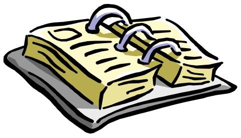
MESSENGER
THE PRESCOTT COMPUTER SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTER - PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

January 2019

Visit our website at www.pcs4me.com Ken Johnson, Newsletter Editor



# CALENDAR

SIG = Special Interest Group

## This Weeks Schedule

**January 12 - Saturday - 1:00-3:00 PM**
General Meeting - Leader: Ray Carlson
Location: Prescott Public Library; Founders Suite A & B

### First Hour: Latest Innovations Found at CES

Every year, a Consumer Electronics Show is held in Las Vegas during the second week of January. This show provides the primary international opportunity for companies to showcase their latest innovations. For the first hour of the January 12th PCS General Meeting, Ray Carlson will review the innovations that receive the most positive reviews. He will emphasize those that seem more practical and/or seem to reflect a trend. Discussion will be encouraged. During this presentation, Ray will also demonstrate use of the Yubico security keys.

### Second Hour: Tips 'n' Tricks

Phil Ball, Vice-President of the Society, will offer another in his popular series on Tips 'n' Tricks to maximize the usefulness of your personal computer. Both parts of the meeting will use non-technical language and encourage comments and questions from those attending.

In addition to the presentations, the following are typical events which take place at our General meetings:

1) *We hold an informal Flea Market in which you are encouraged to bring in your excess computer equipment or software and make them available for others to enjoy at no charge. Please deposit* give-away items on the table in the back marked "Free Stuff." Any items left here at the end of the meeting are subject to disposal.

2) If you have items that are just too good to give away, you may set up a separate table and hold your own sale.

3) We conduct a free drawing for gift cards at the end of the meeting, so make sure to get a pair of tickets from whoever is in charge and place one in the container provided.

4) We will also accept your used ink and toner cartridges for recycling. They are turned in to Think4Inc for credits which PCS uses to purchase office supplies from them.

## Future Meetings

*Calendar Continued on Pg 2*

Ask a technology question and get help from members of the Prescott Computer Society. Bring your own laptop or mobile device or use a library laptop. This is a weekly drop-in service and registration is not required.

**January 19 - Saturday - 1:00-3:00 PM**
Special Topics SIG - Leader: JB Burke
Location: Prescott Public Library; Founders Suite A & B

JB Burke will discuss interesting topics related to general computing

**January 22 - Tuesday - 10:00-11:00 AM**
**Technology Help Hour - Leader: PCS Staff**
Location: Prescott Public Library Training Lab; Third Floor

**January 26 - Saturday**

No PCS meeting is scheduled.

*Note that these dates are correct at time of publication but are subject to change.*

## Prescott Computer Society
## Current Officers & Board of Directors

**Officers:**

| | |
|---|---|
| President | Ray Carlson |
| Vice Pres | Phil Ball |
| Secretary | JB Burke |
| Treasurer | Edi Taylor-Richards |

**General Directors:**

Joan Baum
Dick Mason
John Carter
Murray Smolens
Ken Johnson

### It's time to renew your dues

if you haven't already done so.

The good news: **again this year, dues are only $24.** Please make checks payable to "PCS" and present them to any Board member (gold nametag) or mail your check to:

Treasurer Prescott Computer Society
PO Box 11954
Prescott, AZ 86304

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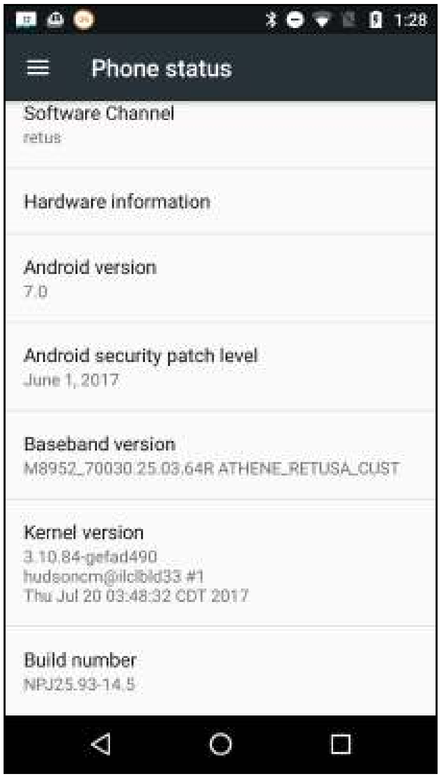
## Securing Android

By Dick Maybach, Member, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ
January 2018 issue, BUG Bytes
www.bcug.com
n2nd (at) att.net

Your PC remains at home behind locked doors, accesses the Internet through a firewall, and has its software updated regularly, but none of this is true of your Android device. If you haven't thought about its security, you are overdue to begin. We obtain PC software updates directly from the software vendors, e.g. Microsoft issues these for Windows. Google releases monthly security updates for Android, but the only end users that get them are owners of Google Nexus and Pixel devices. All others receive them through their device vendors and usually get them much later, if at all. To see the date of your last security update, go to Settings, then About phone (probably the last item). Figure 1 shows the lower part of the resulting screen. (This is for a Motorola $G^4$ using Android 7; screens on other configurations may differ.)



1:28

Phone status

Software Channel
retus

Hardware information

Android version
7.0

Android security patch level
June 1, 2017

Baseband version
M8952_70030.25.03.64R ATHENE_RETUSA_CUST

Kernel version
3.10.84-gefad490
hudsoncm@ilclbld33 #1
Thu Jul 20 03:48:32 CDT 2017

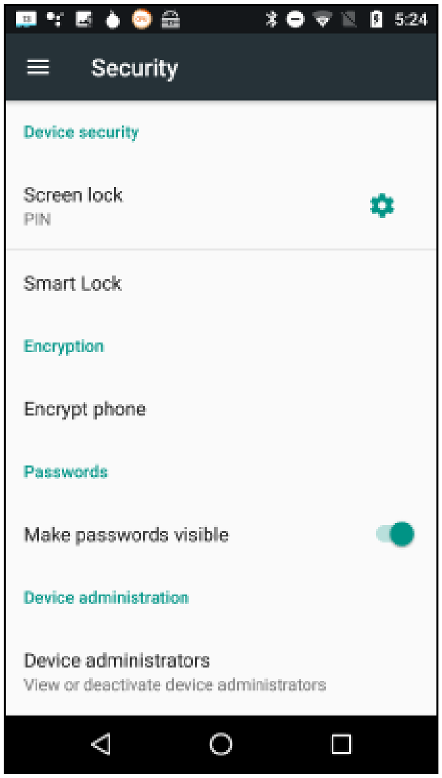
Build number
NPJ25.93-14.5

**Figure 1. About Phone Screen**

This shot was taken in November and shows that the latest security update had been made in June, which was not reassuring (although I did receive the September update later in November). Many security professionals believe that keeping software up to date is the most important security measure, more so than using anti-malware software.

That your Android phone is subject to damage and loss, probably runs on software with known vulnerabilities, and lacks protection from Internet aggressors are beyond your control, but there are things you can do to reduce your risk.

Be sure your phone is protected by going to Settings then Security and enabling screen lock; a password here is more secure but less convenient than a PIN. Don't use None or Swipe, as these make your device fully accessible to anyone who picks it up. I don't care for the Smart Lock features as they unlock your phone for extended periods. Making passwords visible isn't as dangerous as it sounds, as it displays the only last character you enter and only for only a short time. I find it greatly reduces errors when entering passwords. I haven't encrypted my entire device because all my sensitive data is encrypted separately. Figure 2 shows the upper portion of the security screen.



5:24

Security

Device security

Screen lock
PIN

Smart Lock

Encryption

Encrypt phone

Passwords

Make passwords visible

Device administration

Device administrators
View or deactivate device administrators

**Figure 2. Settings/Security Screen**

Sanitize your browser favorites, especially if you sync them with your PC over the Internet. Review all your favorites. (With Firefox, open the menu, select Preferences, then Security, and finally Saved Logins...; for other browsers check the Internet.) Delete any, such as banks, that are sensitive, and the next time you log into one with a password, your browser will offer to save it. Select "Never for this site," or the equivalent.

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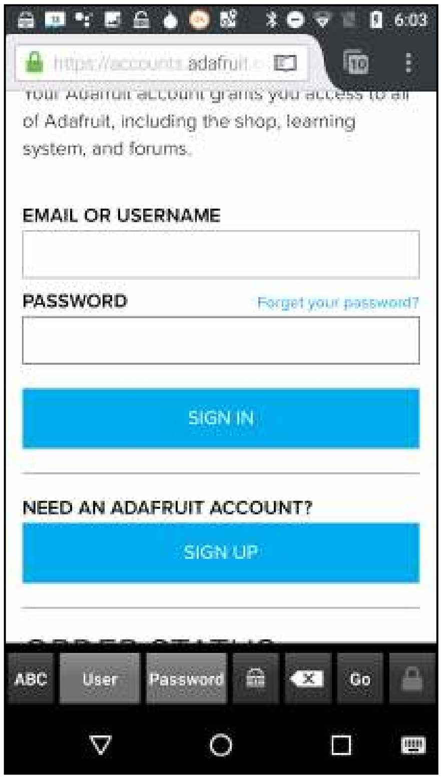
Use a password manager that stores its data in an encrypted database and use a non-trivial password for it. I like Keepass2Android Password Safe by Croco Apps, as it uses the same database as KeePass, KeePassX, and KeePassXC, which are available for Linux, OS X, and Windows. You can transfer the database file among all your devices. Because it's encrypted, you could sync it using a cloud service, but I prefer not to so expose it. Keep all your sensitive information here, passwords, PINs, account numbers, passport numbers, etc. Figure 3 shows Firefox on a site's login page with KeePass2Android active.



6:03

https://accounts.adafruit.c

Your Adafruit account grants you access to all of Adafruit, including the shop, learning system, and forums.

EMAIL OR USERNAME

PASSWORD

Forgot your password?

SIGN IN

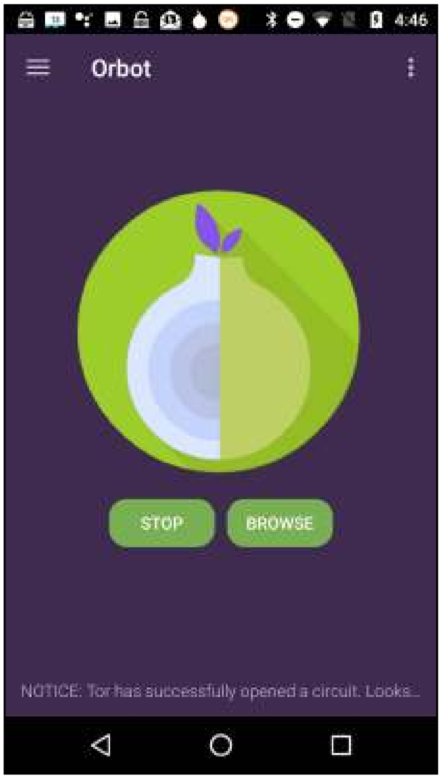
NEED AN ADAFRUIT ACCOUNT?

SIGN UP

**Figure 3. Web Login Page with KeePass2Android Running.**

To get to Figure 3, I opened KeePass2 and selected the Adafruit entry. Then when I launched Firefox and opened the Adafruit location, it displayed a keyboard icon in the bottom menu bar. I selected this and then selected the KeePass keyboard, which added a second lower-menu bar. Now placing the cursor in the Username box and tapping the User button (in the second lower-menu bar) causes KeePass to enter the name in that box. Then placing the cursor in the password box and tapping the Password button does the same for the password. (Of course, I had previously entered the Adafruit information, its URL, my username, and my password, in KeePass.) All this takes longer to describe than to do.

Be careful when using public wi-fi, as with readily-available software anyone on the same network can view every packet you send and receive. Fortunately, Tor is available for Android, and you should use it whenever you access the Internet using a public wi-fi hot spot. Install the app "Orbot: Proxy with Tor" from Everyone, which will ask that you install "Orfox; Tor Browser for Android, "also from Everyone. Orbot is a proxy that enables access to the Tor network, and Orfox a secure browser that uses Tor. When you use these, a wi-fi snoop will see only encrypted packets and won't know where they are going or from where they are coming. Figure 4 shows the opening Orbot screen. (While we're considering networks, don't ever set your device up as a portable hotspot, which makes it a server.)



NOTICE: Tor has successfully opened a circuit. Looks...

Figure 4. Orbot Opening Screen.

Because of its vulnerability, an Android device is not a safe place to store data. Don't keep anything in it, unless its encrypted, that you wouldn't write on a post-it stuck to the roof of your car. Encrypt anything sensitive, such as passwords and banking information, and as soon as it's convenient, copy your new data to a PC. Although it's not a security issue, be cautious about purchasing copyrighted items encumbered with Digital Rights Management (DRM) features. Some can be used only on a single device, which means if your phone is lost or damaged, you also lose these. See my December 2017 article (available at [http://www.bcug.com](http://www.bcug.com)) for sharing data among Android devices and computers.

Every app you install adds potential security vulnerabilities, and many consume resources even when they

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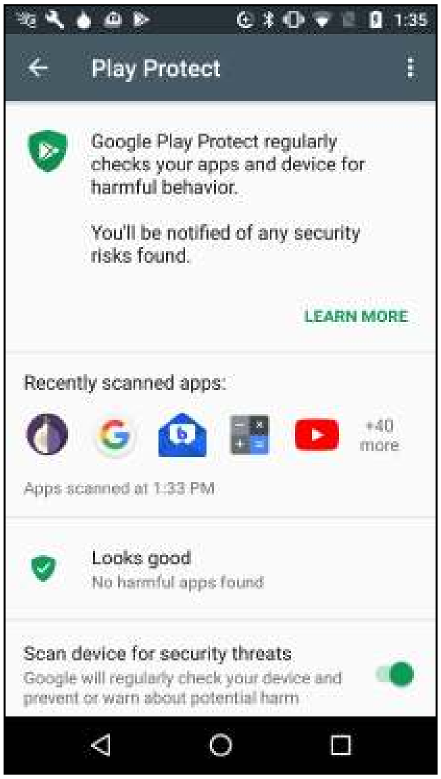
appear not to be running. Their icons clutter your screen, making it difficult to find other apps, and their files fill your storage space. Your device can become less usable with each visit to the Play Store. Google is a large, technically competent organization, with procedures that ensure that Android is a high-quality, secure product. However, this isn't necessarily true of app developers, whose competence is unknown. Google performs security audits on all Playstore apps, and your risk of installing malware is just 0.05 per cent if download apps from only there, compared to an overall infection rate of 0.71 per cent. That an app is popular doesn't mean it's well-designed or safe. Take a disciplined look at your app collection and remove all you don't use regularly. This is one of the most important security measures you can take.

Some apps add considerable risk. For example, some checkbook programs require linking to a bank account, and anyone now accessing your phone could potentially also access your bank account. If you really need this feature, you must secure your phone with a secure password, e.g. one that is long and difficult to guess, which of course will make using the device less convenient.

If you keep your Android data synced with your home computer, you can be casual about backing it up. Nevertheless, backing up may be good insurance if it also backs up your installed apps, since if you lose your phone, you could reinstall them on a new one.

Be sure Google Play Protect is operating by going to the Google Play Store app, selecting the menu (the icon at the left of the menu bar), and then Play Protect; the Scan device for security threats item should be turned on. See Figure 5.

This checks apps as you download them and periodically scans your device for threats. I don't think other anti-virus programs are needed. Android is less vulnerable than Windows, although "less vulnerable" is not the same as "invulnerable." If you keep your device synced with your home PC, and protect any sensitive data with encryption, you haven't much at risk. That an anti-virus vendor would like to sell you an app doesn't mean you need one.



Google Play Protect regularly checks your apps and device for harmful behavior.

You'll be notified of any security risks found.

Recently scanned apps:

Apps scanned at 1:33 PM

Looks good
No harmful apps found

Scan device for security threats
Google will regularly check your device and prevent or warn about potential harm

**Figure 5. Google Play Protect Screen.**

If your device is lost, you can use Google's Android Device Manager service to help you find it and to safeguard its data. Go to [http://www.google.com/android/devicemanager](http://www.google.com/android/devicemanager) and log in with your Google password. The eventual result will be the screen in Figure 6.

This shows you the location of your lost device and gives you the options to have it make some noise (in case its misplaced), lock itself (if you expect to get it back), or wipe its memory (if you think it's gone forever), The last two won't get your phone back, but they will prevent whoever has it from using it or accessing your data. Note however, there is no way to undue the last.

With these few simple precautions you can significantly reduce the risks of using your Android device. For more information on Android security see [http://source.android.com/security/](http://source.android.com/security/).

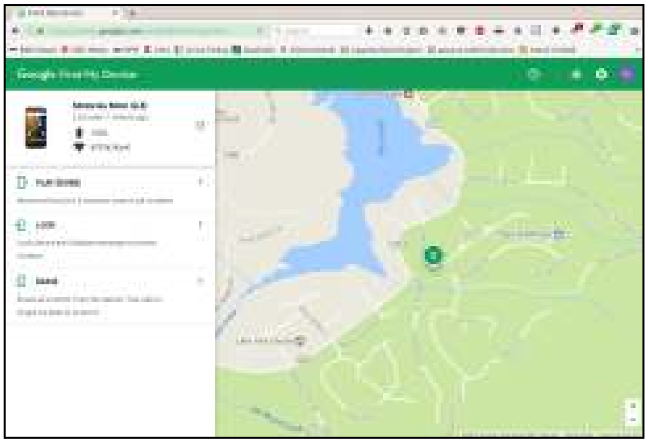


**Figure 6. Google Android Device Manager.** Ω

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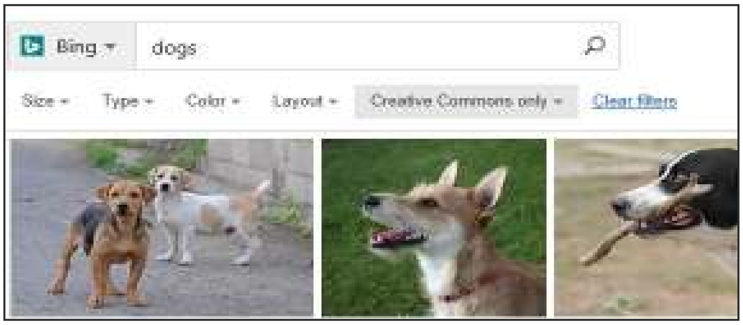
## Take a Tour of the Office Galleries

By Nancy DeMarte, 1st Vice President,
Sarasota Technology User Group, Florida
November 2017 issue, Sarasota Monitor
www.thestug.org
ndemarte (at) verizon.net

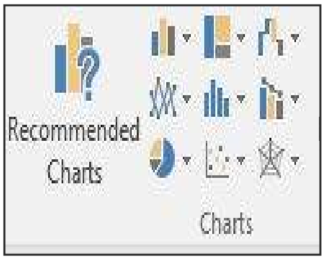
Did you know that Microsoft Office 2016 contains dozens of galleries? The “Big 3” Office applications - Word, Excel, or PowerPoint - have the most and are adding new ones all the time. What is a gallery? In Office, it is a collection of formatting or content options you can use to enhance Office documents, spreadsheets or presentations. When you see a tiny downward-pointing arrow beneath an icon on the ribbon, you can guess that clicking it will reveal a gallery. Recently, I decided to revisit some of the new and old galleries. It was a treat.

In Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, the Illustrations group on the Insert tab contains the most galleries. I chose a few from this group as examples of how comprehensive they can be. Here are a few galleries which appear in all the “Big 3” apps in Office 2016:

**Online Pictures** opens a searchable gallery of photos located on the Internet. I was impressed with the number, variety and quality of the photos. Other positive features were the filters that can be applied to get the exact picture you are looking for and the assistance available for keeping you within the copyright law. With the “Creative Commons only” selected, which it is by default, you are relatively safe to use the pictures for non-commercial purposes.

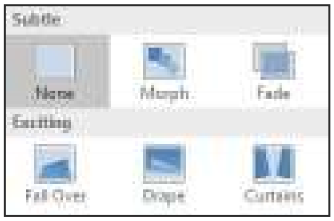


An older gallery with new flexibility found on the Insert tab is **Shapes.** Any of these shapes can be inserted into an Office file and customized by adding color, size, effects, and more. For example, here is a basic shape with a reflection effect and an online photo filling it. The customizing possibilities are not quite endless, but close to it.



*Recommended charts, each chart type with a mini-gallery arrow*

The spreadsheet app Excel has a few newer galleries, too. The **Recommended Charts** gallery analyzes your data table and shows chart types that work best for displaying it. Notice the down arrows next to the chart types in the screen shot. They take you to mini-galleries of options for each type of chart.



PowerPoint, because it is used to create presentations and slide shows, depends on capturing the viewer’s attention. It has some unique galleries. Take the **Transitions** gallery, a small part of which is shown on the left. This gallery is full of creative methods of moving from one slide to the next. Slides can arrive in ways like fading in, wiping in from one side, or peeling up from a corner. Another PowerPoint gallery much like Transitions is **Animations**, which allows text and objects to move around on a slide in a variety of ways.

If the targeted galleries don’t appeal to you, then try out the largest galleries of them all – the **Templates**. When you open an Office application, these are the first thing that you see. In Word, most of us just click on “Blank document” and begin typing. But there are hundreds of pre-formatted types of documents waiting to be personalized by you. Begin by searching for the type of document you need: letter, resumé, calendar, etc. Pick a category from the “Suggested searches” at the top of the screen or type the exact type of document you want. Choose one and replace the text with your own. Templates are life-savers if you have a rush job.

If you were wondering why Microsoft Office is the most popular office suite, consider the variety of galleries which exist beneath the ribbon tools. Take a tour and find some new ideas. Ω