

# Bits of Bytes

Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, Colorado Springs, CO

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Issue 8



## The Prez Sez

by John Pearce, President, P\*PCompAS

The next membership meeting is at 9 AM MT, August 7th, at Springs Community Church. The meeting will also be available via Zoom.

Judy Taylour is our presenter this month. The title of her presentation is "Ergonomics: You, Your Computer, Tablet, and Smartphone." Back in my working days, ergonomics was a big deal. Probably the biggest issue was getting the CRT monitors at the correct viewing height to minimize neck strain. All of that has since changed and it will be good to get an update from Judy.

The next APCUG Virtual Technology Conference is August 21st. This is the same day as the August Digerati breakfast. The VTC usually starts at 10 AM MT so you can do both the breakfast at 8:30 AM and the VTC. The APCUG website is not yet updated with the conference topics. ☺



## Meeting Minutes

by Greg Lenihan, P\*PCompAS Secretary

President John Pearce commenced the 3 July 2021 hybrid membership meeting at 9:00 am. David George made coffee and John Pearce brought doughnuts. A motion was made to approve the minutes from June and they were unanimously approved.

**Next P\*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 7 August 2021**  
Judy Taylour from the APCUG will give a presentation on Ergonomics.

## OFFICER REPORTS

Vice-President Cary Quinn said today's presentation would be about getting back to normal and is working on future presentations.

Secretary/Newsletter Editor Greg Lenihan announced the next newsletter deadline as 24 July. He still does not know why no one got a newsletter when he sent it out originally.

Treasurer Toni Logan said on 26 June, she and Chuck Harris went to the credit union to change the account information. We have \$2231.21 in savings and \$871.29 in checking. Toni plans to move more from checking to savings so we can get a few more pennies in interest each month. Toni paid Joe Nuvolini \$10 for our club's Colorado filing.

Membership Chair Ann Titus asked everyone to sign in on the attendance roster.

BOD Chair/Librarian Paul Godfrey had nothing to report.

APCUG Rep Joe Nuvolini said we paid \$10 to Colorado. The Web page is up and running.

## OLD BUSINESS

The June digerati breakfast went well at Perkins so plans are to keep our breakfast there.

## NEW BUSINESS:

John Pearce asked how many did not receive a reminder for the meeting sent the previous night. Those that had checked their mail that morning had not received it. John thought we may have to use a service like MailChimp or groups.io

to send out announcements.

Harvey McMinn talked to the people we bought our club microphones from to find a better solution. There is a box with cables that could help, but runs around \$125-\$200. John says we may need an omnidirectional mic and the sound should be routed through the club PC.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next social breakfast meeting will be Saturday, 17 July. Our next membership meeting is on 7 August.

## AROUND THE ROOM

John Pearce says Windows 11 should be out in the fall and Cary talked about Trusted Platform Module (TPM) chips, which will be required. Windows 10 should be supported through 2025. John was looking at laptops on Prime

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**John Pearce leading the 3 July membership meeting with Zoom attendees in the background.**



**Those physically present at the 3 July “hybrid” membership meeting**



**Digerati attending the breakfast at Perkins on 17 July. Thanks to Cary for taking the picture.**

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## Your PC Won't Support Windows 11? Maybe It's Time to Try Linux

by Jordan Gloor, reprinted with permission from [HowToGeek.com](https://www.howtogeek.com)

Original article at: <https://www.howtogeek.com/739179/your-pc-wont-support-windows-11-maybe-its-time-to-try-linux/>



Did you [check to see](#) if your PC is eligible for an update to Windows 11, only to [be let down](#)? One

of your few options for continued use of your laptop or desktop beyond Windows 10 is to install Linux. Here's why that's not a bad thing.

The good folks at Microsoft have set high expectations for Windows 11 devices, publishing [minimum system requirements](#) that stretch the meaning of the word "minimum." If your device is even a few years old, chances are your computer won't cut the mustard.

Outmoded hardware, though, can leave you in a real pickle. Do you continue using outdated software and invite security risks, or do you spend your hard-earned money on a new device and contribute to [the global e-waste problem](#)?

### Linux: The Other Operating System

That's where Linux comes to the rescue. Linux operating systems (also called [distros](#)) typically have much more relaxed system requirements, and [some even cater specifically](#) to old and low-end hardware. Best of all, Linux is free.



#### *Meeting Minutes (Cont. from page 1)*

Day and was glad nothing looked good, because he may have gotten one without TPM. John showed us we could check the TPM status by right-clicking Start > Run, and typing TPM.msc. It may have to be turned on in the BIOS. There are also other requirements for Windows 11. John has been watching Wednesday APCUG

programs on Linux and thinks Windows 11 may drive him to Linux.

Nuvo got a new Samsung A32 phone the day before because his old one was causing problems. Nuvo reminded us that John McAfee gave a presentation to the club about PowWow. His company was Tribal Village. John McAfee did not want to talk about viruses.

Toni Logan is having trouble with the Safari browser opening

Even if you still decide to buy a Windows 11-capable PC, installing Linux on your old machine allows you to continue getting use out of your still-functioning hardware, at no cost to you. No, Linux can't do everything Windows does, but for most everyday computing tasks, Linux [gets the job done](#).

### RELATED: [What Apps Can You Actually Run on Linux?](#)

Additionally, many modern distros, like [Ubuntu](#), [Elementary OS](#), and [Fedora](#), strive to give you high functionality and slick, progressive looks right out of the box. You don't have to look far for something that suits your needs and complements your style. And let's be honest, are you really going to miss having [ads in your desktop](#)?

### How to Try Linux

To try running Linux directly on your system, you'll need to pick a distribution (consider [our recommendations for beginners](#)) and then [write it to a bootable drive](#). After that, you can [boot it on your PC](#) and try it out. Don't worry, this "live boot" won't erase your current Windows system or files unless you explicitly choose to go that route.

If you like what you see, go ahead and follow [our complete guide to installing Linux](#). Your hardware, forsaken by Microsoft, will thank you.

### RELATED: [How to Install Linux](#) ☺

the Gazette newspaper. It started two weeks previously. Chrome works fine. Toni has three browsers loaded on her machine and each interfaces with her printer differently.

### PRESENTATION

Cary Quinn gave a presentation on performing backups beyond using Acronis True Image. ☺

## *Long-Term Memory or Lack of It!*

By Joe Nuvolini, P\*PCompAS

At our last meeting, the subject of John McAfee's presentation to our group came up. Well, thanks to Greg, I have a wealth of info about it and many other things. Greg scanned in the front page of the August 1996 newsletter and page 2 of the September 1996 newsletter. Those two pages brought back a flood of memories about that period of our group's existence.

First, the club started meeting in the church around the start of 1995. The McAfee presentation was in August 1996 so, indeed, it was given in the church. It was before the renovation because the September newsletter states "A motion was made to buy a set of mini-blinds for the church. This was seconded by John Pearce and the membership approved." Also on the same page is a description of John's presentation: "John McAfee of Tribal (Voice) came down from

Woodland Park to discuss online relationships that develop through chat programs such as his own Pow Wow (at <http://www.tribal.com>)."

Other items of interest from the August 1996 page 1:

Plans were being made for the first P\*PCompAS picnic held at Mikki Bloor's property. The menu consisted of hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken and cheese provided by the club and side dishes and desserts supplied by the members. Forty-one members signed up!

The July minutes reflect that I started the meeting on time and there were 39 members present.

After the August McAfee presentation the following programs were listed for the remainder of the year (1996): September, Denise Oakland (Microsoft); October, Mike Callahan, alias Dr. Filefinder; November, IBM on Merlin; December, US Robotics.

Greg reported that we had 83 paid members and the treasury balance was \$2358.68.

Two guests were present: Charlie Hupp and Marshall Tuttle.

During that era, we apparently had a SIG called IHUG. My memory fails me there as to what its mission was.

Others who are no longer around, for one reason or another, mentioned on the two pages were: Clif Johnson, Dick Immig, George Francis, Mid Kolstad, Chuck Blaney, Don Hartung, Dave Kalman, Billy Robinson, Mark Eager, Doug Livermo re, Howard Hornik, and Bill Gentry.

Finally, I want to express my thanks to Greg for sending me the info I used for this epistle. It assured me that at least my long-term memory is still functioning as far as the McAfee presentation is concerned. ☺

## *Here's What Google Knows About You (and how you can delete it)*

By Bob Rankin, <http://askbobrankin.com>, published through the APCUG

Google provides a boatload of useful services: search, email, cloud storage, productivity tools, and much more. Most of them are free for personal use, and not very expensive for businesses and other organizations. But in the online world, 'free stuff' often comes with a price. Read on and learn what's in your Google history, how to limit what information is collected, and how to delete the rest...

### **Your Online Privacy: Here's What Google Knows About You**

Do you use Google Search, the Chrome browser, YouTube, Gmail, Google Docs, Maps or any of these other [80+ Google services](#)? If so, are you aware of the information that Google collects about your online activities?

Google wants to know everything about you, so it can tell advertisers what you are likely to buy. There is nothing sinister about

this; Google is up front about what data it collects, what is shared with advertisers, and how to limit that data collection.

But for many people, it comes as a surprise to learn exactly how much data Google collects and what inferences it draws from the data. You may want to see what Google knows about you, and limit what it can learn. Google makes it easy but not obvious.

Every Google account includes a "My Google Activity" page, but it isn't easy to find accidentally. Go to <https://myactivity.google.com/myactivity> and if you're not already signed into your Google account, do so. Scroll down and you'll find that Google lists items you have recently searched for, the date and time you searched for them, what Web pages you viewed, what locations you looked up on Google Maps, and other online activity.

In the middle of this activity page, Google assures you, "**You can see and delete**

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**P\*PCompAS**

*What Google Knows (Continued from page 4)*

**your activity using the controls on this page.”** The first way to control the scope of data that appears here is the Search box. You can search for an item in your activity, or filter the results by date or product. Google “products” include Assistant, Chrome, Calendar, GMail, Maps, Search, YouTube, and a bunch more. Did I mention there are over 80 of them?

### Viewing and Managing Your Google History

I suggest you try “Other Google Activity” and explore the items there. Start with “YouTube Watch History” by clicking the “Manage Activity” link that appears below that heading. Scroll down to see recently watched videos. See the “X” over on the right side of an item? That can be used to delete your history of viewing that YouTube video. That can come in handy if you view a video (intentionally or not) that you’d rather not have anyone know you viewed. On this page you can also delete all videos viewed on a given date, or click the “Saving Activity” button and there you’ll find a slider to pause (but not delete) your Youtube Watch History. To delete your entire Watch History, click the three vertical dots in the Search box (at the top of the page) then click “Delete Activity By”. Specify a date of “All time” (or any date range you wish) and click Delete.

Recently, Google added new controls which allow you to automatically delete items after 3 months, or 18 months. Click the “Auto-delete” button to set your preference.

Returning to the “Other Google Activity” page, try the “Web & App Activity” category. Scrolling through the list of items, you’ll see they are organized similarly by date. Some of these categories give finer control over what is collected, how long that data is kept, and how to delete it from your Google history.

I found the Location History section particularly interesting. I generally keep location services turned on for my mobile device, so I was able to review some of my past travels. So Google knows I was in Stowe, Vermont last month, and that I visited my local post office on Thursday. That doesn’t bother me. In fact, I’ve used Location History to help me trace my steps on a particular date, and remember where I was. But if you don’t want your spouse to know you’ve been visiting the donut shop, you can delete your Location History.

So you can control what Google collects about you, on a broad or item-specific basis. The problem is that Google collects so much data that micro-managing controls is an overwhelming chore. The “Activity Controls” are where you can set and forget your privacy preferences. The item-by-item or day-by-day controls are for special occasions when your default settings are not enough.

I’ve been asked if there is a downside to deleting all this information, or prohibiting Google from collecting and storing it? In my opinion, the answer for most people is yes. If you use the Internet, you’re going to see ads. Personally, I’d rather see ads for products and services that might be of interest to me, rather than randomly selected ads for things I would never buy. And from the advertiser’s side, being able to accurately target people with relevant ads should reduce their cost, and ultimately (hopefully?) the cost of consumer goods.

And as I mentioned in the sidebar, I do trust that Google will share only aggregated, non-personally identifiable information. I’ve been using Google services for 20+ years, and I’ve not seen any evidence to the contrary.

But of course, to each his or her own. It’s good to have choices.

Don’t get me wrong... I’m not saying that Google is violating your privacy by collecting information about your online activities. In my mind, it’s a fair exchange, and you’re in control. I also want to emphasize that Google does not provide personal or private information about you to third parties. As I said in my article [Is Google’s Privacy Policy Evil?](#), I trust that they will only share aggregated, non-personally identifiable information, and that they’re not selling my name, address and shoe size to any third parties. That article was published in 2012, and I’ve not seen any reason to change my opinion of Google’s privacy policy or practices.

If you’re interested in online privacy, read my related articles [How to Control Facebook Ads \(sort of\)](#) and [Is There a Delete Button for the Internet?](#) ☺

## Skimmers: How to Spot Them and New Ways to Pay to Avoid Getting Ripped Off

by Albert Houry at Komando.com (article from 7/17/21)

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The digital age added countless new opportunities for scammers to find and exploit victims. They can target your personal information, finances or both by using key loggers, public Wi-Fi, phishing, phony apps, sites, emails, social media accounts, phone calls, and too many other methods to list.

The recent cryptocurrency boom has been ripe for exploitation. People with little to no experience in digital currency are signing up in hopes of turning a profit. Scam artists have jumped into the fray to take advantage of the situation. [Tap or click here to see how crypto scam apps work and ways to avoid them.](#)

Crooks don't operate purely on a digital level nowadays. They can target you using physical means, and you won't know it until it's too late. Credit card skimmers have been around for some time and are still effective tools for scammers. Think that chip in your card will keep you safe? Well, they found a way around that too.

### Skimmers vs. shimmers

A credit card skimmer is a device attached to a payment terminal such as an ATM or gas station pump that reads and collects data from credit and debit cards used on the machine. Skimmers can be installed inside or outside the machine and can vary in size, shape and level of technical sophistication.

The thief leaves the device installed on a machine for some time and then returns to collect the data it stole. The skimmer does not even need to be removed for this part of the scheme. The information can be retrieved remotely via smartphone. The skimmer is left to continue the job so the crook can return to collect more.

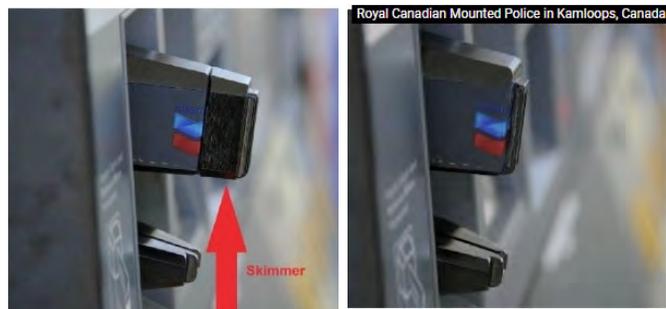
Shimmers fit inside the payment terminal and act as a shim between the chip reader and the chip on your payment card. When you insert your card, the shimmer intercepts the data from your chip.

In either case, stolen information can be used to clone cards or commit fraud in your name.

**RELATED:** [5 online travel scams that are spreading now](#)

### How to spot skimmers

Getting into a payment terminal is not easy, and it exposes the crook to security cameras and authorities, so some skimmers fit right over the existing card reader. Enterprising criminals also fit a hidden camera close by to record the PIN codes entered by people using the machine. An even more clever method is a fake PIN pad that fits over the real one.



You can take some precautions to avoid falling victim to a skimmer:

- **Stay aware** – Look at the speakers, monitor, lock, card reader, keypad and any other component for scratches, glue or other signs of tampering.
- **Eye spy** – Holes that look out of place may be hiding a camera.
- **That doesn't belong** – Does a component look oddly out of place? It could be a color or material that contrasts other parts of the machine. It could be sitting strangely or obscuring graphics or icons on the machine that should be seen clearly.
- **The wiggle test** – Try to wiggle the card reader without inserting your card. Does it seem wobbly? If so, don't use it.
- **Watch for broken seals** – At the gas station, check for security seals on gas pump panels. The seal will read as void if the door has been opened.
- **Debit card trick** – When using a debit card for payment, run it as a credit card so you don't have to enter your pin.
- **Look at surroundings** – Check nearby machines to do a comparison.

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## Newegg Now Builds and Delivers Custom PCs

by Andrew Heinzman reprinted with permission from [ReviewGeek.com](https://www.reviewgeek.com)

Original article at: <https://www.reviewgeek.com/91503/newegg-now-builds-and-delivers-custom-pcs/>

Newegg just entered the world of build-to-order PCs, and its already one of the most compelling options available. For \$99 plus the price of parts, Newegg will [assemble and deliver a PC](#) using components of your choice. You can choose from the full selection of parts on Newegg's website, or skip the design process and order a premade configuration.

The PC assembly service, called [ENIAC](#), is layered on top of Newegg's recently

launched [Custom PC Builder](#) tool, which helps you pick out and order compatible PC parts from Newegg's catalog. For those who want a professionally assembled PC, Newegg's new build-to-order service is a serious treat.

While Newegg isn't the first company to offer PC assembly, its website has more parts to choose from than any competitor. Also, Newegg says that it can ship assembled PCs faster than other companies, which take "weeks" to

fulfill custom orders—the [ENIAC FAQ](#) says that its custom-built PCs should arrive in 7 to 10 business days.

The Newegg ENIAC program is in beta, and while the Custom PC Builder tool currently offers ENIAC assembly as an add-on, it may not be available to all users. (Newegg also says that select components are not yet eligible for the service.) Interestingly, pre-assembled PCs from Newegg are eligible for the company's 30-day return policy. ☺

### Skimmers (Continued from page 6)

- **Is this area safe?** – Avoid using machines in less crowded or shady looking locations. Indoor machines are usually safer than the ones outside.
- **Report incidents** – If you notice something suspicious, report it to the bank or business running the machines.



### How to safely pay at the pump

You can avoid using cards entirely at the gas station. Cash is one option, but do people carry much cash around anymore? Apple Pay and Google Pay let you add a credit or debit card to your phone, which you can then use in place of a card. [Tap or click here to find out how to set up mobile payments.](#)

Apple Pay is built into the iPhone, Apple Watch, Mac and iPad. You don't need to download any app. [Google Pay](#) can be downloaded to your Android-powered phone, tablet, or watch and is also available for iOS. With either payment method, you need only to hold your device near the payment reader and confirm the transaction via PIN, password, fingerprint or facial scan.

Some gas stations have their own apps for payment and even offer fuel rewards. Check out the apps from [BP](#), [Chevron](#), [Exxon](#) and [Shell](#).

### What to do if you get ripped off

Monitor your bank accounts for anything that is out of place. If you find something, call your bank or the credit/debit card company using the phone number on the back of your card. Mobile banking makes it easier to check up on your account anytime you like. Make this a regular habit!

The law limits how liable you are if your card information is stolen but this usually depends on how quick you were to report it. The card issuer may contact you about suspicious activity, but it could be too late by then. Hopefully, you discover the scam before the crook has done anything with your information. ☺

## Why Is It So Hard to Buy a Graphics Card in 2021?

by Vann Vicente, reprinted with permission from [HowToGeek.com](https://www.howtogeek.com)

Original article at: <https://www.howtogeek.com/726236/why-is-it-so-hard-to-buy-a-graphics-card-in-2021/>



A global shortage of graphics cards is making it difficult for consumers to get their hands on them at a fair price. Here's why it feels impossible to buy a graphics card in 2021.

### Prices Are Soaring and Availability Is Dropping

[Graphics processing units](#) (GPUs) or graphics cards are an essential component for most people who use a desktop computer. They are responsible for creating the display output of your PC, allowing you to view multimedia content, and rendering the complex 3D graphics in modern video games. They're also vital for creative professionals, as they allow computers to run tasks like graphic design, video editing, and 3D animation.

If you've attempted to build or buy a computer in 2020 or 2021, you may have noticed insane spikes in prices for graphics cards and the widespread unavailability of new cards. Most retailers, from online parts sellers like [Amazon](#) and [Newegg](#) to big-box stores like [Best Buy](#), have almost no graphics cards left. In marketplace websites, like [eBay](#), prices for resold or second-hand GPUs are several times higher than their original suggested retail price.

This presents a large problem for many [computer-building enthusiasts](#), multimedia practitioners, and gamers, as even the day-to-day of running a PC relies on the graphics card. This has forced many to purchase old models from a decade ago, spend thousands of dollars on the used market without a warranty, or use the inferior integrated graphics that come with their processor. The shortage has also driven away potential first-time PC builders from creating their own systems.

### The Global Chip Shortage

The PC graphics card industry is dominated by two chip manufacturers: Nvidia and AMD. These two companies make up nearly all dedicated GPUs found in desktop computers and laptops. Nvidia is the leader of the pack with its GeForce GTX series, while AMD creates the Radeon RX series.

The biggest reason for the lack of supply is an ongoing global shortage of silicon chips. Computer chips, also called [semiconductors](#), are mostly made from an element called silicon. Because of the pandemic, the world's largest semiconductor manufacturers, such as Samsung, were forced to slow or halt production entirely. This stoppage in production, coupled with the rising demand for consumer electronics like computers and gaming devices also driven by the pandemic, has made it difficult for manufacturers to meet that demand.

While the silicon chip shortage has had a severe impact on the graphics card market, it's not the only industry affected by the supply issue. A wide range of consumer products, from computer-powered cars to game consoles like the [PS5 and Xbox](#), have faced severe availability issues and rising prices. Major products, like [Apple's iPhone 12](#), were launched delayed because of concerns of stock availability.

### Cryptocurrency Miners



*Continued on page 9*

### *Graphics Card (Continued from page 8)*

However, graphics cards seem to be even more difficult than other electronic products, like cellphones and even CPUs. The other big reason that the demand for GPUs has increased in the last year is [cryptocurrency](#) mining, which is the process of using the power of a computer chip to introduce new tokens into circulation. Mining for crypto often utilizes the processing power of a graphics card, and therefore, a mining rig may have multiple graphics cards that aren't running on a desktop setup.

This has become a point of contention among many general consumers. Unlike GPUs used for gaming and general work, GPUs used for mining are used to their max processing limit. This means that they have little to no resale value on the used market. Nvidia has hinted that in the future, the company may reintroduce a graphics card made specifically for mining to keep them separate from consumer GPU products.

In early 2021, Nvidia attempted to [block cryptocurrency mining on its RTX 3060 graphics card](#), but the company's strategy quickly failed when it [accidentally released graphics drivers that re-enabled mining capabilities](#).

**RELATED:** [Of Course NVIDIA's Attempt to Limit Cryptocurrency Mining Immediately Failed](#)

### **The Scalper Problem**

The other big contributor to the issue is market scalpers. Scalpers buy items at close to retail price then resell them for huge margins on websites like eBay. Whenever manufacturers restock new cards on the retail market again, many of them are immediately bought out by scalpers and resold for multiple times the original cost. Many modern scalpers have bots that track for new stock of GPUs and can complete a purchase before a human can even open the product page.

Some retail stores have attempted to curb scalping behavior by forcing stock limits of one item per person. If you can, you may even want to check out a physical retail store instead, as they are less likely to have stock and be affected by scalping.

### **What's Next for GPUs?**

According to [The Verge](#), Nvidia has stated that the GPU shortage is likely to continue throughout 2021. As of May 2021, Nvidia and AMD have only recently gotten production back to pre-pandemic levels, and even then, demand is at an all-time high.

If you're looking to build a PC soon, it may be worth hunting on the used market for a good deal instead of buying new. You may also want to utilize the slower, [integrated GPU](#) that comes with your [chipset](#), such as Intel's UHD or AMD's Radeon Vega series, until you can buy a dedicated GPU at a normal price. Lastly, if you have an older model, you may want to hold off on obtaining a high-end upgrade until prices normalize. ☺

## **Windows 10 Tips**

Speech recognition with speech-to-text dictation is built into Windows 10. To start dictating, click inside a text input area in any app, and press the Windows key + H. The dictation toolbar will open and you can start talking into your computer's microphone. To stop dictating, say "Stop dictation."

Even Windows novices know about the Start menu, which is accessed by pressing the Windows key on the keyboard, or clicking the Windows icon at the bottom left of the screen. The Start menu shows a list of installed programs, and tiles you can click to open an app. But Windows 10 also has a "secret Start menu" that makes it easier to find things like Task Manager, Power Options, Network Connections, Disk Management, and Powershell. You can access it by pressing the Windows key + X.

A host of automated troubleshooting tools are built into Windows 10. Type "troubleshoot" in the search box and select that word in the results to open a long page of troubleshooters for common and uncommon problems. Some of the most popular troubleshooters fix problems with Internet connections, network adapters, printer setups, and Windows Update.

With the Creators Update released back in April, 2017, Windows 10 finally got a built-in "print to PDF" option, eliminating the need for third-party PDF drivers. You can select this virtual printer from within any app that supports printing, and save the current document in PDF format. ☺

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**Coming Events:**

**Next Membership Meeting: 7 August beginning at 9 am (see directions below)**

**Next Breakfast Meeting: 21 August @ 8:30 am, Perkins, 3295 E. Platte Ave.**

**Newsletter Deadline: 21 August**

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

