



# PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP, INC GAZETTE



## February 2024

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"JOIN US FOR FUN AND LEARNING AT CROSSVILLE'S COMPUTER CLUB" February 2024 **Volume 30 Issue 2**

**This Month's General Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 13, 2024**  
**will start at 3:00 P.M. @**  
**FFG Christ Lutheran Church**

**February 13<sup>th</sup> Presentation**  
**@ 3:00 P.M.**

### **Important Tax information**

Bob Willis, a long-time tax preparer and one of our club Directors will presenter this month.

Little has changed for 2023 tax returns, and not much more is expected until 2025, other than the normal inflation related changes such as tax brackets, standard deductions, etc.

After 2025, there could be significant changes with or without Congressional action. Many current tax provisions are scheduled to expire after 2025. These provision will roll back to the tax laws that were in effect in 2017, unless Congress intervenes. We will review several recently proposed tax law changes and the impact of returning to 2017 tax laws.

We will also review several tax changes that took effect with recent Federal legislation: the **Secure Act** that revised **Retirement Account** rules, and the **Inflation Reduction Act** that extended and enhanced provisions for **Residential Energy Credits** and **Electric Vehicle Credits**. Some provisions of both bills were implemented in 2023 and others are effective in 2024 and beyond.

Neither of these laws have received much publicity



### **Wednesday, February 14 2024,**

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**Please Note: All Meetings will now be on the second Tuesday of each month. Starting at 3:00 P.M.**

**Location: Christ Lutheran Church**  
481 Snead Drive, Fairfield Glade TN

**Join the Club!**

Anyone interested to attend the general meeting or any of the SIG meetings as a guest will be charged \$3.00 per person for any or all meetings in that month. Afterwards, you are encouraged to become a member of the Plateau PC Users Group. Our Club cannot exist without you, the members.

**Membership Dues**

Our annual dues are now payable July 1<sup>st</sup>. of each year. Annual dues are \$24 per single person / \$30 per family. Persons/families joining during the fiscal year have dues payable as follows:

<u>Join In</u>	<u>July - Sept</u>	<u>Oct - Dec</u>	<u>Jan - Mar</u>	<u>Apr - June</u>
Single	<b>\$24</b>	\$18	\$12	\$6
Family	<b>\$30</b>	\$22	\$15	\$7

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS DISCLAIMER**

All members of the Plateau PC Users Group are willing to help one another in the area of advice and tutorial instruction over the phone. If you should require more involved services or instruction, we have a few members who are very knowledgeable in several areas. As a responsible consumer, it is up to you to discuss, before retaining a member, any and ALL charges for repair services and time consuming tutorial activities.

It is not the desire of this Board of Directors to set fees for individuals for services rendered, nor the responsibility to intervene between members who enter into a contract among themselves.

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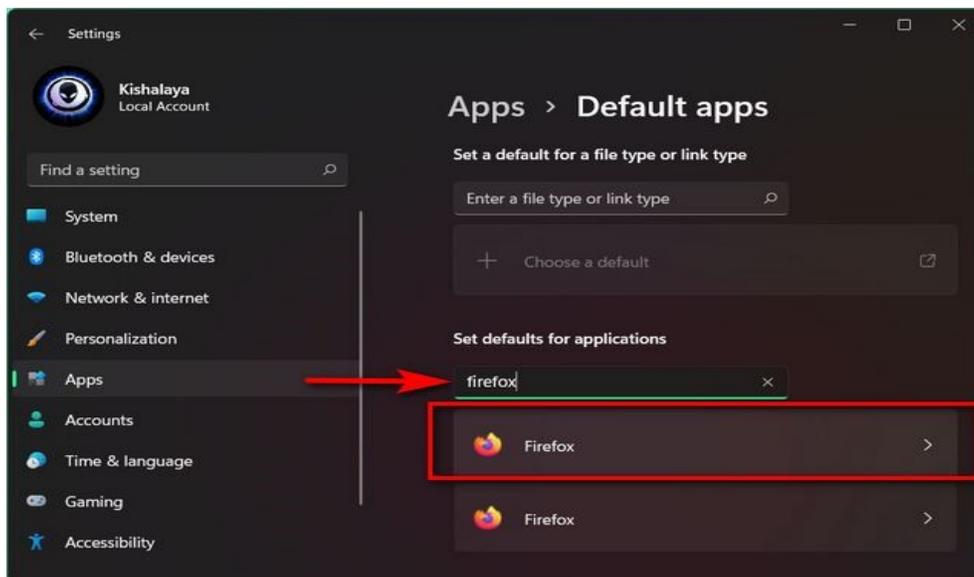
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## Cool Tips & Sites

### Change the Default Browser

After moving to Windows 11, many users would notice that they can no longer change the default web browser with a single click from the Settings page. It's because Microsoft wants users to try the new Edge browser, which is frankly not a bad option. However, if you prefer to use Chrome or Firefox because of their stability and privacy features, you will need to take some extra pains to change the default browser in Windows 11.

So if you want to change the default browser, open Settings and navigate to Apps -> Default apps -> Edge. Now, click on all the link types and change them to your browser of choice. You can follow our tutorial on how to change the default browser on Windows 11 for in-depth instructions.



Keep in mind that even after changing all the link types, clicking on a link through the new Widgets panel or other Microsoft services will open the webpage in Edge. If you want Windows 11 to respect your browser choice, head over to our article on how to force Windows 11 to open links in your default browser.

**\*\* Visit the PPCUG Website \*\***

***At: [www.PPCUGinc.com](http://www.PPCUGinc.com)***. Read all about our club activities and scheduled monthly meetings, also current and past issues of the Gazette Newsletter. Links also to the Meeting Handouts on past presentations.

Send your comments and suggestions to the PPCUG Webmaster,  
Alan Baker @ [jackal33980@gmail.com](mailto:jackal33980@gmail.com) (931) 239-0877

## **A Cautionary Tale**

David Kretchmar, Computer Hardware Specialist  
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club  
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Recently I helped a club member regain control of their Yahoo Mail account after they had been hacked by possibly one of the most sophisticated computer intrusions I have seen to date. The user became aware they had been compromised when people whose names were in the Yahoo Mail personal contact



list reported receiving suspicious emails purportedly from the hacked individual's Yahoo account. No doubt those emails contained a link to malware that would have planted itself on any computer on which the infected link was opened.

The user immediately did the correct thing; they changed their Yahoo password.

Subsequently, the user could not log into their Yahoo mail account, instead getting a message that their account was locked and they would have to wait a period of time (the countdown "clock" appeared to start at one hour) before attempting to unlock it. The user encountered this lock and countdown when trying to access their account. The timer was an interesting clue since Yahoo's advertised lockout period for a user's repeated incorrect password attempts is either 12 or 24 hours, not one hour. There is a countdown clock available for Yahoo and Google advertisers that could be set to run for one hour or any preselected time.

### **A Google Chrome issue?**



This user was attempting to access their Yahoo Mail via their favorite browser, Google Chrome. On a hunch, I tried to access the Yahoo account using Microsoft's native internet browser, Microsoft Edge. The user manually entered their Yahoo username and the new password, and they got into their account with no problem! Yet the Yahoo account contained virtually no recent email. I then downloaded and installed the Mozilla Firefox web browser with the same results.

My suspicions turned to the Google Chrome internet browser installed on their computer. I checked the area in Chrome where browser infections are known to attack and reside: Extensions (Settings, More

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tools, Extensions). I turned off or deleted all potentially problematic Extensions, yet the problem persisted. I then reviewed each application installed on the system and saw nothing suspicious.

Chrome seemed to be operating fine except for the Yahoo Mail issue. This begged the question, "Why does Chrome present problems with Yahoo while two other browsers work?" The problem HAD to be with Chrome. I reset the Chrome browser and deleted cached data, but the problem persisted.

I deleted the Chrome browser, restarted the computer, then downloaded and reinstalled Chrome. The same problem persisted. That pesky timer seemed to continue its countdown, and since I had been working on the issue for almost an hour, the lockout appeared to be about to expire. When the countdown clock dropped to less than a minute, I continued to attempt to log in continuously, finally getting Yahoo to accept the user's login and the new password, and the problem was solved. I had hit the program precisely when the lockout ended before the hacker or hacking program could kick in.

Even after accessing the Yahoo Mail account, the inbox was empty. I sent an email from that Yahoo account to that same account, and it seemed to send OK but never appeared in the inbox. Yet it appeared as sent mail. I checked to filter settings on Yahoo Mail and saw that any mail containing the Yahoo email address of the affected account, including every email going into that account, was being diverted to Trash. Removing that filter was an easy fix for the rest of the problem.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The malware that caused the problem was probably accessed via a link in an email from a trusted friend. This is how most malware is spread. Remember, friends of the club member received an email from the club member that no doubt contained the same malicious link.

To prevent email account lockouts, a user should limit the number of times they try to enter a password. If an account holder gets a "bad username or password" message 2 or 3 times, they should use the "Forgot Password" feature to reset the password. The password is virtually always the problem with email accounts since we keep the same username (email address) all our lives.

Consider using a password manager like the good one built into Google Chrome. This will make it easier to use strong passwords that are almost impossible to hack, as well as make your life easier when you log in to sites. Also, a "keyboard logger" that records keystrokes cannot capture passwords.

Don't count on antivirus software to protect you from hacks. The hacked user discussed in this article was running Malwarebytes Pro and Windows Security, two of the best PC defenses available today.



## Smartphone Wireless Connections – Help Keep Us Connected

By Phil Sorrentino, Secretary and APCUG Rep  
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The smartphone is a wireless marvel. You may not have thought about your smartphone in this way, but your smartphone may be able to connect to up to five different wireless networks. (I'm sure this would have made Nicola Tesla very happy, he is credited with the wireless transmission of energy via his patented Tesla coil, though Marconi got the credit, and the patent, for inventing radio communications.) Just think about the hardware and software that allow your smartphone to participate in five different kinds of networks, all wrapped up in your smartphone package along with all the other electronics needed to support a powerful computer system. I bet even Steve Jobs would be impressed.



### Cell Phone Network

The most apparent wireless network your smartphone works with is the one you initially bought your smartphone to use; that is the cell phone network supported by all those antenna towers that have sprouted up all over in the past 40 years. (Not many landlines around anymore.) This network lets you keep in voice contact with just about anyone since over 91% of the people in the world has smartphones; that's over 6.6 billion possibilities. (Even more impressive is that most Americans – 97% now - own a cell-phone. The share of Americans that own a smartphone is now over 85%). This cell phone network also provides access to the internet when you are out and about. The internet is considered a "Wide Area Network" or WAN. A WAN is an extensive computer network spread over a wide geographic area. A network's speed is its data speed or data rate and is measured in bps or bits per second. Typically Mega bps or Giga bps. WAN data rates are typically around 150 Mbps. When you are not out and about and are within a Wi-Fi network, the Wi-Fi router provides access to the internet. Without this ability to be constantly connected to the internet, I'm not sure how many would own what would only be a competent personal digital assistant.



### Wi-Fi Network

So, Wi-Fi is the second wireless network that your smartphone can take advantage of. Wi-Fi is considered a "Local Area Network" or LAN. A LAN is a collection of wired and/or wireless connected devices typically in your home or office. LAN data rates can be from 100 Mbps to 1 Gbps. Using Wi-Fi, you can connect to the many servers on the internet. The use of your smartphone in this manner is sometimes called "Cloud Computing" because you are accomplishing a task on the smartphone by using the resources of a server computer somewhere out there on the internet (in the cloud), like using GPS and the Maps or Waze app on your smartphone to help navigate you from home to a place you've never been to

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before. Cloud Computing is just a more common term for "Client-Server Technology," which allows our smartphones to take advantage of powerful computer servers connected by the internet.



### **GPS Network**

Remember that every wireless network your smartphone can work with requires a transmitter, a receiver, and an antenna in the smartphone so that it can send data to and receive data from the other network members. (This is only possible because of digital electronic circuitry; this would never have been possible in the analog electronics world. Thanks to micro-miniature integrated circuits that typically get smaller and cheaper over time.) Though GPS, which is a third wireless network, is an exception. Your smartphone only has GPS receivers and antennas, no GPS transmitters. But it has multiple receivers because to determine your location, your smartphone has to receive data from at least 3 GPS satellites. (More detail than that may be the subject of a future article.)



### **Bluetooth Network**

The fourth wireless network supported by your smartphone is Bluetooth. You may not have taken advantage of this feature unless you have a relatively new car and you have introduced (paired) your smartphone to the car's entertainment system. If you have, you are familiar with one of the best safety features in the new cars, the ability to receive and make calls from your smartphone while always keeping your hands on the steering wheel. (Now, if they could only convince the many speeding drivers to stay under the speed limit; another topic for a future article.) Bluetooth has also become the preferred connection for speakers and headphones (earbuds). Bluetooth headphones are for quiet listening, and Bluetooth speakers are for loud listening (a whole lot louder than the sound capability of the smartphone). Bluetooth is considered a "Personal Area Network" or PAN. A PAN is a computer network for interconnecting devices within a person's workspace. It transmits data among devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, and personal digital assistants. Bluetooth data rates can be as high as 1 Mbps.



### **NFC Network**

The fifth wireless network may not be available on some older smartphones or even some new ones. This network is called NFC or Near Field Communications. NFC is a set of communications protocols

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(rules) that enables communications between two devices over very short distances, maybe an inch or two. It facilitates data transfer between nearby smartphones, laptops, tablets, and other devices. NFC data rates are around 400 Mbps. NFC is used for making easy contactless payments with your smartphone using Apple Pay or Google Pay. Just enable the amount in the payment app and touch the smartphone to the NFC reader or terminal. This type of payment protects your payment information with multiple layers of security to help keep your account safe. The payment terminal does not share your card number when you pay, so your private information stays secure.

So, with these five networks, your smartphone helps you keep in touch and connected.

## Learning Technology Today

Jim Cerny, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, Education Chair, and Forums Coordinator  
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In the ancient computer days, ten or so years ago, learning technology was very different than it is today. Before the dreaded COVID days of isolation, classroom settings were very popular for learning technology. Classrooms had individual computers, and the subjects were on general and basic topics everyone needed to learn. Most people then purchased their own computers for the first time and needed to know how to use them. Do you remember having to learn how to use a mouse? How about changing the size of a window on your screen or searching the Internet? In those days, these things were new to most people. Now technology training (not just "computer classes") has dramatically changed.

The big jump off the cliff into something new in learning was the massive changes that COVID brought about. You know the story – training went to online classes, and in-person meetings were all but eliminated. Now that the COVID epidemic is over, have we returned to "normal" learning? I think not. Many of these changes will remain with us. So how do we adapt, and what do the "tech learning classes" look like today and in the future?

I advise searching the Internet for the specific training you want or need. Here's why:

1. More and more everyday devices will use more and more technology – refrigerators, cars, TVs, doorbells, and toilets. Can you imagine attending a class on how to use your refrigerator? No, I can't either, no matter how cool it would be! If there was a class, how many attending would have the same refrigerator with the same controls or options?
2. There are too many options, and no one uses all of them. I am still learning my car's options and have been driving it for four years! A word-processor app like Word has options I am not even aware of and will probably not use anyway but may be very useful for a few people.
3. Use of multiple devices – cell phones, TV adaptors, tablets, laptops, etc. Now you can get your email, watch a movie, or do your banking on different devices –each one will have a slightly different way of doing the same thing. Likewise, teaching even the same topic or app can be used differently on other devices.

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4. We tend to have specific needs from our technology. Do any of these questions sound familiar? -- "How do I put text on a photo?", "How do I read my email on my cell phone?" or "How do I get the sports channel I want on my TV?". Our needs and wants are now getting much more specific. A class on a specific topic and device would be attended by only a few people wanting that specific knowledge.

5. We don't want to waste time learning things we will probably not use or already know. In any class, people come with different and unequal levels of experience and knowledge.

6. People are used to "convenience learning" when they have time and do not have to travel. Many colleges provide "at home" learning using the Internet.

All this is to say that the Internet is probably the best source for learning a specific task for a particular device. Ask Google, "How do I ..." and be very specific. Enter the name, model, and year of your car, the make and model of your refrigerator, or your phone or tablet. Google loves specificity. Demonstration videos and text instructions will magically appear for you on any topic. It is truly a learning gold mine of knowledge – give it a try!



### **Personal Computer Security**

By Dick Maybach, Brookdale Computer User Group  
www.bcug.com  
n2nd (at) att.net

Home users must manage three types of security:

- information security – protecting their information,
- application security – securing their applications against modification and misuse, and
- network security – preventing access to their network.

Only a small portion of your data, such as passwords and credit card numbers, is sensitive and needs special protection. For most, you are concerned only with recovery if lost, and here a good, well-tested backup discipline is the solution. It doesn't matter if the loss was because of hardware failure, operator error, or malicious software. Please note the "well-tested." If you haven't recently and successfully restored data from a backup, you don't have a backup discipline, only a backup hope.

Sensitive data must be encrypted. I use KeePassXC, <https://keepassxc.org/>, for passwords, PINs, and financial access data, such as credit card and bank account numbers. The program stores these in an encrypted database, which I keep on my PC. If you keep it on the cloud, it will be available to all your devices with Internet access, but it's also more vulnerable to attack there. This means it needs a stronger password.

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A compatible Android app uses the same database as KeePassXC, which means the data is also safe-guarded on your smartphone. The application also generates passwords of arbitrary complexity, making using a unique, strong password for each account easy. Other password programs have similar features. I use VeraCrypt, <https://www.veracrypt.fr/en/Home.html>, to encrypt files, directories, and storage media on my PC. I've seen reports that the EDS app allows access to VeraCrypt files on Android, but I haven't tested it.

Many financial institutions require two-factor authentication when you access your account. The most common is texting a one-time PIN to your cell phone after you log into your account with a username and password. You need both your password and the registered smartphone with them. Also, be careful when you travel that you can receive text messages in the countries you visit if you use credit cards.

Phishing attacks, where you get calls or messages asking you for sensitive information, are far more common than those through your PC. I get these almost every day, such as:

- "Your bank account has been locked; click this icon to unlock it,"
- "Your email storage is full; click this icon to free some,"
- "Your PC is infected with viruses; click here, and Microsoft will help you solve this,"
- "Amazon is about to ship you a new cell phone and charge your account; click this icon to prevent it," and
- "You owe money for past-due taxes; call the IRS at this number."

Usually, these are obvious scams, but occasionally you must do something. For example, your credit card company may contact you about a questionable purchase. In such cases, log into your account with the contact data in your password file or call the number on the back of the card. Also, never use a link in an email.

Many attacks occur when you contact disreputable websites. However, you can protect yourself by improving your browser's security.

- Chrome – <https://support.google.com/chrome/answer/10468685>
- Edge – <https://www.makeuseof.com/guide-to-security-settings-in-microsoft-edge/>
- Firefox – <https://trendoceans.com/firefox-privacy-and-security/>

Browsers are becoming more secure, which means keeping yours up to date is especially important. However, browsing can be dangerous; you feel safe because you are comfortable in your own home, but you are poking through the back alleys of the world. If you have any concerns, use the Tor browser, <https://www.torproject.org/download/>, to protect yourself. Even better, install Tails Linux, <https://tails.boum.org/>, on a memory stick and explore from there rather than your usual operating system.

Be careful where you obtain software. Years ago, we would go to a tech store to buy a box with the storage medium and a manual, but the stores, boxes, media, and manuals have all but disappeared. We now download or install it directly from the Internet. I prefer to obtain mine from its developer's website after verifying that the URL is valid, and the developer is reputable. I've learned to avoid sites that warehouse many programs, as their downloads often include unwanted extras or malware. Check any download for malware before you run it, and if possible, test it on a secondary computer or virtual machine before you install it on your primary PC.

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Keep all your software up to date, not just the operating system but all your applications. Many have bugs, some of which have security flaws, and anti-malware software may not protect you from someone exploiting these. Delete those applications you no longer use, as every one you have installed is a potential security risk. This also applies to smartphone apps.

Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are notorious for not updating the software in their terminal equipment. Unfortunately, your home network may not be secure, which can be problematic, especially if you have local file servers or other network devices. You can reduce your risk by installing your firewall between your home network and the ISP hardware, providing that you keep it updated and properly configured.

Some companies promote Internet-of-Thing's devices, such as video cameras that allow you to check on your home from work. Unfortunately, not all are designed for good security; others can also check on your home. Always change the usernames and passwords of such equipment from their defaults. Consider carefully whether the convenience of these is worth the risk, and purchase only those for which you can find thorough valid reviews.

Using a laptop on a public hotspot is much riskier than using one at home, as all your Internet data packets are visible to others using the same hotspot. Be sure to set your PC firewall for this environment and use a Tor browser or a VPN to encrypt your packets. Of course, encrypting sensitive data on a laptop is even more critical than on a home PC, as laptops frequently go missing. They are also more easily damaged, so they should be backed up, preferably by storing that data remotely. All this is even more true for smartphones.

Some PC users think that security begins and ends with anti-malware software, but reading the above should convince you otherwise. Such programs are helpful but address only a small portion of the risks.

### **Tech Up In Smoke**

President's Corner

Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group

[www.uchug.org](http://www.uchug.org)

president \*\* uchug.org

Cooking has been an important element on humanity's path to civilization. In addition to warmth and light, the mastery of fire brought the ability to heat food and drink. Cooking food to a sufficient temperature to kill pathogens helps prevent food-borne illnesses. The ability to boil water and cook food is essential to human health and played a big part in helping to build today's advanced society.

Technology has played a significant role in food preparation and cooking. Over the thousands of years of human history, we have developed many ways to cook safe, nutritious, and appetizing food. Like in many other fields, we have recently made tremendous advancements in cooking tech. My grandmother, who had a reputation as a good cook, started out using a wood-fired stove when she was a young wife on a farm in rural Nebraska in the 1920s. When electricity came to the farm in the 1950s, she used an electric stove and oven, and in the 1980s, 's added a microwave oven. It always seemed interesting to me that she saw and embraced such changes in cooking technology over her lifetime. Still, like many of our tech, the rate of

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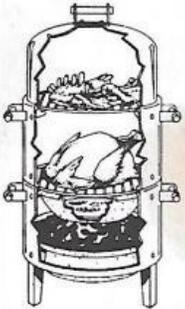
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progress and advancement has slowed since microwaves. There is better control and more sophisticated programming of our cooking, but no one seems to be cooking with lasers or particle accelerators yet.

When I was growing up, the future of food seemed to be going in a modernistic direction. Microwave ovens enabled quick meals and snacks from prepackaged sources. Microwaveable dinners and microwave popcorn made food prep easy and fast. Space food sticks, instant breakfast (powdered drink mixes), and Tang came from our space race days and seemed to point to a future of convenience from processed foods. In recent years we seem to be going in the opposite direction; however, today, there is a greater emphasis on healthy, whole, less pre-processed, fresher, and a return to more traditional food preparation and cooking methods.

One traditional food preparation method I enjoy is smoking. The most common smoked meat products are bacon, ham, and sausage, but almost any meat can get enhanced flavor from smoking. Cheese can be smoked, and even vegetables gain flavor from the process. We have a long smoking tradition in my family. My grandfather used a smokehouse on the farm to prepare hams, bacon, and other meats. My father owned a home smoker, and our family Christmas dinner almost always had smoked prime rib of beef at its core. I got a smoker soon after I moved out and have now taken over that part of the family holiday cooking duties. My son has had several smokers and cooks with them much more often than any other family member.

Smoking is one of the oldest forms of food preparation, imparting flavor and providing some preservation. There are two types of smoking; the food is subjected to wood smoke in an enclosed container. In cold smoking, the food is exposed to low-temperature smoke (60 to 120 °F); the smoking process does not cook it (cheese is smoked this way). Hot smoking uses smoke that is hot enough (200 to 300 °F) to slowly cook the meat (as in BBQ).



The basics of smoking are still the same, but the technology has changed over the years. My grandfather's smokehouse was just a small wood structure in which meats were hung and a smoldering fire burned for days or weeks. My cylindrical steel smoker burns charcoal in the bottom pan for heat. Wood chips or chunks are placed on the coals to generate the smoke. A water pan above the coals buffers the heat and provides moisture and a bit of steam. The food is placed on steel racks above the water pan. This type of smoker could also use an electric heating element or a wood fire as its heat source.

My son once had a Traeger smoker, which burned pre-made wood pellets. The pellets are dispensed in a controlled way into the fire under the meat to regulate the fire temperature. A pan of water can be placed on the grill with the meat to add moisture. These pellet grills and smokers can be very sophisticated, with Wi-Fi connections allowing remote control and monitoring through a smartphone app. One downside to them is that you must buy their wood pellets. My son now has a more traditional "stick" smoker with a cooking chamber and a separate firebox. Wood is burned in the firebox, which is connected to the grilling chamber to provide heat and smoke to the food indirectly.

I like my steel cylindrical smoker, but determining when the meat is done is often difficult. While it is said that you really can't overcook in a smoker, getting the desired level of doneness can be challenging. It does not help that I often only use the smoker a few times a year, typically for a holiday or party where my smoking is center stage. In the early years, I cooked by time alone, with reasonable results, though I usually suffered through a lot of stress, wondering when to take the meat off. Unfortunately, removing the cover to examine the meat or measure its

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internal temperature released heat that had to build backup, slowing the cooking. All I had to go by was experience and a small, questionable relative temperature indicator built into the smoker top cover. Many variables come into play when you have a target time to eat and then have to work backwards through when to take the meat off, when to put it on, and when to start the coals. I've had to try to compensate for cold, rain, and warm days in my process over the years to produce the results that have come to be expected.



When low-cost electronic cooking thermometers became available, they seemed to improve my results' repeatability. I could now continuously monitor the meat's internal temperature and, thus, doneness. This was a big help, but issues remained. We almost always smoke two pieces of meat for our large holiday gatherings, one on the smoker's top grate and one on the bottom. I wound up with two different digital BBQ meat thermometers and used one for each piece of meat. Unfortunately, the two thermometers did not read the same; one read about five degrees higher than the other. This reminds me of the saying, "The person with one clock always knows what time it is, while the person with two is never sure." I also found knowing the smoker's internal air temperature and the water bowl temperature would be very helpful, but that meant buying even more electronic thermometers.

For Father's Day last year, I received the gift that changed my outlook on smoking: an Easy BBQ 6-probe digital electronic meat thermometer with Bluetooth capability. This combined the capabilities of six separate thermometers in one device and allowed it to be controlled and read through a smartphone app. This would allow me to gather much more data on smoking and better predict the doneness of the meat and the time required to achieve it.

With six temperature probes, I could simultaneously monitor the temperatures of the bottom meat, top meat, bottom grill air, top grill air, water pan, and outside ambient air.

When I had it all instrumented up, all the wires coming out of the smoker reminded me of photos of the "Gadget" device that exploded in the first atomic bomb test at the Trinity test site in New Mexico in 1945.



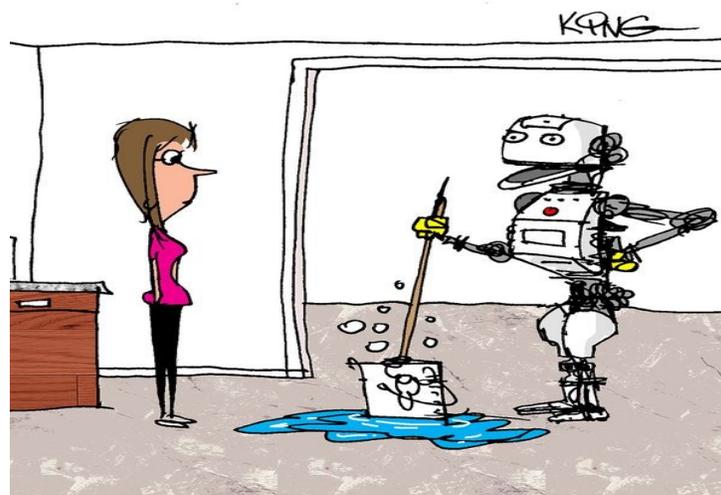
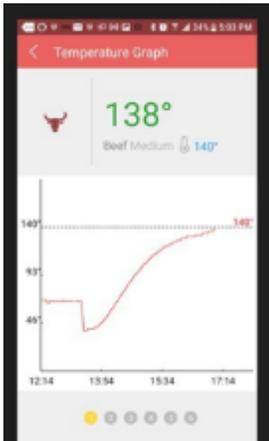
*(Continued on page 14)*

(Continued from page 13)

e problem I have not found a way to work around is that the app won't connect to the thermometer device through Bluetooth when running on my new Samsung Galaxy S22 phone. It will work when running on my old Samsung Galaxy J3 phone (which I kept), so it may be an app compatibility issue with the new Android version. While annoying, it is not that objectionable as long as I can continue to keep my old phone working. I also found that this product that my wife purchased for me from Amazon (\$45.99 at the time) is no longer available, so I hope it lasts. Some reviews on Amazon reported that the probes could fail, so I'm considering buying some of the replacement probes that are still available.

The app can show the temperatures of all the monitored points as the smoking goes on, but the only way I have found to record the data (other than writing it down) is to take screenshots from the app on the phone. The best thing about the app is that it can show graphs of each temp probe over the cooking time, which can be very useful for determining how these monitored points relate to each other over time. I capture these graphs with a screenshot as well.

With all the data collected from the 6-input thermometer, I can feel more confident in predicting when cooking is done to the desired level and how making changes will affect the cooking time. For example, now I'll know better when I need to stir the coals to turn up the heat or leave them undisturbed to reduce the heat so that the meat can come out of the smoker at the desired time with the desired doneness. So here's to cooking the traditional way with a high-tech assist!



*"I'm equipped with the latest AI, so I suggest using me for more than mopping the floors."*



**Plateau PC Users Group, Inc.**  
**Application for Membership for 2024**

----- New Member

----- Renewing Member

Return this application with a check for annual dues payable to "PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP"  
 Return to the club Treasurer during our meeting or mail to  
 "PPCUG Treasurer. 215 Highland Sq. PMB 11, Crossville TN 38555"

**Our annual dues are now payable July 1<sup>st</sup>. of each fiscal year.**

Persons// families joining during the fiscal year have dues payable as follows:

<u>Join In</u>	<u>July - Sept</u>	<u>Oct - Dec</u>	<u>Jan - Mar</u>	<u>Apr - June</u>
Single	<b>\$24</b>	\$18	\$12	\$6
Family	<b>\$30</b>	\$22	\$15	\$7

Date: ----- Amount Paid: \$ ----- by Cash -----, or Check (# -----)

-----  
*Last Name*                      *First Name*                      *Family Member (if family membership)*

-----  
*Address:*

-----  
*City*                      *State*                      *Zip Code*                      *(-----) Phone Number*

E-Mail address: -----

Please Print

I have belonged to a Computer Club before: Yes ----- No -----

I have used PC's since (year): -----

I have knowledge in the following areas that I would be willing to share with club members:

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# March 2024



<u>Sun</u>	<u>Mon</u>	<u>Tue</u>	<u>Wed</u>	<u>Thu</u>	<u>Fri</u>	<u>Sat</u>
					1	2
3	4	5	6 <b>10:00 A.M.</b> PPCUG Board Mtg.	7	8	9
10 	11	12 <b>3:00 P.M.</b> General Mtg. Presentation. Followed by Q&A Session	13	14	15	16
17 	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 						