

**SHIRL'S COMPUTER SOLUTIONS**

thinking outside the box

computer repairs & home training

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Newsletter July 2012

Welcome to July, Fireworks and the heat and humidity! Hopefully you all have a cool place to retreat to! Our granddaughter, Felicia, just graduated from Mohonasen High School and is heading for college in the fall, and our son, John, is coming home for a visit from Prague. He's lived in the Czech Republic for 27 years, so we're always happy for a visit. Our summer is starting out with a lot of happy events!

Speaking of heat, our computers worst enemies are heat and dust. The one room that I'm sure has an air conditioner running in it is the computer room. You'll find that it prevents a lot of computer overheating and unwanted problems. And make sure that if you hear thunder in the distance that you turn off your computer. If there's thunder, somewhere there's lightning and a lightning strike or power surge can cause irreparable damage to your machine. A good surge protector is important and should be replaced every couple of years.

A few questions have come up this month that I'd like to address regarding security software. AVG is one of my favorites, as you know, but some of you have been confused with the updates that are popping up. While it is important to update when prompted, there is something to watch out for. Remember, the software is free, BUT they'll always try to get you to buy the paid version. Lately the updates have included a "trial version" and if you don't click on the "free version" that's also offered, they'll automatically switch you over. That's why some of you have written to ask why the software is no longer free and they're telling you that in 15 days your trial subscription will expire. Now, more than ever, you need to read what's on those screens that you go through to update your software. They'll either get you to switch to the paid version or some software will have you install Google Chrome or a third party program that could be malware. A lot of times they're already checked off to install so make sure you take those checkmarks out! It's not nice, but that's the price we pay for getting things for free. ☺

Have you been having a problem with Windows Updates? Everybody knows that we HAVE to do them but sometimes they have a mind of their own and just won't install. They look like they are installing, but next thing you know, when you turn your computer on it tells you there are updates waiting to be installed. And guess what..... it's the same updates you thought were installed! Microsoft knows all about this and they have a support page to help you correct the problem. The following link will explain to you how to go about taking care of this issue. <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/910339> . Thanks for the question, Jill!

The news just out is that Microsoft will be selling an upgrade version of their new Operating System, Windows 8, for \$39.99! That means that if you're running Windows XP, Vista or Windows 7 you can install the upgrade and be up to date with the newest Operating System. To me this is amazing since they always wanted you to purchase it for well over \$100. I think they're taking their cue from Apple! They always offer

upgrades for around \$40. I'm planning to upgrade an old laptop with XP on it, so I'll let you know what I think. ☹ You can read about it below and see some of the graphics for Windows 8. They're even including Media Center!

[http://nls.cnet.com/pageservices/viewOnlineNewsletter.sc?list\\_id=e497&send\\_date=07/03/2012](http://nls.cnet.com/pageservices/viewOnlineNewsletter.sc?list_id=e497&send_date=07/03/2012)

Now for a few links for some useful software! As we know, our digital photos are getting larger all the time with the newer cameras. A 12 mega pixel camera can give you photos from 2 -18 MB which is much too large to send in an email...especially if you're sending multiple photos. This program, which is free, will let you resize them so you won't have a problem sending them AND your friends and family won't be frustrated with their mailboxes being filled up! Here's a chart to explain the size of images and the program to download is below that.

<http://web.forret.com/tools/megapixel.asp?width=4000&height=3000>

<http://www.freesizer.com/>

And since it's summer and we all want to take good photos, here's a great site to check out to understand your settings a little bit better on your cameras. It lets you play with the aperture and shutter speed on your camera and will let you see what the picture will look like when you take it! Pretty cool!

<http://camerasim.com/camera-simulator/>

You know that I talk about free things for the computer all the time, but there's one thing that really ISN'T free. File sharing, also known as Peer2Peer, has always been a favorite of young and old because they get to exchange files with others and don't have to pay for music, movies or software. Everyone has read about the courts rulings on copyright issues, and the cases have brought an awareness to the fact that this just isn't legal. Napster was taken to court and had to stop the free file sharing and is now a part of Rhapsody music which is a paid service. Still people think it won't happen to them if they go with a site like Limewire, Bit Torrent etc. If you have it on your machine or know someone who does, it's best to take it off. Here's why! Even if someone else is using your Internet service to download these files, YOU could be going to jail or paying a very hefty fine! <http://apnews.myway.com/article/20120521/D9UT6FEG1.html>

Going camping? Here's a site that might make your decision making a lot easier!

<http://www.wecamphere.com/Campground/CampgroundMap.aspx>

And last but not least, for those of you traveling with your laptop, iPad, or iPhone find out where there is free wi-fi so you can connect to the Internet. Go to this website , look for Find Wi-Fi Locations in the top right corner, click on United States and the city where you'll be traveling to. They'll show you where you can pick up free Internet access. <http://www.jiwire.com/iphone/>. Since I got an early birthday gift of a new iPad, ☺ this will be one I'll be using a lot! You can also download the app from the Apple Store for your iPad.

Enjoy the month, and as always I'm glad for your questions. I'll be on vacation next week, so if you need an appointment just leave a message on my machine and I'll call you back right away.

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