

## Intruder Alert – How About That Infrastructure?

By Burt Tschache

So far in this column, I have identified the necessity of computer security suites for home computer protection and written about a few real-time issues that have affected computing and the digital environment as a whole. There are now larger security issues that must be addressed and solutions implemented.

In the April, 2009, issue of Popular Mechanics is an article on some of the strengths and weaknesses of the automated control systems that for all intents and purposes quietly run America's infrastructure that we have come to rely on. The analyst they spoke with said that it is unknown how vulnerable the automated infrastructure is, and that is what is keeping him awake nights.

SCADA or Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition systems are the top level computers that interconnect and operate smaller, lower-level automated systems that are, in simple terms, the on and off switches for so many different applications within the infrastructure.

Included in the list, but not limited to, are water- and sewage-processing plants; power generation and distribution facilities; petroleum extraction, transit, processing and distribution systems; mass transit systems and manufacturing facilities. Pretty much anything we do in this country has a computer associated with it in some way.

On April 8, 2009, it was reported that the electrical grid had been hacked into and China and Russia were among the top suspects. The Wall Street Journal reported that some programs were left behind that could cause disruption to the grid. China and Russia have denied any involvement, of course.

The major issue, that is so troubling, is computer hackers have gotten much more sophisticated at their craft and security experts are doing the best they can in their attempt to remedy known weaknesses and security leaks. The computer industry has even gone to the extent of hiring some of the hackers, so they can use their knowledge to protect the systems they previously troubled.

New security leaks are discovered at an alarming rate though, many by professionals known as "White Hat Hackers." This is one of the main techniques for discovering issues within computer systems and programs. Another term for it is "stress testing," because it usually causes stress to all involved with the process. These computerized control systems were never intended to be networked except within the facility where they reside. As soon as multiple facilities come into the equation or remote control abilities are necessitated, the Internet becomes the tool for information transfer. Now, these control systems do not have robust security as when most of them were put in place that was not an issue.

Control system security originally consisted of fences and locked doors. Those were efficient for quite a while. Oh, there was the occasional vandalism for which the response was higher fences with razor wire and stronger doors and locks. Those fences and doors are still necessary for physical security, but what if the site has wireless capability? Many wireless configurations are not implemented to the highest security level and that is an easy door in.

In the coming months, I will have interviews with people working within various infrastructure facilities and also those charged with keeping security. Fortunately, President Obama has given infrastructure upgrade a very high priority in his administration. Nobody really knows what the potential for harm and disruption is, but you can bet that we have the best minds in computer security working on the issue and finding solid, workable solutions.

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## Bernal Named John L. Scott Top Producer

Local Vernonia Real Estate Agent Sharon Bernal was named 2008 Top Producer for the John L. Scott Marketing Center that covers Carlton, Forest Grove, Hillsboro and Vernonia. Bernal out-performed seventy-six other agents to earn the award. This comes on the heels of being named Rookie of the Year, the previous year.

"Out of thirty-two transactions in 2008, twenty of those were in the Vernonia area," said Bernal. Bernal says this year has started out slow, but she expects it to improve. "I'm really busy right now with paperwork, which is the front end and gives indications that the second half of this year should be really good. So I'm working like crazy right now."

<b>Friends of the Vernonia Public Library</b>			
		<b>Membership Dues:</b>	
Family:		\$10.00	
Individual:		\$5.00	
Minimum:		\$1.00	plus 2 hours minimum of work in the library
<b>Make checks payable to: Friends of the Vernonia Public Library</b>			
<b>Mailing Address: 701 Weed Avenue, Vernonia, OR 97064</b>			
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## Double C Tack Celebrates Grand Opening

Dawn Carr made it official, with a wonderful Grand Opening Celebration at her new location for Double C Tack. And lots of Vernonians came out to celebrate with her.

Now located at 1103 Bridge Street, just above the flashing light at the corner of Bridge and Rose Avenue, Carr opened the doors in style. She also welcomed Kim Camarda, from Camarda Gardens, who will be on site seasonally to sell plants and garden supplies.



Dawn Carr and Miss NPRA 2009 Mackenzie Carr at the Grand Opening of Double C Tack

Vernonia resident Mackenzie Carr-- Miss Northwest Professional Rodeo Association 2009-- was there with her horse, Pedro, greeting the kids, signing photos and handing out gifts. The Schwan's guys were there with a block party, giving away samples of their food, including free ice cream! Dr. Steve Vredenburg gave a discounted vaccine clinic, and lots of folks brought their pets to take advantage of that. There were baby goats, ducks, geese, and turkeys, and everyone hung around and enjoyed the beautiful spring weather.

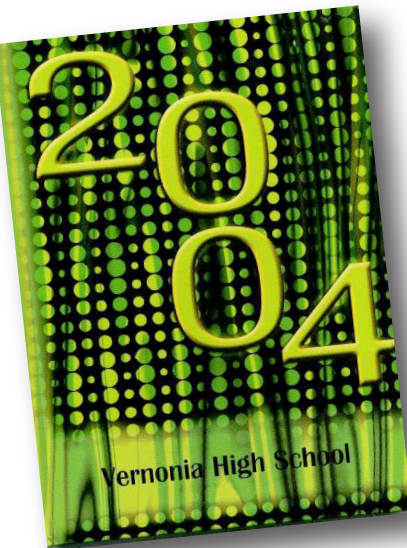
Carr held a raffle to help raise funds to support Mackenzie Carr in her travels as Miss NPRA. The big winner of the day was Joe Chestnut who won the grand prize saddle.



Joe also won the horseshoe lamp, a gift certificate to Armstrong Horseshoeing, a hat, roll-on spray, and a wormer. Other winners in the raffle were: Mary Ann Shaw, Cassidy Fetch, Don Webb, Shirley Goodman, Debbie Sloop, Michelle Dennis, Diane Benes, Megan Ely, Corrina Beuhler and Michelle Mikal.

Miss NPRA 2009 Mackenzie Carr meets some young admirers

## VHS CLASS OF 2004 REUNION NEWS!



VHS class of 2004 is having their 5 year reunion this summer! While some alumni have yet to RSVP, most have gladly joined in the excitement. In the mean time, we're still waiting for the rest of you to jump on the wagon. If you have any interest or know anyone from the 04 class, please contact Megan Baker.

**Remember...**  
**"The hardest years, the wildest years, the desperate and dividing years. These shall not be forgotten" ~Senior class of 2004**

The reunion will take place at the Vernonia Golf Course on August 15th. Food, drink, unlimited course access and many memories all await those who attend. During the reunion, coordinators will be holding a few fundraiser events, donating all proceeds to an unnamed charity fund. To learn more about this fund please contact the lead coordinator.

Anyone who knows Vernonians would undoubtedly say that we're a rowdy bunch. With that in mind, plans are being worked on to have a 'camp out' so everyone has a safe place to crash for the night. The hopeful prospect for the campsite is Airport Park. We've all gone through hard losses over the years due to drug and alcohol abuse in one way or another, let's not make THIS event another "shoulda, coulda woulda." The plan is to rent out the entire park (Airport Park is next to the Vernonia Golf Course) so that there won't need to be any driving afterwards. BBQing and camping-out have always been a favorite pastime of the locals, losing another peer however is not on the menu.

Knowing that the class is working with a local charity fund, please consider the following: The coordinators of the VHS 2004 reunion ask that proceeds of park rental fees associated with the reunion go the the event charity fund. Park associates will be given details on the proposition.

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