

Bits of Bytes

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

Volume XLIV

January 2024

Issue 1

The Prez Sez

by Paul Godfrey,
P*PCompAS President

As your club's president-elect, I am both pleased and honored to do so for 2024. I was president a couple of different times years ago. Things in my life have changed to where I can devote the time to be president. I am looking forward to a good year of learning and fellowship.

Cary Quinn is already putting together programs for both January and February. Joe Nuvolini is doing his annual CES follow-up. It would be nice if other club members could capture one or two new products to help Joe. After CES gets started, contact Joe to report on a certain new item being introduced.

I appreciate the club members who took the time to contact me concerning program ideas while I was vice president. It makes the club operation much easier with many hands helping.

See you all on January 6th.

HAPPY NEW YEAR
2024!

Meeting Minutes

by Greg Lenihan,
P*PCompAS Secretary

President Cary Quinn called the 2 December 2023 membership meeting to order at 9:06 am. David George made the coffee, and Greg Lenihan brought doughnuts. A \$1 donation is requested from members for doughnuts and coffee. A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes for November, and the motion passed.

Next P*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 6 January 2024

Selected APCUG videos will be shown on topics that have not been previously mentioned, which may be expanded upon later in the year.

OFFICER REPORTS

President Cary Quinn had nothing to report.

VP Paul Godfrey was not present for the officer reports.

Treasurer Toni Logan stated that checking remains at \$134.74, savings gained 10 cents in interest bringing us to \$2386.46 in savings. The combined total is \$2519.20. APCUG dues will increase next year to \$75. An audit of the treasury will be done in December or January.

Secretary/Newsletter Editor Greg Lenihan announced the next newsletter deadline is 23 December.

Membership Chair Ann Titus said to send a shoutout to an anonymous donor who covered our dues for next year.

Librarian Paul Godfrey arrived but had nothing to report.

APCUG Rep/Webmaster Joe Nuvolini reaffirmed that APCUG dues are going up, but it is worth it with them hosting our website.

BOD Chair Harvey McMinn had nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS

There was another attempt to update the club computer, but it again would not install Windows 10 updates. Cary found an error message. When he researched the message, it indicated corruption with the .NET Framework.

NEW BUSINESS

Elections were held. Paul Godfrey volunteered to run for president but may be gone during

February and March. After a vote by acclamation, the results were: Paul Godfrey, President; Cary Quinn, Vice-President; Secretary, Greg Lenihan; Treasurer, Toni Logan; and BOD member, David George.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next social breakfast meeting will be Saturday, 16 December, at the Golden Corral, starting at 8:00 am.

Our next membership meeting is on Saturday, 6 January 2024.

AROUND THE ROOM

Chuck Harris had phone problems with Verizon and they had him reset his phone. Nothing would work. He quit Verizon and went with Plaintalk for his carrier with an Apple 14 phone and eSIM. He recommends Plaintalk and it is much cheaper.

Jim Miller had to do a restore with Acronis Cyber Protect Home Office, but afterwards he still gets a message asking if he wants

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P*PCompAS

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Librarian: Paul Godfrey
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Hospitality: Vacant
Programs: Cary Quinn
Publicity: Vacant
Nominating: Vacant

Board of Directors

A.J. Whelan
John Pearce
Bob Logan
Barbara McMinn
David George



President Cary Quinn and others attending the December meeting via Zoom.



Members in attendance at the December meeting.



Digerati at the Golden Corral for the December monthly breakfast.

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How to Factory Reset Windows 10

The nuclear option.

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

Original article at <https://www.howtogeek.com/662219/how-to-factory-reset-windows-10/>

Key Takeaway

- Back up your files before performing a factory reset on your Windows 10 PC to prevent data loss.
- Open Windows Settings, navigate to Updates and Security > Recovery, then click “Reset This PC.”
- Choose between keeping your files or removing everything, and then select whether to do a local reinstall or a cloud download.

If your Windows 10 PC is [running slow or acting abnormally](#), one of the most surefire ways of fixing the issue is by performing a factory reset. This is also recommended if you’re selling your computer. Here’s how.

Note:

If you’ve updated your computer, here’s [how to factory reset your Windows 11 PC](#).

How to Factory Reset Windows 10

Before you begin the factory reset process, be sure to [back up your files](#). Otherwise, some important data may be irretrievably lost.

When you’re ready to factory reset your Windows 10 PC, open the Windows Settings menu by clicking on the Start button (1) and then selecting the Gear icon (2). You can also press Windows+i to open the Settings app more quickly.



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Meeting Minutes (Cont. from page 1)

to restore with the Recovery Manager when he restarts his PC. Cary Quinn suspects it is doing a temporary recovery. He suggests looking for Recovery Manager tools. Jim will go to Acronis and look for a solution. Jim also wants to know how to tell if his machine can handle Windows 11 because in the past it said it was able to upgrade. Cary said to recover his machine and then run the Compatibility Tool.

John Pearce bought a 40 W USB-C plug charger for his phone and tablet. His cell phone can do super-fast charging. It would do fast charging but not super-fast. He found out the cable could not handle the wattage. Once he bought a different cable, it worked fine. It now charges in an hour.

David George took his wife’s HP All-in-One computer to SpringsGeek because it would not save pictures to a thumb drive. It

hasn’t come back yet, but he will let us know how it went. He is still having navigation problems with his 2019 Ford Ranger. He called his insurance carrier and it is covered.

Ann Titus says she tried using a program called ClipGrab to download videos and it is fast and works well.

Toni Logan said her Apple machine is getting really slow. It is about nine years old. Toni needs to see if she is getting the latest updates. She tries printing to an Epson printer first thing in the morning, but is getting a “filter failed” message.

Greg Lenihan didn’t see much he was interested in on Black Friday, but on Cyber Monday he found some good deals at Walmart.

Bob Kotz has a Dell laptop with Windows 11 and it has been shutting itself off. Lately he has been unable to sign on. He saw a message to wait two hours before signing on, so he did, and

it worked. Other ways to sign in were discussed, like Windows Hello, a fingerprint reader, or facial recognition (options found in Settings).

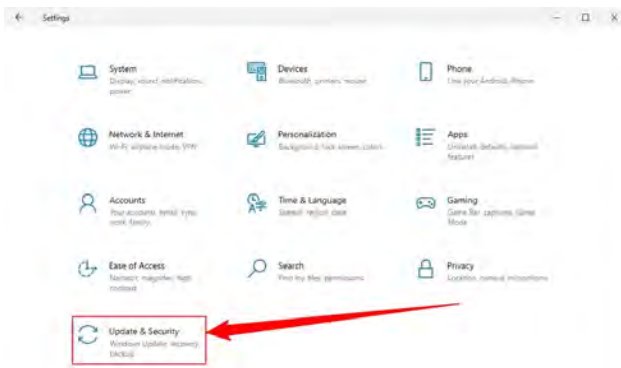
Paul Godfrey mentioned he once had a problem with an HDMI cable between his cable box and his TV. When he replaced it, the problem went away.

PRESENTATION

Judy Tylour from the APCUG Speakers Bureau gave a presentation on “Utility Apps.” The apps she discussed were Belarc Advisor, TinyURL, BitWarden, CCleaner, Evernote, Edge Collections, Grammarly, iDrive, Nextdoor, Nitro PDF Reader, Patch My PC, Hard Disk Sentinel, PayPal, Venmo, Recuva, Revo Uninstaller, Unchecky, VLC Media Player, Apple/Samsung Pay, Cash App, ColorNote (Android), Snapseed (Apple, Android), Everything, and WordCloud Generator. ☺

Factory Reset Win 10 (Cont. from page 3)

The Settings window will now appear. Here, select the “Update & Security” option found at the bottom of the window.



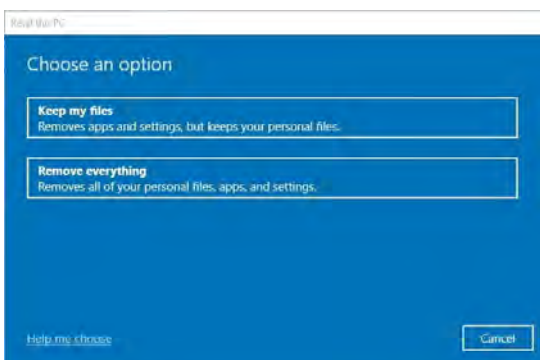
A list of Update & Security options will now appear in the left-hand pane. Select “Recovery,” and under “Reset This PC,” carefully read the description and then select the “Get Started” button.



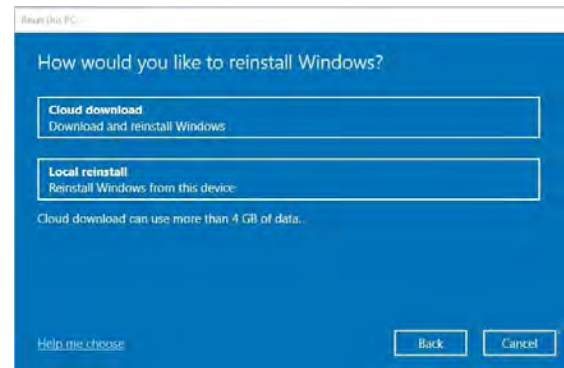
Once selected, the “Reset This PC” window will appear. You’ll have two options to choose from:

- **Keep my files:** This option will keep all of your personal files while removing installed apps and system settings.
- **Remove everything:** This will completely wipe your Windows 10 PC.

Choose the option that works best for you.

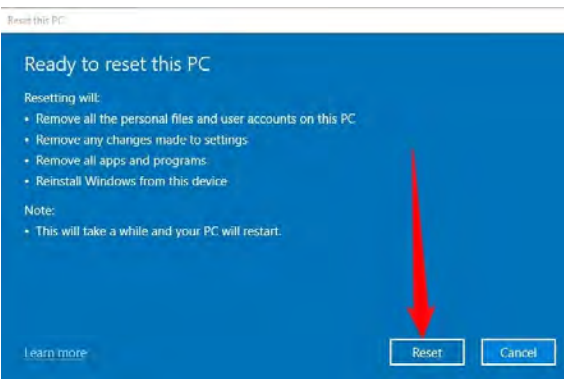


The next screen presents you with the choice between a local reinstall and a cloud download. Local reinstall uses existing assets on your PC to rebuild a clean copy of Windows, while cloud download fetches a new copy of Windows 10 from Microsoft. You can use whichever you prefer, just keep in mind that the cloud install will use about four gigabytes of data. That could be important if you’re on a metered network or have slow Internet.



In the next window, you’ll see a message showing you what will happen when you reset your computer. This message will be different, depending on which method you chose in the previous step.

When you’re ready, select the “Reset” button.



Your Windows 10 PC will now begin to factory reset. This may take several minutes, so be patient. When the process is finished, your computer will reboot.

If you get an error message instead, learn [what to do about the “There Was a Problem Resetting This PC” issue](#). ☹

New PC? You MUST Take These Steps Now...

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

Setting up a new computer is something to get excited about. It's tempting to open the box, plug it in, start it up, and just begin exploring. But a new PC requires some initial fine-tuning in order to optimize performance and avoid problems later on. Here is my list of things you should do to a new desktop or laptop PC as soon as it comes out of the box...

Optimize and Secure Your New PC

Years ago I saw a cartoon depicting a man driving home with his shiny new Intel 386 computer in the back seat. Behind him was a billboard advertising the Intel 486 model. I was not able to locate that old cartoon, so I asked Dall-E, an AI image generator, to create one similar. Even though the system unit ended up in the front seat, I was happy with the result. Check out the image below and let me know what you think.



If you've recently purchased a new PC, or you're planning to get a new computer this

holiday season because yours is "obsolete", then you'll want to follow the steps below to get the most from your new computer.

Job One is security. Antivirus software is a must on any PC, but the trial versions of Norton or McAfee that come preinstalled on new PCs are overpriced resource hogs. Some popular free antivirus options are [AVG](#) and [Avast](#), but [my preference is PC Matic](#), because it uses a whitelist approach that allows only known, trusted programs to run on your computer. Uninstall the trial antivirus that

came with your PC, then install your new security software.

Step Two: Getting rid of bloatware. Bloatware (sometimes called crapware) is not malicious software. Rather, it's the term for all those unnecessary utilities and trial software packages that computer vendors are paid to load onto each new PC they ship. Many of these nuisances load automatically at startup, slowing your PC and annoying you with reminders to try them out. Essentially, they're just advertisements that you pay to be annoyed by.

If you want to rid a brand-new system of all the unnecessary junk programs that came installed on it, try the free [Bulk Crap Uninstaller](#) utility. This program lets you see all the software installed on your system, so you can quickly select the ones you want to remove, and zap them in one fell swoop, with minimal effort. It's a lot faster than the Windows "Add/Remove Software" option, which requires you to select each one and answer a lot of "do you really want to do this" questions.

Step 3: Tune Up Your Startup -

When your Windows computer is starting up, a variety of programs and scheduled tasks automatically get loaded before the desktop becomes visible. While many of these are crucial, some are optional, and a few could be potentially harmful. See [Are Stealth Programs Slowing Your PC?](#) to discover how to customize your "autoruns" for enhanced performance and security.

Step 4: Keeping your operating system and application software up to date is also essential. Security patches are

issued regularly by Microsoft, and these improvements are not really "optional." Make sure Windows is set to download important updates automatically (it usually is on new PCs) and enable automatic updates on all application software that has such a feature.

You might be surprised to learn that some of the application software pre-loaded on your computer is outdated or needs critical security patches. See my article, [Here's Why You Must Keep Your Software Updated \(and how to do it for free\)](#) for links to some free utilities that will help you keep your software updated and secure.

Step 5: Taking inventory of your PC's hardware and software can help you diagnose problems, get better tech support, and possibly even save you untold grief and piles of money. Belarc Advisor and Speccy are two free utilities that scan your system and report everything you may need to know. My article [A Look INSIDE Your Computer \(no tools required\)](#) gives you the scoop on where to find these programs, and details on how they can help.

Step 6: Making regular backups of user data and system settings is a good habit that starts from day one. As soon as your PC is tweaked the way you want it, make a full "system image" of your hard drive and store it in a safe place. Thereafter, automatic backups of critical data that changes over time can be set up on whatever schedule makes sense for you. Hard drive failure, viruses, fire, flood and human error can wipe out critical data, and if it happens to you a backup copy of your files will be a lifesaver.

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How to Back Up Windows

You know you want to. You know you should.

By Leo A. Notenboom, <https://newsletter.askleo.com/>; published under the Creative Commons License

Using free and included tools, here's how to back up Windows and all your data in eight easy steps.

Applies to Windows: **11, 10**



(Image: canva.com)

You may have sensed by now that I'm a huge fan of backing up.

Microsoft Windows includes several tools that, used in conjunction with a third-party tool, provide a [backup](#) strategy that will protect you from almost anything that can go wrong.

Let's learn how to use those tools properly so we can get your backup strategy started.

In Short

How to Back Up Windows

- Make an image backup of your computer.
- Make a recovery disk for emergencies.
- Prepare to restore a backup image in case it's needed.
- Restore individual files from a backup image.
- Turn on File History.
- Restore individual files from File History.
- Use OneDrive for online backup.
- Restore individual files from OneDrive's history.

Continued on page 7

New PC? (Cont. from page 5)

And don't forget that **not all your data is stored on your computer's hard drive**. Do you have a plan to back up and recover your online data, including webmail, cloud storage, Facebook, Twitter, online photos and other social media? What about the contacts and other data stored on your mobile phone or tablet? My ebook [Everything You Need to Know About BACKUPS](#) will show you how to protect yourself from any kind of data disaster.

Step 7: Perform a benchmark test to confirm that your new computer runs as fast as advertised, and save the results so you can see if it's still running well in six months, a year, or two. You can use a free benchmarking tool to test the CPU performance, the speed of your hard drive, RAM memory, video hardware, and other subsystems. You'll also have the option to compare your results to others with similar hardware. See

my article [How Fast Is Your CPU? Benchmark it!](#) for links to some free benchmarking software.

Some Optional Setup and Tuning Steps

Step 8: Update Drivers - If you find that any of your peripheral devices are not working correctly after connecting them to your new computer, you may need to install or update the drivers for the hardware, such as a mouse, printer, external drive, graphics card, or network adapter. Look for these drivers on the manufacturer's website, along with instructions to download and install.

You may encounter popups or emails warnings that 'Your drivers are out of date.' Ignore those scammy ads. Don't run off and update your drivers unless you're sure there is a problem. See my article [Is it Time to Update Your Drivers?](#) for the scoop on device drivers, what they are, what they do, when (and when not) to update them...

Step 9: Personalize System Settings

I like to customize my desktop background, arrange the icons, configure the screen saver with a timeout to lock the screen, and fiddle with the system fonts and type sizes. If you have a laptop that's mobile, you may also want to adjust power settings to conserve battery power.

That's my listing of things you should take care of when you get a new computer. But it's been said that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. So a healthy dose of awareness and vigilance will go a long way toward keeping you and your computer free of trouble while interacting with the Internet. A few hours spent up front tweaking a new PC and preparing for the future, can save days of suffering when something goes wrong, as it inevitably will. Think of all this preventative maintenance as similar to a car's breaking-in period. Do it with every new PC and you'll save yourself time and money. ☺

*Back Up Windows (Cont. from page 6)***0. What about Windows 7 Backup?**

Prior versions of this article relied on using the Windows 7 Backup and Restore tool that was built into Windows 10 and 11.

As of sometime in 2020 (or even earlier), [Microsoft decided to pull the plug on the Windows 7 Backup and Restore tool](#). At the least, it has been “deprecated” and will likely be removed in a future Windows update. **The official word from Microsoft is that you should use third-party utilities to [back up](#) instead.**

So that’s what we’ll do. We’ll use the free edition of EaseUS Todo (there are other third-party programs that do this, but EaseUS Todo is one of my recommendations), along with File History and OneDrive, to learn eight tasks involved in a robust backup plan.

1. Make regular images

Start by making an [image backup](#) of your computer. It doesn’t matter if you don’t know what to do with it; that’ll come later. Creating an image of your computer gives you a known point to which you can always return should anything go wrong.

- [Creating a Backup Image Using EaseUS Todo Free](#) explains how to create an image backup of your system to an external [hard disk](#).
- YouTube: [Installing EaseUS Todo Free](#)
- YouTube: [Backing up With EaseUS Todo Free](#)
This is something you’ll want to do periodically, and ideally automated.

2. Make a recovery disk

To recover an image — to restore your computer to operating order when something bad happens — you’ll need what EaseUS calls an emergency disk.

You may also want to **create a Windows [recovery drive](#)**. This is a disk (a DVD or [USB](#) thumb drive) from which to boot, which includes additional tools to examine and possibly repair your system as well as the ability to reinstall Windows from scratch if needed.

- [Creating an EaseUS Todo Emergency Disk](#) explains how to create a recovery disk.
- [Create a Windows Recovery Drive](#) illustrates the process of creating a recovery drive.
- [How Do I Boot From a USB Thumb Drive?](#) Make sure you can boot successfully from the recovery drives you’ve created.
- YouTube: [Creating an EaseUS Todo Emergency Disk](#)

3. Restoring an image

Restoring an image is the process of taking a backup image you’ve previously created and putting it back on your computer’s hard drive (*which erases anything currently on that hard drive*). **An image restore is what you would do after replacing a faulty hard drive** with a new, empty one.

- [Restoring an Image Using EaseUS Todo](#) shows how to restore a backup image created by EaseUS Todo.
- YouTube: [Restoring an Image Using EaseUS Todo](#)

4. Restore an individual file from an image

I rely on image backups primarily because **there’s no question about what’s in them: everything**. But sometimes you don’t want to restore everything; you just want a single file, folder, or collection. You can do that from a backup image you created above.

- [Restoring a File from an EaseUS Todo Image Backup](#). EaseUS Todo makes restoring individual files and folders from an image backup easy.
- YouTube: [Restoring a File From an EaseUS Todo Image Backup](#)

5. Set up File History

In addition to image backups, we can utilize more “in the background” backups in the form of File History. File History sets aside some amount of space on your hard disk (ideally an external hard disk, perhaps even the same one containing your backup images) to which **it writes copies of your data files periodically as they change**. Using File History, you can recover a file as it was an hour ago, a week ago, or sometime in between, depending on how often files change and how much space you’ve set aside for backups.

- [Enable File History in Windows 10](#) tells you how to set it all up.
- [Enable File History in Windows 11](#)
- YouTube: [Enable File History in Windows 11](#)

6. Restore a file using File History

After you’ve had File History running for a while, you’ll surely encounter a point where you want to recover a file that has been backed up.

Learn to browse what’s been backed up, locate the file or files you want, and restore them.

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Stop Mailing Checks and Use a Special Pen When Writing Checks

by Kim Komando at Komando.com (tip from 11/14/23)

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If you're still mailing checks, now would be a good time to go paperless. New reports show that check fraud has doubled in the past year, thanks to organized crime. Things are so concerning that the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) warns Americans to stop mailing checks completely.

Need a reason or two to start paying bills online? Keep reading to catch up on the latest stats and steps to protect yourself.

The fraud business is booming

In 2022, banks issued around 680,000 reports of check fraud to FinCEN. That's a significant jump from the

350,000 reports logged in 2021. The USPS reported 300,000 complaints of mail theft in 2021, which was more than double the amount from 2020.

Although the use of paper checks has been on the decline for years, criminals are still targeting the mail to fuel their scams. People might be writing fewer checks, but the amounts on those checks have increased. The current average check amount is \$2,652 compared to \$673 in 1990 (or \$1,602 in today's dollars).

Smooth criminals

So, how do these crooks get away with it? Criminals go on a little fishing trip to U.S. postal boxes to steal mail or identify information. They typically target envelopes that look like checks being mailed or bill payments.

Check washing is the most common type of check fraud. This is where a crook steals a check from the mail and alters the payee's name so they can

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Back Up Windows (Cont. from page 7)

- [Restoring Files with File History](#)
- YouTube: [Restoring Files with File History](#)

7. Use OneDrive for backing up

Backing up to a completely different physical location — “offsite” backup — has never been easier since the advent of [cloud](#) storage and synchronization tools like OneDrive.

- [Using OneDrive for Nearly Continuous Backup](#) shows you how and also discusses a couple of simple changes to your workflow that result in **almost continuous cloud backup of all your work**.

- YouTube: Using OneDrive for Nearly Continuous Backup (Available Soon)

8. Restore a file from OneDrive history

Just like File History, **the day will come when you need to recover a file** that's been backed up to the cloud.

- [Recover Deleted Files in OneDrive](#) points out that OneDrive has an online Recycle Bin from which you can recover deleted files.
- [Recovering from Ransomware with an Online Backup](#) discusses how it can even save you from [ransomware](#).

- YouTube: Recover Deleted Files in OneDrive (Available Soon)
- YouTube: Recovering from Ransomware with an Online Backup (Available Soon)

Do this

Backing up is important. I say it so often because it's so true.

I also say it because I see so much data loss and accompanying heartbreak occur when people don't realize just *how* important it is until it's too late.

Used together, these eight steps and three tools (image backups, File History, and OneDrive) can ensure you're appropriately backed up and need never suffer data loss again. ☺

Stop Writing Checks (Cont. from page 8)

cash it. They often change the amount of money as well.

These days, some criminals are taking it a worrisome step further. They're taking the data from checks and using it to get even more sensitive or personal data on their unsuspecting victim. Bad guys creating fake identities, opening lines of credit or even starting up fake businesses have all been reported.

Pay safe, stay safe

If you need to write a check, use a security pen, also known as a check-washing pen. [Uni-ball 207 Series pens \(4 for around \\$10 on Amazon\)](#) use specially formulated ink that gets trapped into the paper, making it difficult for criminals to wash or erase the ink on a check.

Here are more clever steps to take:

- **Monitor your accounts:** Regularly review your bank account statements.
- **Direct deposit:** Use electronic transfers or direct deposit methods for payments instead of checks.
- **Secure personal information:** Be cautious about whom you give your checking account number and bank routing number. In the wrong hands, these can be used to create counterfeit checks.
- **Limit the amount of information on checks:** Don't put your phone number or social security number on your checks.
- **Use digital money:** Paying bills online eliminates paper checks that can be stolen from your mailbox or trash. Also, use Zelle, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Venmo or other payment apps.
- **Secure your mailbox:** Send outgoing mail containing checks only from the post office or a secure postal service mailbox.

Don't want to say goodbye to paper checks yet? Write them out using blue or black non-erasable gel ink. It soaks into the paper and is more difficult to remove. Skip the mailbox and take your checks directly to your local post office.

If you believe you're the victim of check fraud, don't panic. Contact your bank ASAP. If you suspect a check was stolen in the mail, file reports with your local police department and the [Postal Inspection Service](#).

Paying bills online is safer than checks, but you must watch for cyber scammers. Use these [five tips to avoid dangerous links](#). ☺

Tip: Use keyboard shortcut to peek at your desktop

You can take a quick peek at your desktop using the keyboard shortcut Windows key + , (comma). Releasing the comma keeps you on the desktop, while releasing the Windows key takes you back to where you were.

Here are some other keyboard shortcuts:

Ctrl + Shift + T reopens the last tab that was closed. This is handy if you mistakenly close a tab and want to reopen it. Press Ctrl + Shift + T again and it will reopen the tab that was closed before that one.

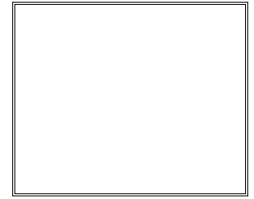
Ctrl + Shift + Del deletes the cookies that have been stored by the browser.

Ctrl + zooms the page in and makes the text larger.

Ctrl - zooms the page out and makes the text smaller.



P*PCompAS Newsletter
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Coming Events:

Next Membership Meeting: 6 January beginning at 9 am (see directions below)

Next Breakfast Meeting: 20 January @ 8:00 am, Golden Corral, 1970 Waynoka Road

Newsletter Deadline: 20 January

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

