

MC³ Newsletter

March 2019

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The March meeting of the McHenry County Computer Club is **March 9, 2019 at Salvation Army Building 290 W. Crystal Lake Ave., in Crystal Lake, IL.**

NOTE: *Enter the building on the parking lot level under the awning.*

Meeting Agenda

- Introductions & Reports
- Q & A
- Flash Drive Linux Install by John Luff or possible AP-CUG Video

Upcoming Demos - Subject to Change

To be announced

Computer Flu Season on Windows - Jim Cerny, STUG

Did you get your flu shot this year? It's always good to protect your health from those nasty germs and viruses – and the same is true with your Windows computer. In this short overview we will cover some essential basics of computer protection.

There are many FREE anti-virus protection programs (apps) out there, and almost all of them offer an “upgraded” version for a monthly or annual fee. I really have no experience with what the upgrades (\$) versions offer compared to their free version, but I have used the free Windows Defender for quite a few years now and so far, so good. Windows Defender comes with Windows and it may already be active on your computer. Just left-click on the little Windows icon in the lower left corner of your screen and you will see an alphabetical list of all your apps. Left-click on “Windows Defender Security Center” and you will see if this program is running on your computer.

You do need an active “running all the time” virus protection program on your Windows computer to protect you from the

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Our membership is \$26.00 a year.

NOTE: This fee offsets the running of the club; membership benefits include help with computer problems. Please pay Lyle Giese, our treasurer, or the designated Board Member in his absence.

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nasties. If you use another virus protection app, remember that only ONE virus protection program should be active or running, do NOT try to run two at the same time – they will interfere with each other and bring your system back to the stone age of slowness. I think it is wise to delete all other virus protection apps from your computer except the one you are actively using. On my computer, if I delete an active virus protection program, Windows Defender steps right in to protect me right away. That's very nice of them. Whatever virus protection app you are running, check the options for "automatic updates" and turn that "on". That way it will update itself without you having to do anything.

Like they say on TV – "But wait, there's more.." and there is. Besides active virus protection, you also should use some free software that will SCAN your system for problems. In my case, I use "CCleaner" (note the two-letter C's) and "Glary Utilities." There are probably a least a dozen more you can pick from. These apps are not "always active" type of virus protection – you have to run them. I usually run both of them every day, it only takes a minute.

Of course ALL of these apps have multiple options, tools, and things you can do with them. For example, Windows Defender has an option to scan your computer for problems too – a "quick," "full," or "custom" scan. Whatever app you choose, please take some time to learn about it by searching YouTube – "How to use Windows Defender" for example. You do not have to learn all the options – there are way too many anyway – but only the basics.

As another example, Glary Utilities can also tell you what software upgrades you need and install them for you – a very nice option. Please ask your friends and relatives – "What do you use to protect your computer?" And searching the internet for the "most popular" apps is always a good idea too. I am sure you are aware of how great it is to use Google or YouTube to find very helpful videos on how to use whatever apps you pick. If you run ANY app, it is always a good idea to watch a ten-minute video about it. You will learn not only how to use it for the "basics," but also will learn some of the popular options that may also be helpful to you. Most of the options or choices offered are way over my head so I just stick with the basics.

Unfortunately nothing is guaranteed. You could pay good money for protection and still get a virus. But it is always to have something than nothing. And if that something costs nothing, well, that's not a bad deal.

Freshly Squeezed Reviews: With An Ever So Light Bias - Frank Petrie, YMP Now

Instead of looking at the sky, friends, or trees, we now spend an inordinate amount of time staring at screens: smartphones, computers, or HDTVs.

As has been known for a while now, this can affect you biologically in a couple of ways. First, the glare of a screen is harsh on your eyes and can lead to eye strain, causing some damage. Another known problem is that we know that the color of light projected by our screens is about the same color temperature as daylight. Staring at a screen at night tricks your mind into believing it is daytime. This results in throwing out of kilter your circadian rhythm. You can't fall asleep easily because your mind doesn't believe it's time to get some rest.

Several apps (like [Flux]) have been released over the years to remedy the later, changing your screen's color temperature to reflect nighttime (eventually Apple incorporated a less feature-rich control into its OS, Night Mode). This way your rhythm is back in sync, enabling you to go to bed at your desired time.

I stumbled across a second issue accidentally. I've been ever so slowly trying to make my studio

apartment a bit homier. I was looking to achieve the halo effect behind my HDTV (perhaps in adjustable colors) for night viewing to set a relaxed mood in the room. (I tend to watch TV in bed before I go to sleep. I know they recommend that you don't look at a screen several hours before you go to sleep but then again, when I have I ever done anything healthy?)

I found that this effect was called Bias Lighting. As I started reading how to achieve this, I came across several articles which explained that it wasn't only something nice to look at but there was a substantially beneficial reason for doing this.

You know how your eyes, even with proper color temperature, can become affected when viewing any of your screens at night? This has to do with the surroundings you're viewing your screen in.

If the screen is brighter than the lighting in your environment, this will cause your retinas to dilate, causing eyestrain, burning, and fatigue. Type in your search engine Bias Lighting for a detailed description of what occurs.

So, what is the solution in this instance?

Ironically, Bias Lighting can reduce much of the problem, the same thing I was going to do to add a little class to my apartment. You've no doubt seen this before. Most of the time you see it creating various colored halos around a TV's perimeter. The effect is created by lacing LED strips around the back of the monitor.



But you can reduce your eyestrain even further. I did a bit of research on this and what I learned was that white light (6500K degrees Kelvin) is the most effective way of reducing strain.

I found this an interesting concept and first tried it out by placing my desk lamp behind my iMac while typing one night. I was surprised at how much more comfortable it was working on the computer! Even with using only a desk lamp the impact was immediately noticeable.

You can spend an arm and a leg, even buying a high-end TV with Bias Lighting built-in, You can purchase kits with remote controls that will cost you around USD \$100., you can purchase IKEA puck lights. or purchase less expensive yet effective DIY kits. Or think outside of the box and design your own solution..

As is usually the case, [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) is a good place to start getting a feel for what is out there. I found a company that makes Bias Lighting strips in various lengths that would be powered by my monitor's USB plug. They're called [Luminoodle](https://powerpractical.com/collections/luminoodle-interior-lighting) from [Power Practical](https://powerpractical.com) They make exterior lighting as well but what I wanted was interior lighting. The cost was roughly USD \$10.00.

Now that I've installed the LEDs on the back of my iMac and pronounced it a resounding success, it's now on to the HDTV and see if that has the same effect. You can power your HDTV's Bias Lighting also via USB port. Or you can get a system that you plug into an outlet.

I recommend that you start small at first. Buy an inexpensive set up for your computer and see if it has the same effect on you. If you're happy with the results, then move on from there.

If you received a desktop computer over the holidays, I would highly recommend that you buy an inexpensive set up and give it a bash. Your eyes will most definitely thank you for it.

Interesting Internet Finds - Steve Costello, SEFCUG

Don't Lose Your Phone: Here's What Can Happen (and How to Prepare)

<https://askleo.com/dont-lose-your-phone-heres-what-can-happen-and-how-to-prepare/>

I have never lost my phone, but it can happen. Check out this post from Leo Notenboom to find out what can happen and how to prepare to minimize problems caused by the loss.

Use Dark Mode In Apps On Android To Save Battery Life

<https://groovyandroid.com/use-dark-mode-in-apps-on-android-to-save-battery-life-15634/>

Did you know that using dark mode in your apps can save battery life? I didn't know this until I ran across this post. Now I have enabled dark mode everywhere I could and my battery lasts noticeably longer. Give it a try yourself, you can always go back to normal mode if you don't like it.

Shrink Image File Size with Google Squoosh!

<https://www.askdaveyaylor.com/shrink-image-file-size-with-google-squoosh/>

If you have a web page, a blog, or even a newsletter, chances are you are slowing things down by having images larger than necessary. I have used image editors like GIMP, and IrfanView, to compress images for my blogs and newsletters, but Dave talks about a web browser app from Google in this post that makes things easy. (Note: I have established a routine, so I will continue with the image editors.)

The Essential Ebook Converter Guide

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/ebook-converter-guide/>

This post explains converting ebooks from one format to the other. I sometimes can only find a book in epub format and my Kindle will not read that so I have to download it and then convert it and upload to my account. If you run into that problem and don't know how to convert the ebook, check this post out and learn how

The Best Streaming Video Player To Buy Right Now

<https://www.theverge.com/this-is-my-next/2018/11/30/18118550/best-streaming-video-player-4k-tv-roku-apple-amazon>

Just getting into cord cutting? This post gives the pros and cons of the top streaming video players available now. I use older Roku and Chromecast models for the little streaming I do and they work fine for me on my older HD TVs.