took me about three minutes to download the software, run it, choose a hotspot name and password, and set my Internet connection to "share". As soon as it was ready, my audience could wirelessly access the Internet using the hotspot name and password that I created. Fully cognizant that the more users sharing the available bandwidth, the less connection speed available to each, I was still able to demonstrate what I needed to show, and the participants were able to do what they needed to do. In the group that was sharing my hotspot was

a small assortment of laptops, smart phones, and iPads, along with an obsolescent netbook. After I completed my session, I clicked on the "Stop" button on the Mhotspot window, and the hotspot was shut down.

Later in the day, during an impromptu get together, I was asked by a self-proclaimed geek how I made my laptop into a hotspot without using a WiFi router, which he doubted could be done. Since there was an available Ethernet connection, I plugged in my computer, clicked on the Mhotspot icon on my desktop, clicked on the "Start" button, gave him my hotspot name and password, and in seconds he was connected to the Internet wirelessly through my laptop without the use of a router! The Mhotspot had remembered all of my settings, and simply clicking on the icon and starting the utility, made my computer a hotspot again.

I can visualize several scenarios where Mhotspot on a Windows 7 computer can be useful. As happened recently in the Dallas hotel,

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What's the Difference Between "Save" and "Save As..."?
by Jim Cerney, Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida, www.spcug.org, jimcerny123(at)gmail.com

My usual answer to this question is "always use Save as…". Well, OK, now why?

First, let me take a moment of your time to show the "save a file" process. If you open a program and create something NEW, when you are done you probably want to save your work. If you click on the "Save" option, guess what? – you will get the "Save as…" dialog box. The "Save as…" dialog box is important because that is where you can see and change (if you wish to) the following three options:

- WHERE you save your file – in what folder or disk.
- The NAME of the file. If it is the first time you are saving the file, you need to give it a good name that means something to you – so you can find it again.
- The FILE TYPE. Many programs allow you to save a file with a selected file type. I don't want to get into file types here, but that is a great topic for another article.

OK, so now you save your file with a good file name, right? So the next day comes and you want to OPEN that file you created yesterday and make some changes to it. Once you have made some changes and you want to save the changed file – be careful now – do you click on "Save" or "Save as…?" If you click on "Save" you do NOT get the "Save as…" dialog box and BOOM, your changed file has TOTALLY REPLACED your previous file with the same name. Thus, your previous file is GONE, and it is NOT in the recycle bin either. But if you always use "Save as…", you will always get the "Save as…" dialog box so you can check those three important file options (location/ folder, name, and file type). If you choose not to

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Choosing Smartphone (Cont. from pg. 6)

a long time and that I love. Now in either operating system, you can just swipe your finger down from the top of the phone to see all of your alerts, notifications, incoming messages, and incoming email.

The most unique feature of the new iPhone is Siri, a personal assistant who will answer verbal questions that you ask. This would, no doubt, be very useful, entertaining, and truly state-of-the-art.

Android phones also have voice capabilities. They use Google's Voice Search. Most screens that pop up a keypad for text entry, also have a small microphone. Just press the microphone and speak. It is amazingly accurate and you can use it for everything from entering e-mail text to searching to navigating to a point on the map. Probably not as sophisticated as Apple's Siri, but it works well.

Android phones also have

some things that I love that are not available on iPhones. The first of these is the fact that you can get a larger screen size on an Android. All iPhones currently have a 3.5-inch screen. Several good Android phones have 4.3-inch screens. My aging eyes really like the larger screens.

I also like the four buttons on the bottom of the Android screen. These are very, very useful. There is a Back Key, a Menu Key, a Home Key, and a Search Key. They are always available. They do not change when the screen changes. The iPhone has just one button. Some will argue that this makes the phone easier to use. Yet, this is not always the case. In some applications it is impossible to go back a screen. In others there is an on-screen back button but the location of this button varies with each application. With Android, you can always go back to the previous screen with just one press.

The Android operating system

also is more customizable. With Apple, you are restricted to small square apps. With Android you can use many different resizable widgets as well as the standard apps. All of this gives you many different customization options, but also adds to the complexity of the phone. With the iPhone you don't get so many choices. This makes it a bit more restrictive, but also makes it easier to use.

One other difference is that most Android phones have user-replaceable batteries, while an iPhone battery must be replaced by Apple at a greater cost. While this might not be important to the average user it may make a difference to a heavy-duty user.

Well, there are just a few of the pluses and minuses you will have to assess when you buy a new smartphone. Don't worry though; it is hard to make a bad decision as almost all the smartphones on the market today are both capable and useful. ☺

Two Free Helpful Utilities: File Repair and PrintFriendly
Published with permission from Ira Wilsker, Golden Triangle PC Club, columnist for The Examiner, Beaumont, TX

WEBSITES:

http://www.filerepair1.com

http://www.printfriendly.com

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOYKL7KYeSQ (PrintFriendly)

I have to admit that the most frequent sources of ideas for this column are interesting questions asked by callers on my weekly radio show on KLVI (6:00 pm Mondays, 560AM), and e-mails from readers of this column. In a somewhat unusual move for me, I will respond to two of those inquiries in this column.

From a variety of causes, including external electrical problems, damage done by malware, and file errors caused by the applications being used, it is not at all uncommon for files to become damaged or corrupted. Sometimes the damage is unrecoverable, because the file has been overwritten by other data, or has otherwise been rendered unreadable, but many times an apparently damaged file can be recovered. These corrupted files often become apparent through the display of a popup window giving an error statement such as, "file is not in a recognizable format; unable to read file; file cannot be accessed; application cannot open the type of file represented by filename," or by giving a mysterious "out of memory" or "low system resources" error, indicating that the file cannot be read or opened.

I have had good success recovering damaged and corrupted files using a utility, aptly named File Repair, which is available as a free 1 MB download from **www.filerepair1. com**. According to the File Repair Website, "File Repair is 100% freeware: No ads, no beg screens, no feature or time limits. It is completely free for you to use and enjoy."

File Repair works very simply by loading the program, and then selecting the corrupted file to repair. The program will then scan the infected file, and attempt to repair it; it is just that simple. If a file cannot be completely repaired, but still contains some recoverable data, File Repair will attempt to recover the maximum amount of data from the damaged file, and write the recovered data to a new, usable file. File Repair may be able to recover many types of corrupted data files including Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access files (both the older formats and the newer "x" formats used in the 2007 and 2010 versions of Office); corrupted compressed files (ZIP and RAR formats); all common video formats (.avi, .mp4, .mov, .flv, .wmv, .asf, .mpg); all common image formats (including .jpg, .jpeg, .gif, .tiff, .bmp, .png); damaged PDF files; and some of the most widely

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WiFi Hotspot (Continued from page 6)

there was only a single Ethernet connection available in the hotel room, and more than one of us wanted to access the Internet at the same time; Mhotspot allowed us to do that. Similar arrangements can be made in classrooms, meeting rooms, and other places where people need to share Internet access.

Somebody somewhere must have found a use for Mhotspot, as the CNet website, download. com, shows the Mhotspot software as the current #3 most popular downloaded "Wireless Network Utility," with over 154,000 copies downloaded, of which over 5700 copies were downloaded in the

preceding week. Mhotspot has been reviewed and rated by several of the reputable software evaluation services, most giving Mhotspot their highest ratings. These rating services include "Editors' Choice" awards from Brothersoft and FreeWareFiles, and "Excellent Ratings" from Download3000 and FreeWindows. For those concerned with the safety of downloading software, Softpedia tested the download, and certified it with its "100%" rating, indicating that it is totally free of any types of spyware, adware, or viruses.

The Mhotspot icon proudly sits on the desktop of my Windows 7 computer, ready to wirelessly share my Internet connection on an instant's notice. ☺

Save or Save As (Cont. from page 7)

change any of these options, then it is no different than using the "Save" option. But with "Save as…" you always get to see what is going on and you get a chance to change an option if you wish. If you do change the NAME of the file, then you will have two files saved, your old file before your changes and the new file with your changes and the new file name. So if you are in the habit of always using the "Save as…" option whenever you save a file (old or new) you will always be given the chance to change something if you want. Choosing just "Save" will not give you those options unless your file is being saved for the first time. ☺

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used music formats (.mp3, .wav).

I tried File Repair on some older files that I knew were not readable because they were corrupted, and in each case it took only a matter of a few seconds to read, analyze, attempt to repair the damage, and rewrite the files with a filename that I selected. File Repair was able to fully recover most of the files, which actually surprised me. Some of the files were mostly restored, with some obviously missing data or containing unreadable data; in an Excel spreadsheet (.xls format), Fire Repair allowed me to open a previously unreadable (by Excel) spreadsheet, but some of the cells had apparent "garbage" in them, a problem that could be manually entered, making the spreadsheet usable. A previous column that was in .doc format that had been corrupted, was almost totally recovered, except for the last few lines that were either displayed as random text, or totally missing; it was as if the original file had been cut off or truncated at the end. I was able to somewhat restore an old .gif image file, making it mostly complete, but quite viewable, with only some small areas appearing pixilated (blurred with incorrect pixels); this was much better than not being able to view the image at all. As a free service, with reasonably fast turnaround, the creator of File Repair openly offers to attempt to recover otherwise unrecoverable files. "You can send

us your file for the manual repair of the file. Our repair experts will analyze the file and repair it for you. Once the file has been received, it generally takes 1-24 hours to process. You can send your corrupted file as an attachment to us via e-mail repair@ filerepair1.com."
Obviously, do not e-mail files that are highly personal, confidential, or otherwise sensitive in content.

Complete recovery, or enough recovery to make the file useful, was better than the alternative of having totally useless files. File Repair should be in everyone's software collection.

Several people have asked me about an easy way to print Web pages without all of the images and ads, either as a hard printed copy or as a PDF file which can be easily saved. My personal favorite is PrintFriendly at **printfriendly.com**. This handy free utility (supported by ads on the Website when used) is most convenient when installed as a button on the Bookmark or Favorites toolbar in Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari browsers. By opening a Webpage and clicking on the "Print Friendly" icon on the toolbar, the service opens a window offering the user several choices, including "Print", create and download a PDF file, or e-mail the cleaned Webpage. The user can also control the font size (text size), and remove images for faster printing; the user can also edit the content prior to printing, e-mailing, or creating a PDF. PrintFriendly has created a YouTube video (**youtube.com/ watch?v=SOYKL7KYeSQ**)

that demonstrates how to use PrintFriendly and all of its features and functions.

In addition to a "Print Friendly" button on a Web browser, there is also an option to place a customized button on any of the users' own Websites or blogs, including Blogger/Blogspot, Wordpress.org (hosted), and Wordpress.com, which will allow that site's viewers to selectively utilize the Print Friendly functions directly from the Webpage or blog. As a final alternative, if none of the previous methods are available, the user may manually enter (or copy and paste) an Internet address in the box on the top of the printfriendly.com page, and the same print, PDF, and e-mail options will be available. PrintFriendly can save a lot of ink and time when printing blogs or Websites to paper, and can alternatively create and save these blogs or Websites as PDF files.

I have installed the PrintFriendly icon on all of my browser toolbars, and use it very frequently to efficiently print documents to paper, create PDF files of websites, and e-mail the cleaned content of
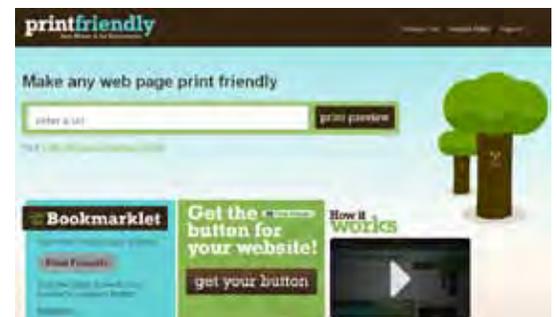
Webpages and blogs to others. Since it takes up little browser landscape, and does not degrade browser performance, it is a very handy (and free) tool to have and use. PrintFriendly is one of those simple tools that you did not know how much you needed it until you have it and use it; it is a great little tool. ☺

P*PCompAS Newsletter
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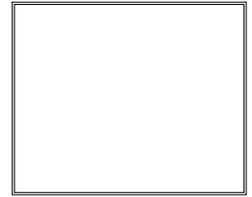
Coming Events:
Next Membership Meeting: 7 April, beginning at 9 am (see map below for location)
Next Breakfast Meeting: 21 April, 8 am, Country Buffet, 801 N. Academy Blvd.
Newsletter Deadline: 21 April.

Check out our Web page at: http://ppcompas.apcug.org