BAY BYTES
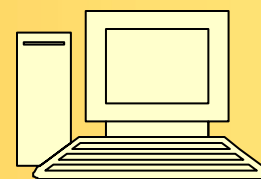
Greater Tampa Bay Personal Computer User Group, Inc.

Newsletter

Issue 7   July 2012   26th Year of People Helping People!

GTBPCUG

July 2012

Newsletter

In this Issue

Don't forget to visit our club's site at:
http://gtbpcug.org

As well Don Miller's and Darrell Manns' :

http://www.dmanns.org/dmiller/

What you should know about Google's new privacy policy

www.zonealarm.com

Google is the most-used search engine, with 65.02% of all searches done through its interface, according to Hitwise.com. Not only that, Google's Gmail also ranks among the most popular email programs. Therefore, practically every Internet user will utilize one or more of Google's sites and services. And now with the recent changes to Google's privacy policy and security, users should be aware of what they are signing up for.

First and foremost, consumers should know that Google now tracks your movements across all of its sites if you're signed in to Google while surfing. Most of this tracking is to help tailor ads and news items to you according to your online habits, interests, and location. However, you share more than just your browser history.

Google collects information two ways: it gets personal data from a consumer when they sign up for its services, and gets data when a consumer uses its services. Many consumers are more concerned over their personal information privacy. Does Google share that? The company says it will share that information, but only if it has your consent to do so. It will, however, share non-personal information — like data that shows trends in Google usage — with the public and Google's partners, including advertisers and publishers.

If you are concerned about Google sharing your personal information, including your web-surfing habits, you can take the following steps to prevent sharing more than you want.

1) Control the information linked to your Google account through the Google Dashboard. The company lets consumers see what information is collected there, so you know what they are already tracking. To prevent Google from tracking your web activity, turn off the browser history.

However, be aware that turning off the search history doesn't mean that past data is deleted from Google's archive. Eva Galperin of the nonprofit Electronic Frontier Foundation told the Los Angeles Times, "With web history enabled, Google will keep these records indefinitely; with it disabled, they will be partially anonymized after 18 months."

2) Edit your ad preferences through the Ads Preferences Manager program and opt out of Google advertising.

3) Verify who you share information with, control what your Google Profile looks like to other people, and tailor what you want certain individuals to see.

4) Don't sign in to the Google account when going online, or consider using a different search engine. If you choose to leave Google, you can export personal data like emails from Gmail and files from Google Docs.

It takes a bit of legwork, but you can still safeguard your information from Google.

Tips and Tricks for Enhancing the PC Visual Display

By Bonnie L. Snyder, Member, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO   http://ppcompas.apcug.org

If you are in need of assistance in seeing the screen on a PC, there are several options available to help you do this. If you are using Windows 7, for instance, there is a built-in screen magnifying program that is head and shoulders above the one in Windows XP. You can run it at any time (provided your video can use the Win 7 Aero display) by pressing Windows key – plus on the keyboard. Pressing Windows key – plus additional times will increase the magnification with each press, and Windows key – minus will decrease the magnification with each press.

Once you are in the magnification program, you can set up the program with the options you want. To do this, go down to the taskbar and click on the magnify icon. A window will open toward the top of the screen and an icon that looks like a "gear" will allow you to choose your options, including having the magnification load automatically at startup. You can change options on the fly by using Windows key – L for Lens mode, Windows key – D for Dock mode, Windows key – F for Full screen mode.

An interesting freeware program you might want to try is aRuler for Windows.
It works under Win XP and Win 7. Initially it loads a ruler that you can use to help focus on the line of text you wish to read. It is configurable in length, and the ruler's visual display can be changed to the user's preference. It also includes a screen magnification option from 1X to 4X.
http://www.arulerforwindows.com/

One of the things that can cause visual fatigue when reading on a computer screen is the brightness of the display. There is a freeware program called Tinted Window which works in both Win XP and Win 7 that can mitigate this problem. Once loaded (it is a Java executable so it doesn't install), Tinted Window comes up in a small window. Right-click on that window and you can set up the color of the tint you wish. The window also allows for full screen or just a lens. http://www.softoxi.com/tinted-window.html

A quick and easy way to magnify the information on the screen is to hold down the Control key and roll the mouse roller forward. The more you move the roller forward, the larger the display will be come. This feature does not work in all programs, so you'll

have to just try it for each one. Interestingly, in Firefox, the most recent magnification done this way is "remembered" so that when initially magnified with the control key, mouse roller, it will be already magnified. You can lower the amount of magnification by rolling down. This feature works in both Windows XP and Windows 7.

Display Tuner (Dtuner) is really nice freeware for adjusting many facets of the video and audio.
When you run it (after installation), an icon remains in your system tray so that you can access it any time you feel the need to make the video display better for the comfort of your eyes. Again, this program works in both Windows XP and Windows 7.   http://bit.ly/yJcvO6

Is that mouse cursor just too small? Well, Bigger Cursors can solve that problem. This is another freeware. All you have to do is unzip the cursors into the Windows/Cursors folder and then select the one you want via the Control Panel/Mouse listing.
Once chosen, the cursor will remain that way until you wish to change it. This program works in both Windows XP and Windows 7.   http://bit.ly/xDcXRV

Adding Disk Space to Windows 7

By Dick Maybach BUG Bytes, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ   *www.bcug.com*

When buying a new PC, it's usually wise to equip it with the largest possible hard disk.

Despite this, it's not uncommon to find that eventually it becomes uncomfortably full, leaving you with four options:

1. save all your user data on an external disk, replace the system disk with a larger one, install Windows and all your   applications from scratch, and restore your user data from the external disk,

2. make an image of the current disk on an external drive, replace the current hard disk, and restore the image to it,

3. add a hard disk and move some data folders to it, or enable dynamic disk management, which makes multiple disks appear as one, thus increasing the available space.

If your Windows 7 installation is corrupted by file system errors or malware, you must use option 1. If your system is working well, use option 2 (using the Windows 7 *Backup and Restore* tool), which is substantially easier and faster than 1.
If your current system is working well, option 3 looks attractive, but there are significant issues, which I discuss below.
I don't have the resources to test option 4, and I've learned from sad experience not to write about things I haven't done.   If you are interested in dynamic disk management, see a good book, such as *Window 7 In Depth* by Cowart and Knittel. However, this approach appears to be complex enough to make it useful only in a professionally-staffed computer center.
I don't recommend it for home users.

Option 3, add a second hard disk and move some of the data folders from our home folder to it, looks attractive. Here, some data will reside on a different drive, call it D:, and unfortunately, some programs, for example *iTunes*, cannot access data on it. You can edit *iTunes*' preferences to declare that, *iTunes Media*, the folder that holds its music, resides on D:, but *iTunes* apparently doesn't look outside your home folder. There are probably other applications with similar flaws.

A procedure called *grafting* appears to offer a solution. It maps all the files on an auxiliary disk into a folder in your home folder, and any files you later add to that folder are stored on the grafted disk. The basic procedure is as follows:

copy all the files in the selected folder to the auxiliary disk;

delete the selected folder on the main disk; and

graft the auxiliary disk to a folder on main disk.

This indeed works on Windows 7, and after I did it, iTunes was able to find its files on the auxiliary disk, but operations were so flaky (see below) that I wouldn't do this on a PC that I actually used.

If you would like to experiment (not on the PC you use for TurboTax please), here is the procedure. Log into an account with administrator privileges, and open the *Disk Management* tool. (The easiest way is to tap the *Windows* key or click on *Start*, type "disk manage" and select *Create and format hard disk partitions*.) The screenshot below shows the result.
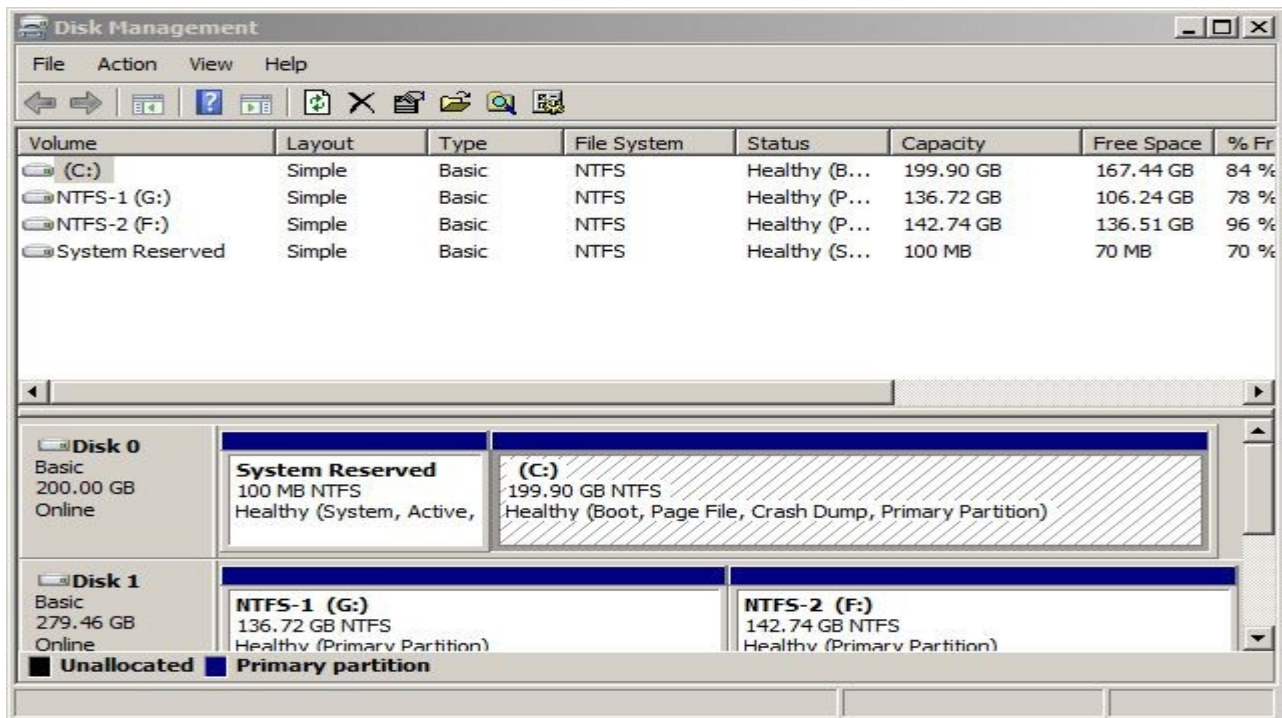
In this example, I graft NTFS-2 (F:) onto a folder in my home folder. Right-click on NTFS-2 (F:) and select *Change Drive Letter and Paths …* . Click the *Add …* button, select *Browse …* , navigate to the folder where the original folder appeared (in my case C:\users\n2nd), click the New Folder button. The result is shown below.
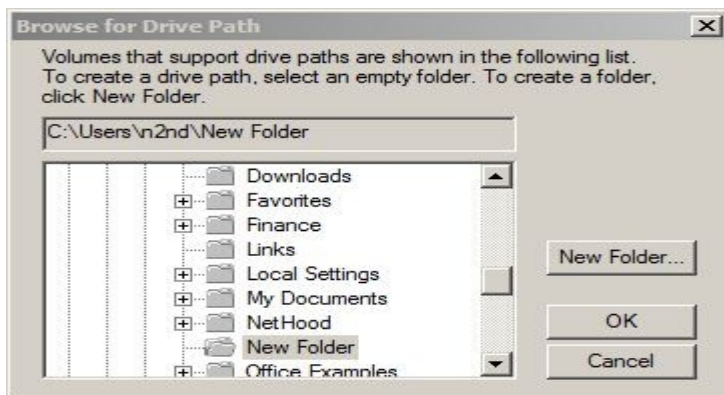
Click the *OK* button and the *Browse for Drive Paths* window will close, then click *OK* in the *Add Drive Letter or Path* window, and close the *Disk Management* window. The disk NTFS-2 (F:) is now grafted on the folder *C:\Users\n2nd\New Folder*. If you had to log in as a different user to obtain administrator privileges, log out and then log back into your home account, in my case n2nd.

This seems straightforward, but there are several traps. The Disk Manager is quirky and not well documented. I needed several attempts to make the above procedure work, which isn't good for a tool that modifies your folder structure. Since you can graft an entire disk only to a single folder, if there are several large folders, you must partition the auxiliary disk and graft a separate partition to each folder. This is unfortunate, because you can't graft your entire home directory, as it contains system files that are always in use. Most disturbing is that when I finished and tried to make a full backup, including a system image, the procedure failed. Even if it had succeeded, I'm not sure I could have restored my system. Would the software try to put everything on the original (now too small) C: disk, or would it be smart enough to restore to both C: and F: and graft F: to a folder? This isn't something about which you want to be surprised when you have to restore your files.

My conclusion after all this is that Windows 7 is designed to operate from a single disk, as are some of its applications. In this respect, it's made a step backward from XP, where you could locate your *My Documents* folder on any disk, and even *iTunes* could find its files there. You can add additional disks to a Windows 7 system, but accessing files on them will be somewhat less convenient than if everything resided in your home folder. As a result, if you run out of disk space on a Windows 7 PC, the best course is to replace the disk with a larger one and port your system to it.

Tablet or Laptop, a Popular Question

...and More App Reviews

By Gregory West, APCUG Advisor, Region 6 & International   www.scug.ca

Unless you are a "hard core" computer gamer, You can now officially say goodbye to the laptop.

The day of computer frustration is coming to an end. The answer to pulling your hair out as you are trying to figure out why the laptop is so hard to use is called: "touch pads".

Recently, I was on a technology cruise out of Miami, where 400 plus geeks road the seas and clicked on computers in various seminars. Wait, that's not correct. It wasn't computers these everyday people were using. No, it was touch screen devices. Mostly iPads I must admit. This too is strange as the group was 99.9% Windows users. The average age in the 400 plus crowd was, shall I say, more than 50+. Most of them said they cannot believe the difference and ease when they switched from a laptop or desktop to a tablet.

Most people on the tech cruise, who recently bought a tablet and still owned a laptop/desktop computer, said that they "hardly ever use their computer anymore." The hot topic on the ship was the app. People were constantly sharing newfound apps for their tablets.

So what makes these tablets so popular? Price, ease of use, two click downloads for software, portability, and low price is enticing laptop/desktop are just a few of the factors enticing people to switch.
Here are some tips when shopping for a tablet: Test drive several. Ask friends who own them what they suggest. Do online searches for reviews.

Decide what exactly you are going to use it for then decide on the size. I wouldn't worry too much about the hard drive size as most of what we do on computer is heading to the cloud and soon you won't need software programs for your devices.

Make sure the tablet of choice has a USB slot for thumb drives, cameras, and other such devices. ITworld.com suggests "Decide on the operating system. The three main choices these days are iOS, Android or Blackberry Tablet OS. Do a bit of research on all three and pick the one that will work the best for you."

One final word...Most people will tell you once they bought tablets their other computers became lonely. Just ask anyone who owns a tablet and they'll tell you they "hardly use" their computers anymore because the tablet is "so much easier to use and less hassle".

Forester.com researchers predict "Tablets will cannibalize netbooks and outsell them starting in 2012. In 2015, 23% of all PCs sold to consumers in the US will be tablets." Happy hunting.

App Reviews..."AppZilla 2" won the App or of the year award.

I broke down and bought an app for my iPhone, AppZilla 2. Ninety-nine cents is a fair price to pay for an app that houses 120 apps with just one click. Apple reports this app "surpasses 2,000,000 downloads!" AppZilla 2 works on the iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. Sorry droid users!

With 120 apps in one app it will take some time to test drive them all. Some are kinda corny but still fun. As a Google user of Docs, mail and much more, I like the way this app has corralled all the Google products for ease of use. They call this the "utility" app and rightfully so as there are levels, app for flashlight mode on your phone, path finder so you never get lost, night vision, password keeper, parking meter reminder with alarm, police scanner for many cities, and many more I haven't tried but sure will. I give this app a 10+.

Explaining memory cards

www.komando.com

Q. *Greetings, Digital Goddess! Thank you for all the knowledge you share. I'm confused about SD memory cards. I've seen all kinds of speeds on cards, but I don't know what they actually mean. I have a new camera with a burst mode feature - could you break down some of these classifications and tell me which will work best for me?*

A. Hello, thanks for the great question, and for downloading my podcasts. Kim's Club members can take my show on the go or watch online for exclusive behind-the-scenes features. you only need to pick a storage amount for your card? Think again! Transfer speed is just as important as storage size.

Memory cards use multiple classifications to advertise their read and write speed. You'll see everything from Class 4 to 133X to UHS-I. What do these letters and numbers really mean?

First, you have to figure out which type of memory card your device uses. Cameras usually use Secure Digital or Compact Flash cards. I'll focus on the more-common SD specifications first.

Transfer speeds for SD cards are represented as classes. These are - in order of speed - Class 2, 4, 6, 10 and UHS-I. UHS-I is the fastest, but it's compatible with only a few devices.

For continuous shooting modes like burst shooting, Class 4 or 6 will work fine. If you want to shoot HD video or pictures in the RAW format, buy Class 6, 10 or, if supported, UHS-I.

Some equipment is optimized for a specific class. Your manual should say which classes work with your device.

Here's a riddle for you: How are some memory cards like Archie Bunker? Answer: They have no class!

Seriously, though, not every memory card uses classes. You may see numbers like 50x, 133x, 266x, 300x and 600x. These are used mostly for Compact Flash cards.

These numbers are based on 150 kilobyte-per-second transfer rates. You have to multiply the number on the card by 150KB to find its true speed. For example, 133x equals about 20 megabytes a second. I recommend buying 266x at a minimum. That will work for almost any situation.

One caution: Some companies will use the memory card's read speed as a rating. This is a little deceptive, since write speed is more important and often slower. Make sure you know how the manufacturer rates its cards before you buy.

Memory cards are incredibly important for many gadgets. Here are some more things you'll need to know about them.

> At some point, you're going to run into low-quality, counterfeit memory cards, even in a retail store. Learn how to handle it.

> Oh no! It looks you have a bad memory card. Are your photos gone forever? Maybe not. I'll tell you how to recover them.

> The same technology in memory cards is also found in solid-state hard drives. Find out whether you should buy an SSD for your computer.

Is Your Internet Security up to Date?

Antivirus up to date?

Firewall?

Windows up to date?

Spy Ware?

See how to protect your computer at:

http://gtbpcug.org/protect/

More about Internet Threats

Marking spam as spam is an important tool in the war against it, but exactly what happens when you do so is clouded in mystery.

http://www.askleo.com

Q: I am on AOL and when I get an email from someone that I do not want to ever hear from again, I report it as spam. What really happens to it? Does AOL know what to do with it if it ever shows up again? Is there any protection for me? Does the person that sent the email know that I put it in the Spam folder?

There's no definitive answer on exactly what happens (for reasons that I'll explain in a moment). However, there are definitely some general concepts that come in to play when you mark something as spam.

The first distinction is to understand whether you're marking as spam in an email program running on your machine or on a web-based interface.

Marking spam in your email program

By email program, I mean software that runs on your computer and downloads your email from your email service to your computer.

Examples of these kinds of email programs include Outlook, Thunderbird, Windows Live Mail, Windows Mail, and Outlook Express, but there are quite literally dozens of others as well.

When you mark something as spam (or "junk" in some programs), you are telling only that program that the email message is junk. This information typically does **not** make its way back to your email service provider and does not affect what email will continue to be downloaded in the future. There are exceptions, but they are rare: "... spam detection is an inexact and ever-changing science."

Identifying spam

Your email program can use the fact that you've marked something as spam in a couple of different ways:

It might add the sender's email address to a block list. (This is a separate function in some email programs.) Unfortunately, block lists based on email addresses are typically not effective in the war against spam these days.

It might add the IP address of the sender or the sender's email service to a block list. Once again, IP-address-based blocking is also not effective against spam.

It might analyze the contents of the message, identify various characteristics of the message, and update a database of information kept by the program that says, "Email that looks like this might be spam, according to the user of this email program." This is the most common and currently the most effective email-program-based, spam-filtering technique.

As effective as it can be, the problem with that last one is that its effects are difficult to predict. You might get an email that is clearly spam to you, mark it as spam, and then later get another that was still not filtered. These types of "learning" filters don't necessarily act immediately, but build up these statistical characteristics of what spam looks like to you over time. It might not be until the second or third (or fourth or tenth) time that you mark a particular type of spam as spam that the filter will finally kick in and automatically identify similar messages as spam in the future.
"Similar" is, after all, a fuzzy concept.

Filtering spam

Great, your email program has successfully identified something as spam – what does it do?
Most email programs do nothing more than move the email to a junk or spam folder.
It sends **no** notifications back to the sender and **no** notifications to the email service.
Spam filtering is nothing more then directing flagged email as it's downloaded to your PC into a different folder where you can ignore it. That's it.

Marking spam on an email service

If you're using your web browser to read your email, you're using an online email service. Your email is stored "in the cloud," not on your PC, and you're simply viewing it via a web-based interface.

Examples of web-based email services include Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo Mail, and many, many others. Your own ISP or email service may provider may also have a web-based interface to your email in addition to the services that allow you to download it to your PC.

The important thing here is that you're using your web browser to interact with your email stored on your email service's server.

Identifying spam

When you mark something as spam on an online service, you're doing essentially the same thing as you did above with a PC-based email program – you're telling the service, "I think email that looks like this is spam." The difference, however, is that you're telling *the service provider*. In fact, you and all of the other users of a particular service are telling the provider what does and does not look like spam.
Exactly how the service provider uses that information is a mystery. For one thing, they don't want spammers to learn the details of the mystery; that would make it possible for spammers to know how to work around it.

For another, how service providers use it is constantly changing in response to the ever-changing nature of spam.

There are several approaches that the providers may or may not use:

Only things that you mark as spam are used to identify and filter spam for you. This is basically the PC model at the server level – you're not impacted by the spam decisions of other users.

Your marking something as spam goes into a single database that's used for everyone. Only things that *everyone* thinks look like spam are actually filtered. No matter how often you mark something as spam, if everyone else on the service treats it as legitimate, you may never see it filtered.

Hybrid: A global sense of what everyone thinks is spam and a local sense of personal preference as to what *you* think is spam are used when filtering email destined for your inbox.

My sense is that it's mostly the later, hybrid approach, but as I said, it'll vary from provider to provider, and it'll vary over time.

Filtering spam

Much like the email program on your PC, when spam is filtered by an email service, it is typically sent into a junk mail folder in your account. You can then usually safely ignore it or periodically check it for false positives.

And once again, no notice is sent to the sender. The email has, in fact, been delivered; it's just been delivered to your Spam folder.

Some services will take things a step further.

Some services will identify spam at a global level – perhaps based on content or source or something else – and block it from being delivered entirely. You'd never see it in your inbox or in your Spam folder. From your perspective, it's like the email was never sent.

Occasionally in these cases, the service will send back a bounce message to the sender.

Maybe. There's no guarantee.

False positives

Regardless of whether you use PC- or web-based email, spam detection is an inexact and ever-changing science. You'll see email that you consider to be spam – perhaps even obviously spam to you – be delivered into your inbox.

So, you mark it as spam and your email program or service learns a little more about what you consider to be spam.

Occasionally, however, legitimate mail will get marked as spam and be filtered. This is referred to as a "false positive."

For anything that's been filtered and placed into a spam folder, you should have the ability to say, "This is NOT spam".

This is perhaps even more important than identifying spam.

Once again, the program or service takes this indication from you and learns from you that email like this should *not* be considered spam.

That's an important step to take. Every so often, spend a few minutes in your Spam folder looking for things that were filtered and should not have been. Mark those as "not spam" to reduce the chance of similar mail in the future also being filtered.

The lighter side

Coming in Late   www.worldstart.com

Tom was in his early 50s, retired and started a second career. However, he just couldn't seem to get to work on time. Every day, he was five, 10, 15 minutes late. But, he was a good worker and real sharp, so the boss was in a quandary about how to deal with it.
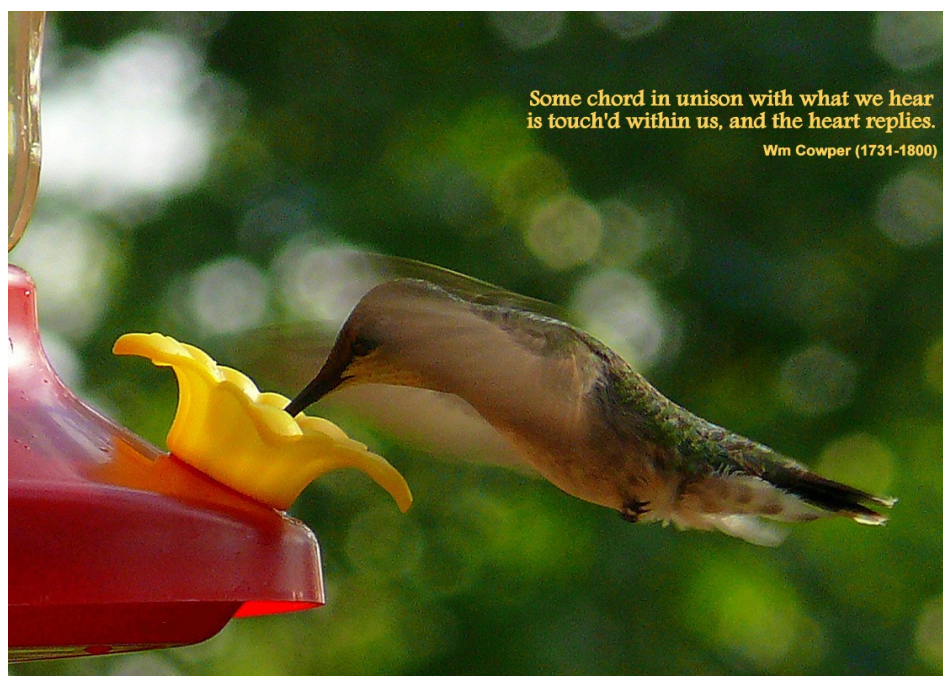
Finally, one day he called Tom into his office for a talk.

"Tom, I have to tell you, I like your work ethic. You do a bang-up job, but your being late so often is quite bothersome."

"Yes, I know boss and I am working on it."

"Well good, you are a team player. That's what I like to hear. It's odd though, your coming in late. I know you're retired from the Air Force. What did they say if you came in late there"?

"They said, 'Good morning, General."

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Some chord in unison with what we hear
is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.

Wm Cowper (1731-1800)

<u>A MUST SEE</u> :   http://devour.com/video/miniatur-wunderland/

Some of the material appearing in this Issue was sent to the editor by other members of the GTBPCUG. Thank you.