

THE GEEK CORNER

By Dan Law

identity predators. I was very concerned that even though I always have my computer set to download updates automatically as they become available, not all did so and required me to stay on top of this by manually searching the most important ones. Thank goodness for the people at Secunia PSI (Personal Software Inspector) who constantly ensured I was aware of unpatched software.

The worst offenders were the same old crowd, like Adobe products, which are a key loophole that is routinely exploited by the bad guys. I also stepped up the frequency with which I perform computer security scans with my Norton antivirus, Malwarebytes, Spybot and Advanced System Care, which is a PC performance toolbox of sorts. A proper geek cannot become too confident or lazy at this time of year. I consider all these software updates as being critical protection prior to going online to shop and disclosing my credit card number. It is very important that when searching for updates, you download not only the important or critical updates but also all the optional ones.

I received many great discounts from my favorite, trusted online stores that flooded my inbox and Facebook page with discounts because I had preregistered in advance of Thanksgiving. That gave me their preferred, valued customer status, and they offered me many unadvertised, sharply reduced discounts with free shipping to my front door.

This month, for those of you who purchased new computers, laptops and tablets with brand new operating systems, like Windows 8, I am publishing some helpful links here to help you get acquainted with your new toys.

Now that you've bought the new Microsoft Windows 8 computer/software, here is a great link to PC World with tutorials on how to master it. You will find many tips on working with and understanding this new operating system at <http://www.pcworld.com/search?query=learn+how+to+use+windows+8>, plus you can also check out this link from CNET.com which can be read at http://howto.cnet.com/8301-11310_39-57529213-285/complete-guide-to-using-windows-8-roundup/.

See the eight worst Windows 8 irritations and how to fix them at http://www.pcworld.com/article/2013667/8-worst-windows-8-irritations-and-how-to-fix-them.html#tk.nl_pwr.

The iPad Academy will help you master the Apple iPad. You can get valuable iPad tips and tutorials. Find easy-to-follow instructions for making the most of the iPad, apps and accessories. Learn how to turn your iPad into a practical and purposeful tool at <http://ipadacademy.com/>.

Become a Skype power user with our seven must-know secrets at http://www.pcworld.com/article/2013598/become-a-skype-power-user-with-our-7-must-know-secrets.html#tk.nl_pcwbus.

If you've tried your hand at shopping online, but still worry that you may not be safe, here is a great recent article that should help you understand what you need to know first: http://www.pcworld.com/article/2018995/safe-online-shopping-10-tips-to-avoid-getting-burned.html#tk.nl_today. I apologize for not publishing this one in December, but it was not available at the time of my writing that article.

Review: Microsoft Office 2013 features new look and prices at http://www.pcworld.com/article/2017550/review-microsoft-office-2013-features-new-look-prices.html#tk.nl_pcwbus.

If you did not buy a new computer and feel your current PC is slow, or it keeps telling you that your computer is low on memory and you want to know why, you can visit the friendly super geeks at CNET.com where many of us go for free professional answers. They recently published some great answers and suggestions for this issue, which you can read at http://forums.cnet.com/7723-19411_102-579093/your-computer-is-low-on-memory-but-why/?tag=nl.e497&cid=e497.

Now to a different subject. Many of you may have met me during the PKS Christmas Flotilla or at the PKS Christmas Parade taking photos for our town's Facebook page. All of the photos I took on those two events were placed on the site by Town Clerk Scott Sherrill for your enjoyment and can be viewed by visiting <https://www.facebook.com/TownOfPineKnollShores>.

Wishing you all a very happy, safe and successful New Year!

I made it through another holiday shopping season successfully and without breaking the bank or the world coming to an end. During December, the Internet community and software developers had a very busy time with a couple of dozen very important security updates trying to stay ahead of hackers, scammers and

Ride Across America for OWLS

That's just what avid cyclist Paul Rudershausen, a research assistant at the Center for Marine Sciences and Technology (CMAST), is doing this winter. Paul lived his dream of taking a bike tour across America back in 2009, when he rode across the northern corridor of the USA and decided to do it to benefit the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter. He had ridden across Canada many years before that, and he said of his trip across Canada that people kept asking him if he was doing it for a cause, which got him thinking, "Why not?" Once again he has decided, "Why not?" OWLS asks that you join in cheering Paul on in his quest to traverse the southern corridor of the USA, raising much needed money for OWLS-Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter of Newport, NC, in Pedal4Wildlife II.

"When he brought us the idea to "Ride Across America for OWLS" the first time, we had no idea that it would evolve into such an exciting and monumental event for the shelter," stated Trish Slape, executive director for OWLS. "We saw it not only as a great fundraising opportunity, but as a great outreach opportunity as well. Here's a chance for us to spread our message across the country as well as across the biking community. It's just a very exciting opportunity for us, and we thank Paul for opening the door!" Now, faced with the opportunity to have Paul ride across America for the shelter yet again, she stated, "Paul's first ride was so exciting. Following his blog really made you feel like you were right there with him, so we are very excited to be a part of this phenomenal event again. We are honored that Paul has included us in this great undertaking of his!"

Paul will be posting almost daily updates on his blog www.pedal4wildlifeblog.blogspot.com, which was created during his first transcontinental ride. His blog will be linked to www.owlsonline.org, the website for Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter, so you can learn more about his cause. His trip is scheduled to kick off the last week of December from Morro Bay, California. He plans to visit many breathtaking places throughout Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee and, of course, North Carolina.

Paul has provided assistance to OWLS in many different ways over the last few years, from repairing and maintaining cages to supplying them with fish caught during many of his research trips off the coast. Now, he continues his phenomenal support to give yet again to the shelter and support what it does. He is covering his expenses for the trip out of pocket, so all donations and sponsorships collected will go straight to the shelter. The focus of the trip will be to raise money to remodel and expand the current pelican habitat to house the ever-increasing number of pelicans that come in each year, with any excess funds going towards the care of the animals that OWLS treats on a daily basis. There are many ways for you to become involved in Paul's ride across America. Go to www.pedal4wildlifeblog.blogspot.com to keep tabs on his progress by checking out his photos and reading the blog of his trip. You can also check the OWLS website www.owlsonline.org to see how to make an individual contribution or to spotlight your company by sponsoring a leg of his trip.



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