

Bits & Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club



September 2019

Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center

Highlands Crossing Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd Suite 208 (lower level), Bella Vista, AR 72715

Website: <http://BVComputerClub.org>

Email: editor@bvcomputerclub.org

HOW TO FIND US

All meetings are on the lower level of the Highlands Crossing Center in Bella Vista. You may use entrance A on the West side or entrance C on the South side and take the elevator or stairs to the lower level. Turn left (West) to reach the General Meeting room, right for the John Ruehle Training Center. **The lower-level NE entrance is also now available again.**

MEETINGS

Board Meeting: September 9, 6:00 pm, John Ruehle Training Center

General Meeting: September 9, (2nd Monday), 7:00 pm, Community Room 1001.

Program: "Panel of Experts: Q & A", with Woody Ogden of BVCC and Justin Sell of Bella Vista Computer Services. Send computer-related questions in advance to Q.and.A@bvcomputerclub.org or bring them to the meeting.

Bring a guest! New Members and Guests are always welcome at the General Meeting

Genealogy SIG: September 21 (meets 3rd Saturday of the month).

MEMBERSHIP

Single membership is \$25; \$10 for each additional family member. Join by mailing an application (from the web site) with check, or complete an application and pay at any meeting.

HELP CLINICS

Saturday, September 7, 9am – noon

Wednesday, September 18, 9am – noon

Saturday, October 5, 9am – noon

Help clinics are a free service for BVCC club members, held in the Training Center

Bring your tower, laptop, tablet or smartphone for problem solving.

CLASSES

"Computer Security for Regular People, Part 2" – Justin Sell, Tuesday, September 17, 6:30 – 8:30 pm
Part 1 will be offered again on 3rd Tuesday in September.

"Using Windows 10"-- Joel Ewing, Wednesday, September 25, 9 am - noon

Advance sign up required for classes: Contact Grace: email to edu@bvcomputerclub.org, text 469-733-8395, call 479-270-1643, or sign up at the General Meeting. Classes are **free to Computer Club members** and are at our John Ruehle Training Center.

Check the monthly calendar and announcements for any last minute schedule changes at <http://bvcomputerclub.org> .

ELECTION RESULTS AND NEW OFFICERS

At the August 12 meeting the following officers were elected for one year terms starting in September:

President: Joel Ewing
Vice President: Woody Ogden
Secretary: Debbie Edmunds
Treasurer: Ron Moffett

Two Board members were also elected for a two-year term starting in September, ending September 2021:

Mary Wynne
Ray Chapman

Our remaining Board Member, Barry Andrews, will be traveling during the next year, expects to be unable to make many of the Board meetings and has offered to step down. In keeping with our By Laws, the Board has appointed Barbara Maybury, our outgoing Treasurer, to fill out the remaining year of his term that ends in September 2020.

BVCC WEB SITE AND EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGES

As noted in a prior email announcement sent to our members on August 23, we have changed our web hosting service and changed our domain name from **bvcompclub.org** to **bvcomputerclub.org**. As a result the BVCC active web site is now at **<http://bvcomputerclub.org>** and all the BVCC email addresses at bvcompclub.org have changed to **bvcomputerclub.org** email addresses.

If you have bookmarked or set as a favorite the old BVCC web site in your browser(s), you need to update those saved URLs to reference the new web site at **bvcomputerclub.org**.



If you have any bvcompclub.org email address in your email contacts list or address books, they need to either be updated or deleted. All the new email addresses (and new officers) are listed on the Officers page on the new web site.

This means all new BVCC email announcement should come from **membership@bvcomputerclub.org**. If you had needed to do anything specific to keep emails from the old membership@bvcompclub.org from being marked as spam, you may need to repeat that action for emails from the new email address.

Since August 23 the old web site has been redirecting traffic to the new web site and the old email accounts have been forwarding email to the new email addresses, but that overlap will probably stop on September 3. Searches for "Bella Vista Computer Club" on Google and Bing are beginning to point searchers to the new web site and our other social medium presence on Meetup.com and Facebook have be updated to reflect the new web site addresses.

DUES INCREASE AND BVCC FINANCES

The Board Voted to increase the annual BVCC single membership fee from \$20 to \$25, effective in September. Additional memberships within the same household will stay at \$10.

The last three of our fiscal years, BVCC has been running a deficit. We have some cash reserves that make that possible, but there is obviously a limit on how many years we can continue to function in that mode.

The fixed expenses for our Training Center (HCC Rent, Cox Internet, Insurance, MJ phone) constitute the mandatory part of our expenses at about \$6,624 annually. There are about another \$300 of annual expenses that while not mandatory are pretty much required to maintain our presence on the Internet and protect our corporate documents. When we have any significant income beyond our base line expenses, we have used that to upgrade equipment in the Training Center. Any major equipment upgrades, other than donated equipment, has been on hold for the last three years.

Our major sources of Income in recent years are about equally divided between AARP Grant Funds and membership dues, each now typically in the \$2K -\$3K range, plus a much smaller amount in donations and other miscellaneous income annually. Membership was higher four years ago and AARP grant funds were higher as well. AARP grant funds are paid out based on volunteer hours put in by BVCC members at the Bella Vista Recycling Center and that is now typically only 30+ hours per month, mostly the contribution of just three of our members. The deficit for our fiscal year ending in August was about \$1,500, an increase from \$899 the previous year, which means finances did not move in the direction hoped this last year..

The dues increase with our current membership is expected to add only an additional income of around \$560, so that is just a partial solution, For a long-term solution we need some combination of more members, more BVCC members volunteering at the AARP Recycling Center, or more outright cash donations (donation box in the Training Center, or via PayPal on the web site Announcements page). We are an IRS 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization for tax purposes.

The change in our web hosting service mentioned in the previous article will save us about \$135 annually and help some. The annual fees with our previous service kept increasing every several years to the point that it finally made sense to make a change. Thanks to Julie Storm for suggesting our new hosting service.

Joel Ewing, BVCC President

WHAT IS A VPN (VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORK) SERVICE AND WHY USE ONE?

By Jeff Wilkinson, President, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV
May 2019 issue, Gigabyte Gazette
www.scs-cc.com
pres.scscc (at) gmail.com
Reprinted by permission from APCUG



A Virtual Private Network (VPN) is a connection method used to add security and privacy to private and public networks, like Wi-Fi Hotspots and the Internet. Use of a VPN allows for encrypted

data transmission and prevents tracking or monitoring by internet service providers, advertisers and people with malicious intent.

A VPN encrypts your data, and your location and connection are unable to be viewed by anyone. You can use a VPN to prevent your personal data, mobile banking and social media activity from being stolen by hackers as you search with an anonymous IP address. A VPN operates as a secure messaging tunnel between your device and destinations you visit on the internet.¹

Your device connects to a VPN server which can be in the United States, or a foreign country like the United Kingdom, France or Sweden! Your internet traffic passes back and forth through that server. As far as most web sites are concerned you are browsing from that server's geographical location, not your physical location.

While a VPN can't promise total anonymity, it can be very useful for typical users. A VPN also won't do much to keep advertisers from tracking you online. Remember that the website you visit is aware of what you do on its site and that applies equally to advertisers serving ads on that site. There are browser add-ons like Ghostery, Privacy Badger and HTTPS Everywhere that can help with that issue.

How do you decide which VPN service to use? First, it pays to pay when it comes to choosing a VPN service. Free options exist, but they usually offer a limited amount of bandwidth and or a slower service with limited number of servers. The good news is that perfectly good VPN services cost as little as \$5 per month, when purchased in blocks of months. Of course, you want to avoid services that keep logs of your activity, IP addresses, websites you visit or any other details of your activity.

So how do you set up and use the VPN you have chosen? Most have applications you can download to your PC and mobile devices. You should choose a VPN service that has apps for all the devices you use, allows enough simultaneous connections for your devices, has locations in countries of interest to you, has adequate servers and IP addresses and supports your speed needs at a reasonable price. **IMPORTANT!**

Financial institutions and streaming services like Amazon Prime and Netflix will not work with a VPN since their security depends on verifying their customer.

Many VPN services offer free trials and have frequent sales offerings to new customers. Take advantage of the free trial to put the VPN through its paces.

I have been using IPVanish (<https://www.ipvanish.com>) for a little over a year now and it works perfectly on all my devices. Of course, all VPNs will have some speed penalty depending on the VPN server you use. I haven't had any problems.

Here's an example of an experience I had using a VPN. While surfing a web page, an obnoxious ad for health insurance seemed to consume a large amount of a page I was viewing. I wondered, if I were surfing the same page from Boston, would that same ad come up. So, I used my VPN to surf the same page as if I was located in Boston. Sure enough, same obnoxious ad. I then wondered whether that ad would appear if I were in Helsinki, Finland! Using my VPN I changed cities to Helsinki, Finland.

1 Strictly speaking, the encrypted "tunnel" is only between your device and your VPN server, but when using a public WiFi or other un-trusted Internet connection for your device, that covers the most vulnerable part of your connection. When accessing secure sites that use https or other secure transmissions, those encryption techniques still protect the part of the data path between your VPN server and the site at the other end of your communication, even though that part of the path is outside the VPN tunnel.

This time, that ad did not appear; but a smaller ad appeared for a different product.

This is just a quick overview of VPN's to give an idea of what they are and why someone would use one.

