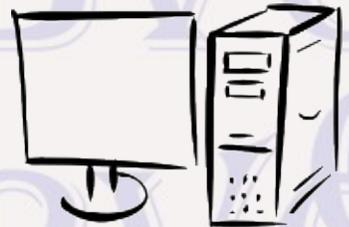


# Bits & Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club



## May 2020

**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](mailto:editor@bvcomputerclub.org)

### COVID-19 VIRUS ADJUSTMENTS

During normal times all meetings are on the lower level of the Highlands Crossing Center in Bella Vista. For the month of May we will continue to suspend in-person meetings and classes and conduct on-line meetings using Zoom over the Internet.

To attend a Zoom meeting or class, you need Internet access and a device with the Zoom application installed.

### MEETINGS

**(On-Internet) Board Meeting:** May 11, 6pm, using Zoom

**(On-Internet) General Meeting:** May 11, 7pm, "**What is this Zoom Thing**", using Zoom. Meeting access information will be emailed to membership the week before. Visitors or Guests may contact our Membership Chair for Zoom meeting details at [membership@bvcomputerclub.org](mailto:membership@bvcomputerclub.org)

**Genealogy SIG:** **CANCELED** for May. (3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday).

### HELP CLINICS

No May Help Clinics at John Ruehle center

Members may request Remote Help on our website at <https://bvcomputerclub.org> at menu path **Member Benefits ▶ Remote Help** .

### MEMBERSHIP

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

It is now also possible to Join or Renew membership on line on our website at <https://bvcomputerclub.org> at menu path **Get Involved ▶ Join/Renew** . Payment may be by Credit Card, or, if you have a PayPal account, by whatever means you have defined on PayPal.

### CLASSES

**(On-Internet) "Introduction to GIMP" – Joel Ewing, Monday May 18, 1pm - 4pm.**

Advance sign up required for each listed class: Contact Grace: email to [edu@bvcomputerclub.org](mailto: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**. Class access information will be emailed to those signed up for the class the day before class.

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

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## BVCC MEETINGS USING ZOOM AND THE INTERNET

*By Joel Ewing, President BVCC,  
May 2020, Bits & Bytes,  
president (at) bvcomputerclub.org*

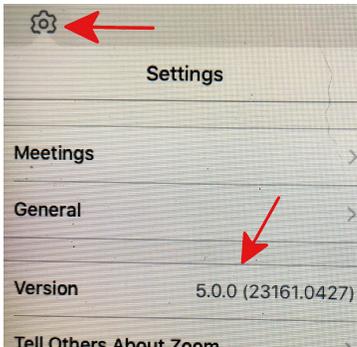
**Starting with the May 11 General meeting, BVCC will begin using the Zoom application to hold its monthly meeting over the Internet.** We will also conduct one class in May using Zoom. The zoom application allows a host-user to conduct a virtual meeting over the Internet with up to 100 participant-users. Should that limit at some point become a problem (a nice problem to have), it is even possible to associate the Zoom meeting with a live YouTube video stream and allow additional passive viewers though that means. It is possible to hold interactive meetings or give presentations with audience participation, with live audio and video and other media as part of the presentation. It is suggested that for the best virtual meeting experience participants use devices having a camera and microphone (built-in or external) so participants can see each other and speak to the group as at a real meeting; but one can still attend a meeting with a device that only allows viewing or listening. Without a microphone, making comments or asking questions is still possible using typed chat messages.

If you want to participate using zoom from a desktop computer with a larger display but lacking a microphone, it is supposed to be possible (haven't yet tried it) to use a separate telephone connection for audio; or if there are plenty of meeting slots available, you could just have a second participation in the meeting from a smart phone. If you have a separate mic and speakers for audio, there could be issues with feedback or a distracting echo effect. The easiest way to eliminate that possibility is to use a headset with built-in mic. Even after pandemic buying had set in, I was able to find a relatively inexpensive headset (Cyber Acoustics AC-204) at Amazon for around \$15 that performs acceptably with my desktop, using the external mic and headset mini-jacks (unlike USB headsets which can have software driver or Operating System compatibility issues). I had no luck finding an external web cam though – prices had shot up to 500% of normal price at the few places with any in stock, and their USB interface meant compatibility is not guaranteed as there could be driver issues with specific models, depending on your Operating System. I did find an alternative: a way to get Zoom on my desktop to use the built-in USB webcam on my laptop over my home LAN using an application that is free when both systems are running Linux -- but that's another story. I believe there are similar remote-USB utilities under Windows, but they aren't free.

For those used to giving meeting presentations with a digital projector as a 2<sup>nd</sup> monitor while using screen notes on your laptop screen, it should be quickly apparent that to host or co-host such a presentation on Zoom in the same way, a system with two monitors is very useful, sharing the monitor desktop showing the slide show over Zoom. Zoom does have the ability to share a specific application window, but this seems to be limited to specific cases, like PowerPoint running under Windows. If you use LibreOffice Impress, you will have to share an entire desktop, and with only one monitor you would need a separate machine or hard copy to see your notes.

## Getting Prepared

The Zoom application is free and supported on many different platforms. You first need to get the Zoom application installed on whatever device(s) you plan to use to participate. If you already installed Zoom at some point in the past, check to be sure you are at the current update level, which should be 5.0 or later. A number of important updates came out in April 2020 to address various security and usability issues.



To install the Zoom app on an iPad or an iPhone, go to the App store and search for Zoom. The App you want is ZOOM Cloud Meetings. Get the app if it is not already installed. If it is already installed, you can check the version level by opening the App, selecting the "settings" gearwheel, and checking the version value to see if it is 5.0 or later.



To install Zoom on Windows, search for "zoom". If it is already installed this will find "Start Zoom App". If you start it, you will see the installed version level at the bottom of the Zoom window. If there is a newer version available, in about 15 seconds you will see an "Update Available" window inviting you to update, which is probably a good idea. If Zoom is not already installed, the search will probably have found a "Download for Windows -Zoom" web site at <https://zoom.us> (if not, explicitly search for "zoom download"). Visit that site to download and install Zoom. You will need to tell the browser it is OK to run the Zoom installer and tell Windows "Yes" to allow the installer to modify your system. If nothing seems to be happening, look for a flashing shield on the task bar showing there is a window waiting on a response to proceed with the install.

It is possible to install Zoom on Chromebook, android and Mac platforms. Hopefully the process is equally clear from the App store for those mobile devices or from the [zoom.us](https://zoom.us) web site.

For Linux systems the download web site will recognize your system is Linux, but you will need to know enough about your Linux system to know which of the Linux variants of Zoom to download.

## Using Zoom

The Zoom application is free and does not even require creating a Zoom account if you are only going to use it to participate in meetings that someone else has created. If you want to create your own meetings for actual use or just to experiment, but will never need a continuous meeting longer the 40 minutes long, then you do need to create a Zoom account, but a free account will suffice. Only if you need to host a meeting longer than 40 minutes (and back-to-back shorter meetings won't suffice) or need some special features, do you need a paid account.

Every meeting by default is identified by a Meeting ID and a password (meetings without a password are vulnerable to attack). If you know the Meeting ID and password, you can manually open the Zoom application, select "Join a Meeting", and supply those values when requested – **but that is the hard way to join**. The easy way to join a meeting is to receive an email from the host with a meeting URL (you know, one of those <http://>

things). **When it is time for the meeting, click on the meeting URL, which causes your browser to open the site and try to download a file, which causes the Zoom application to automatically open and be supplied with the correct Meeting ID and password. EASY.** By default, you will enter into a "waiting room" until the host or a co-host admits you to the actual meeting. The first time you Join a meeting you will probably be asked to supply a name to identify yourself during the meeting. For BVCC meetings we would appreciate if you use your actual first and last name so we can relate faces of members to names on our roster.

**If all you want to do is just view and listen to the meeting, that's really all you have to know.** You don't even have to know how to Leave the meeting (although the "Leave" button should be fairly obvious), because the host can kick everyone out when he leaves the meeting.

If you want to participate in the meeting, then you need to learn a little more: how to use the chat feature, or to raise your "virtual" hand and un-mute and later re-mute your mic when called to speak. If you join the meeting with video, you probably also want to check how to turn web-cam video off and on, should you need to get up and leave for a while.

If you need to host or co-host a meeting, there are all sorts of other things you need to know about sharing media, enabling what participants can or cannot do, etc. There are many on-line videos and other aids for hosts to consult.

The following Zoom courtesy tips came from the APCUG group, of which BVCC is a member – Since everyone can potentially see/hear each other during the meeting:

- Keep yourself muted; un-mute yourself only when you need to speak.
- Turn off your video if you leave the 'meeting.'
- Please make sure your home/office/cell phone has been turned off, silenced, or moved to another room.
- Is it too dark in your room? Turn on a light; make sure it doesn't glare on your screen. Ceiling lights may be too bright and create glare.
- Avoid having "busy" items such as moving ceiling fans in your video.
- Don't wiggle in your chair.
- Check yourself onscreen to make sure everyone can see your entire face (not the ceiling or no forehead or chin, etc.)
- Don't eat during the meeting; drinking water, a soft drink or coffee is OK.
- Does the dog(s) need to be outside?
- Do you have the Windows 10 Night light on? If you do, your screen could be fuzzy — you might want to turn it off for the meeting.



# NEW FEATURES ON THE BVCC WEBSITE

By Joel Ewing, President BVCC,  
May 2020, president (at) bvcomputerclub.org

## Requesting Remote Help on BVCC Website

BVCC members may now request on-line help from the BVCC website by selecting the menu path [Member Benefits](#) ► [Remote Help](#), clicking on the "Create Remote Help Request" button., filling out the various fields of the form found there, and selecting "Submit Request". This will result in the request being forwarded to those Help Clinic volunteers who have also agreed to handle Remote Help requests.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the BVCC website with links for Home, About, Member Benefits, Get Involved, Information, and Newsletters. Below the navigation is the "Remote Help" title in a cursive font. The main text explains that several members volunteer to provide remote help over the Internet or telephone, and that the requester's membership status will be verified. It also mentions that remote help requires an active membership and that the requester must have Internet access and a suitable remote desktop tool like AnyDesk. A green button labeled "Create Remote Help Request" is visible at the bottom of the section. At the very bottom, there is a footer with the date "Last update: 05/01/2020 17:25:22" and the address "1801 Forest Hills Blvd, Bella Vista, Arkansas 72715 Lower Level".

The screenshot shows the "Remote Help" form on the BVCC website. The form has a blue header with the BVCC logo and navigation links. Below the header, there is a title "Remote Help" and a instruction: "Fill in the indicated items to send a request for remote help (highlighted = Required).". The form fields include: "Email" (with a note "email used for BVCC announcements"), "Contact Phone #", "Name", "Callback Pass Phrase" (with a note "max 30 letters and spaces"), and "Preferred Callback Time Range" (with a note "ltrs digits : - space" and "8am - 5pm CT assumed if unstated"). There is a large text area for "Brief Description of Problem:". At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Submit Request" (green) and "Cancel" (red). Below the form, there is a disclaimer: "As an emergency alternative to an on-line request, a less-effective method for submitting a request is to call our Training Center at 479-553-8214 and leave a message with the same information items as above when the call goes to voice mail. Start your message with 'Remote Help Request', give your name, a 'PassPhrase' for callback verification, a time-of-day window for callback, and then give a brief description of the problem. This method is less processed and may be less accurate than the online request."

All our helpers are volunteers working on their own time, so we can't guarantee a response time or even a response day, but after verifying your member status, someone will establish some contact back to you as soon as possible at the contact email or phone number that BVCC has on record for you within the requested time-of-day window.

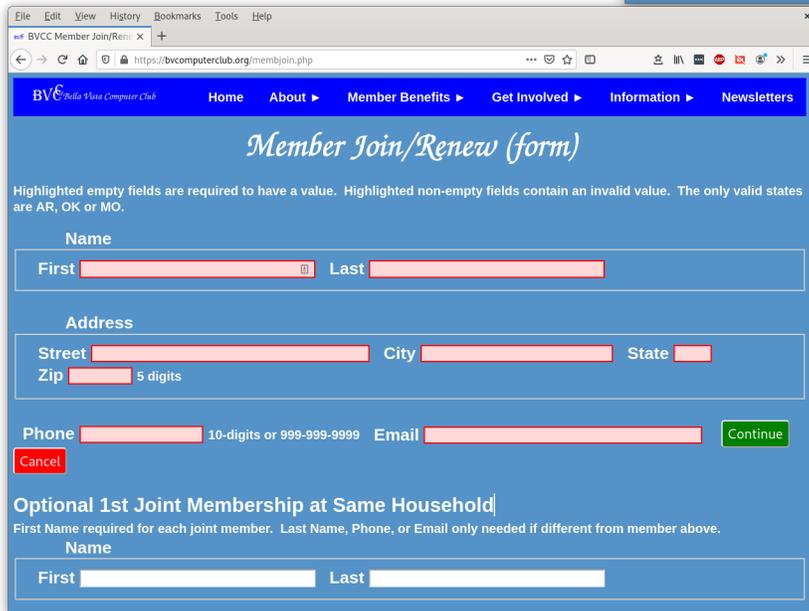
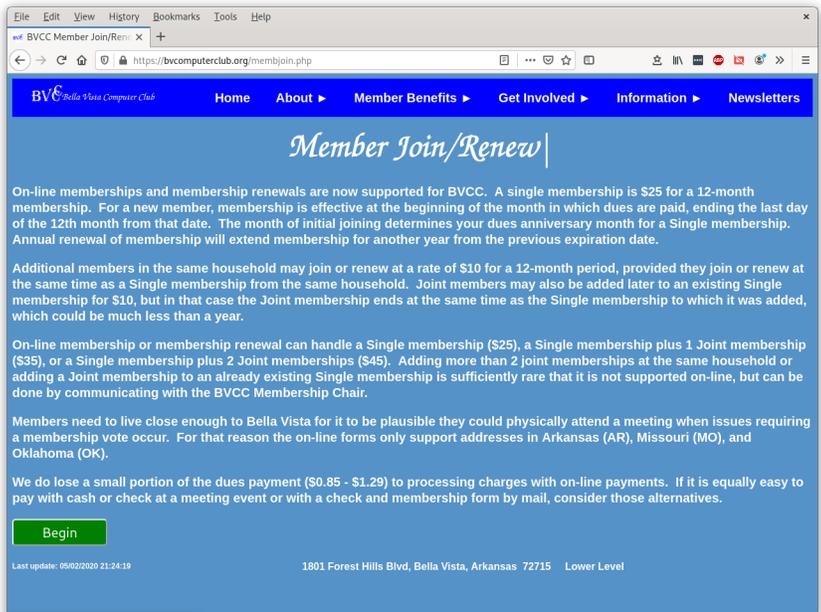
Obviously not all problems can be handled remotely: Something that requires hands-on-the-hardware to fix a hardware-related problem; something that requires special utilities or

complex procedures to diagnose and repair and either remote desktop control over the Internet is inadequate for the task or not available. Yet many problems involving a mostly-functional system can be resolved remotely.

## Joining BVCC or Renewing BVCC Membership On the Website

One of the requirements for requesting Remote Help or attending an in-person or on-line class is that you be an active member of BVCC. With the temporary suspension of in-person meetings, Help Clinics, and classes, the only way to Join or Renew membership that would have been left would have been to print out a membership form from the web site and mail that with a check. Without in-person meetings it might have been a week or two before a mailed membership form and check were completely processed. Adding support for on-line membership means that the Treasurer and Membership Chair will both be notified of the transaction on the day it occurs.

To reach the Join/Renew pages on the BVCC website, select the menu path [Get Involved](#) ► [Join/Renew](#). The first page describes the types of membership supported on-line. A Single membership and up to two Joint memberships in the same household are supported, provided they are gotten at the same time. The rare cases of associating more than two Joint membership with a Single membership, or adding a Joint membership to an already existing Single membership can be done through the Membership Chair, but not on-line.



Start the process by selecting the green "Begin" button, fill out the required fields, and then press "Continue" to proceed to a Verify step, or "Cancel" to abort out of the process.

In the Verify step you will be shown the values entered or assumed (for Joint memberships). "Backup" if any corrections are needed, "Continue" to proceed to payment, or "Cancel" to terminate the entire process.

The pay step gives you the option of continuing with the Payment process via PayPal, "Backup" to previous verify step, or "Cancel" to terminate the entire process. Selecting "Pay Now" will

take you to the PayPal web site, where you may choose to pay via a credit card.; or, if you have a PayPal account (Not Required), you may optionally elect to pay using your PayPal account and whatever payment options you have defined for that account.

When payment is complete, PayPal will return to the BVCC website to register the completion of the membership process and notify the BVCC Treasurer and BVCC Membership Chair of the paid membership. Should some kind of computer or Internet failure occur after payment, but before the successful return to the BVCC website and the indication that the Membership Chair has been successfully notified, then you may need to manually notify our Membership Chair to be sure all the necessary information for membership has been received.

If the browser PayPal payment process is forcibly terminated prior to payment or before the browser is able to return to the BVCC website, then corrective action is only needed if you can verify that the payment was successfully made.