



May 2014 Newsletter



I'm afraid that what I have to share this month isn't good. Every time you turn the news on it's about how a new security breach has been reported. We started out with Heartbleed, Michael's Arts & Crafts has been hacked, AOL has had its email system hacked and now they're saying that Internet Explorer shouldn't be used at all because a serious security flaw has affected "every version of the Internet Explorer". Not only that, Windows XP has "expired" and that leaves people completely vulnerable to hackers and more computer problems than you could ever image! Even Microsoft has offered to give a \$100 discount to XP users if they buy a new machine over \$600! And there are more.....

So, now I'll try to break it down so you know what to do about these problems.

- **Heartbleed** has been around for a couple of years (since 2011) and it was just discovered! It's serious because it's the security that protects

passwords and other sensitive data. If you use Twitter, Facebook, Yahoo, Dropbox, Tumblr, you need to change your passwords to protect yourself. To check to see if a website is safe, use this link.

<http://tif.mcafee.com/heartbleedtest>

- **Heartbleed and Apple** If you're an Apple user you need to be aware that this affects you too! If you have an AirPort Extreme or AirPort Time Capsule wireless router, you'll need to upgrade the firmware immediately.
- **Michael's Art and Crafts** announced that 3 million credit card numbers were stolen in a hacking incident. It affects purchases between May 8th 2013 and January 27th 2014. They're offering free credit monitoring and fraud assistance service for one year. If you used your credit card at their store during this time and if you've received information from Michaels about the free monitoring, sign up today. If they haven't contacted you, contact them! I would cancel my credit card right away and ask your bank to issue you a new one!!!! (Aaron Brothers is also on the list and the store is owned by Michaels Stores)
- **AOL** has been hacked. Have you noticed a lot of spam coming into your inbox from AOL? On April 29th the company announced that hackers had gotten into their system and spam is being sent out **in your name**. You should change your password immediately and change your security questions also.
- **Internet Explorer** has a flaw that could let hackers put a virus on your computer, and hackers are already using it. It affects versions 6 to 11 and there's no defense with the latest Windows systems. Right now there's no fix for it and they're advising that you use another browser until it can be fixed. This is why I always use Firefox. ☺ Internet Explorer is always fraught with problems. **The bad news for XP users is that when they do come out with a fix, it won't be available to XP users since they've stopped their support for this operating system. Even Homeland Security has put out a statement not to use IE until further notice!**
- **Windows 8.1 This is critical!** Do you have Windows 8.1? If you're doing **manual** updates for Windows Updates, you need to download

the latest patch by May 13th! If you don't, you won't be able to get any more updates as Microsoft will stop them. If you do automatic updates, you're all set.

- **Google Chrome** has a bug that can let anybody listen in on you! It's been said that this bug can turn Chrome into an espionage tool that compromises your privacy in your office or your home....even when you're not using your computer! If you have speech recognition turned on then you're vulnerable to this bug.
- **Java** keeps coming up in the news and it's been over a year since the first breach. Once again you need to update Java to version 7-55. The link is below. <http://www.java.com/en/>
- **Sony** has issued a warning to customers detailing how their batteries could overheat and catch on fire. If you have a Sony Vaio Fit 11A Laptop, Stop using it now!
- **iPads and iPhones** that have been jailbroken are now being victims of malware....another first for Apple. If you haven't jailbroken your devices, don't chance it. People do this to unlock the device so it can do more, and it means that the device is no longer restricted to particular software of security measures.



Even though income tax time has come and gone for another year, the scams still go on! The IRS says more than 20,000 taxpayers have already been targeted in this fast spreading scam. You get a call from someone saying they're with the IRS and they may have a legitimate sounding badge number, know the last four digits of your Social Security number, and the caller ID might even show the legitimate IRS 800 number. Then they'll tell you that you owe the IRS back taxes or there was a problem with your return. They then ask for a bank account number to settle the problem or ask for a wire transfer.

They'll even threaten to arrest you or close your business if you don't pay. If you hang up on them, they'll return a call and this time they'll say they're the local police! The IRS says that if you aren't sure it's a scam, hang up and call **800-829-1040** and talk to a real IRS employee to see if there is a problem. Remember, the IRS typically contacts people by mail, not phone.



Do you have a voice mail that you wish you could keep forever?

There's an easy way to save it, and it only takes three steps:

1. Install a program called "Audacity" which is free. Once installed, launch it, then head to Edit, Preferences, Recording. Check the box next to Software Playthrough.
2. Plug your phone into your computer's microphone jack using an auxiliary cable, (aka stereo, or mini to mini cable) If you have an iPhone, hit "record" on Audacity and then play on the phone. When it's done, hit stop.
3. In Audacity go to File, export, and save the audio file in MP3 format. This works on PC's and Mac's.



Here's a great link for finding government benefits. This one you might want to keep handy since they have an energy assistance category!



http://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-finder/#benefits&gc=cat_1



If you're like me, you don't send many faxes and having a fax machine can sometimes be frustrating to use. Here's a way to send a free fax without a fax machine! Using FaxZero you can send a fax right from your computer and attach up to three documents. There's a max of 5 free faxes a day. ☺

<http://faxzero.com/>



Do you have duplicate songs on your computer? Copy Trans is a free program that helps to clean up duplicates, restores orphan

tracks and repairs and restores damaged or incomplete songs. Great for cleaning up iTunes. http://download.cnet.com/CopyTrans-TuneTastic/3000-18551_4-75627945.html



All coupon clippers... here's a website for you! www.Chippmunk.com



Windows 8.1 tip...You can make a large app tile smaller if you right mouse click on it and choose Resize and then choose one of the four options....Large, Wide, Medium or small.



Computer term of the month – Sandbox – when referring to computer security, a sandbox is a location in the memory designated by a program or user where a program can run without affecting the system. Anti-virus software will keep something in “Sandbox” while scanning before it’s installed on a computer.



Czech Astronomical Clock

I'm just letting you know in advance that I'll be on vacation from June 25th until July 11th. We're going to Prague, Czech Republic (with our granddaughter Julia) to visit our son John, and he surprised us with the news that he's taking us to Israel to visit the Holy Land! Our daughter will be here at the house while we're gone, so if you want to leave messages, either the machine will be on or you can talk to her. I'll also be checking my email periodically while away when possible. If you have any computer problems that you need to have addressed, you might want to call and make an appointment in the next few weeks. 😊

Now that we're in May, hopefully we'll see some nice weather! Happy Mother's Day!

Warm Regards,

Shirl