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Computing With Heart

“What was all the applause about?” Jerry asked himself as he arrived at the computer club’s old building where they held their meetings. The last couple meetings had been pretty gloomy since Gramps, their leader, was taken to the hospital with sirens screaming. The clubbers felt their hearts and joy had left in the same ambulance.

The spirit and sound level of the club had certainly changed as Jerry saw in the middle of the computer clubbers, a wheel chair carrying a tired, weathered-appearance silver-haired gentleman. The preteens were all asking him questions as Zeb, the only other senior in the group, kept telling the boys and girls to back up and give Gramps some air. Marsha summed up the feelings of all the clubbers as she told Gramps, “Gramps, if you ever get taken away in an ambulance again, we’re all going to climb in and stay with you.” Those words of love did far more than wheelchairs or any of man’s medicine, to carry the silver-haired kid-lover down the road to recovery.

The boys and girls loved every second they spent with Gramps and his lesson stories about computers and God’s undescrivable love for hurting young hearts and old ones too. Everyone sat on the floor indian fashion in front of the wheel chair and got quiet as a graveyard. All the eyes on Gramps saw him bow his head to lead the children in prayer, praising God for His unsearchable gifts to men. The boys and girls bowed their heads, eyes closed, seemed to link each of their hearts to Gramps heart of praise to God and His Grace.

After the amen, Gramps told the clubbers about the heart pacemaker the doctors put into his heart to help the bottom half of his heart beat in sync with his heart’s top half. He described the size and battery and wires that were now doing the life saving work in his body as he spoke to them. It was a computer he carried on the inside as he carried the message of love and forgiveness to the missionaries-in-the-making, all drinking everything he said.

Gramps eyes scanned the dozen or so preteens and saw mussed hair, dirty fingernails, shoe laces missing, ripped dresses and many buttons missing. What broke his heart is thinking of all their challenges that he couldn’t see. Sure there were missing parents, almost empty refrigerators, quarreling grown-ups, and the heckling from their more fortunate classmates.

The silver-haired club leader opened his Bible with all the care that two arthritic hands can have. The boys and girls took great comfort in Gramps being able to find computing principles and God’s promises all in the same book written by the Creator of all that is.

In words that any young person can understand, Gramps used computer parts in describing they all have to work in sync. The school computer parts all have to be looking out for the others, in somewhat the same way his pacemaker watches to make sure his heart upper and lower halves are working in sync – in tune with each other. With careful eye contact with every one of the clubbers Gramps said, “We need to watch out for each of the other clubbers – no not to find fault but to be a help, be a pacemaker to the hearts of our computer club.”

He turned a couple more bible pages asking the boys and girls, “wouldn’t it be fun to be a little mouse in the corner of the room where Jesus was praying to His Heavenly Father? Well, this wonderful bible lets us do exactly that.” The clubbers shuffled up closer to see the very words Gramps was pointing to in John 17. “Here Jesus is just about to be nailed on the cross for OUR sins and look what He prays to His Father for. Clubbers, at this most desperate time in His earthly life, HE’S PRAYING FOR YOU AND ME! All through His prayer He makes requests for OUR peace and OUR unity. Did you get that? He wants our hearts to be in sync with each other just like my pace maker is doing right now. Now I want to ask you, can you be a pacemaker helping the hearts of those around you? He has given everyone of us the things we need to be a pacemaker and a peacemaker, in this troubled world. There’s no time to waste, Our directions are right here in His precious word. (end of story)

Clank Clank

Clank – Clank – **Clank – Clank**

It was definitely getting louder... and closer too!

Clank – Clank. It sounded just like one of those monster army tanks. The ones with the big cannon on the front that could pulverize a house in one blast.

Tom rubbed the last of the sleep from his eyes, trying to clear his head and figure if this was real or was he still dreaming. With his keen eyes as the teenage watchman that he was, he scanned the room he had spent the night in. As the tank noises got closer and scarier, he saw all the computer parts nailed on the walls of the old delapidated building the Computer Junk Jockies Club had been using to train it's members. Before he could grab his old sweatshirt, the tank driver gunned the engine and it let out a roar louder than the fiercest lion you could imagine. Only a couple seconds later came the first terrifying crash – or was it an explosion?!

Tom jumped to his feet, one shoe on and the other off, and raced out the door away from the explosion. What the computer club watchman saw next really floored him. What he thought was a monster enemy tank actually was a humongous bulldozer starting to destroy their clubhouse classroom. Tom waved his arms frantically to get the dozer driver's attention and finally did.

Tom spent a few minutes getting his breath and explaining their terribly important use of the old building as a classroom for learning about computers and God Who had given them to man... and uh ... boys. It was then that Jake the dozer driver pulled out his cel phone and called someone named Penny. The instructions were to "bring your camera, and that little tape recorder you sometimes use in History class." He then gave Penny the location of where they were at. Penny was Jake's teenage daughter and she'd be there in about fifteen minutes. Tom looked down at one shoe on and one shoe missing. No time to waste, he had fifteen minutes to find his other shoe and shake the dust from his pants.

After hearing all the hard work the boys were doing in learning the details of computer innerds, Jake wanted his daughter to take pictures of all the parts on their "classroom" walls. Before Jake continued to demolish the old building, Penny read into her recorder all the writing on the classroom walls. Beneath each computer part nailed to the wall were two columns of notes. One column was "stuff we know" and the other column was "gotta find out".

Later that day the worst was learned. Tom decided it was even worse than hearing there was going to be no summer vacation; school was just going to keep going. This was worse! Penny is an organizer. Can you believe it? The last thing the boys in the club figured they needed was an organizer. Tom could just picture Penny in their old classroom. He bet she'd find three cockroaches, line them up and give them names.

Getting organized? Yuch!

That evening Tom told Ben all the horrible news. Ben needed to know all the horrible details, because he was the club pres and main teacher. Ben didn't quite see the club being crashed by an organizer or that now a newspaper would be wanting to know more. He wasn't quite sure but something intrigued him about others knowing how the club was using old computers to learn about how they worked.

His greatest joy was always to be able to use most every computer part to teach facinating truths about God and all that He has provided for those that love Him and want to serve Him. Ben's insides felt kind of good, knowing all the lists that Dean (the club scribe) had put on the walls, would not be lost. The club's future was in shambles just like the old building when Jake got through with it.

The one thing Ben knew absolutely for sure. There was part of a Bible verse that kept swimming around in his head as he helped his dad the rest of the week. Sunday evening Ben's youth pastor listed as Ben explained all the troubling events, and how he thought that Satan was trying to destroy the club as the classroom had been. The youth pastor opened God's word to Phillipians and read:

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Ben learned that day that we must always remember our friends as we talk to God in prayer, and thank Him for ALL that happens. Even though it might not appear to be what we want, still... God is in control. He always is.

“Ben! Your Youth Pastor Called.”

“He’d like to see you right away... over in the church basement.”

When Ben got there, he was greeted by Pastor Tony, Penny, and Dave Tipps. Dave was the sparkplug within the youth group and the right hand man to Pastor Tony. After all the introductions were ended, Pastor explained to the whole group what he understood about the Junk Jockies school. With no shred of sadness, he related the facts he had been told about the destruction of the old building and how Penny had gotten photographs and all the information off the walls by reading it into her tape recorder. Pastor asked the group for other details so he would have the whole story.

Pastor began, “You have heard in our church youth activities how God never destroys sincere efforts to tell others about Him. In fact, the opposite is true. At first it might appear that those ministries be destroyed by Satan. But when we truly believe that God is in control, we must always think and act as though we believe that, down deep inside.” With that, he opened his Bible to 1Kings 17. Everyone there scooted up to the table and the Bible as Pastor gently smoothed out the pages with both hands.

“God gives every one of us an important message about Him or what He is going to do. We must obey and keep on sharing that message no matter what our opinions of the circumstances are. Elijah had a tough dangerous job of telling the wicked King Ahab of the judgement of drought that God was about to put on the earth. As soon as he delivered God’s message, he skidaddled out of the palace. Well, Elijah had no place then to live, food to eat, or belongings with him. Yet he obeyed God. We can read here that God fed Elijah unlike anyone had eaten before or since. Big birds with six foot wingspans brought him food twice every day, by the brook called Cherith..

But then the brook dried up; sort of like your computer classroom that had to be demolished by Penny’s dad’s bulldozer. Did that stop God’s plan? Did God have to switch to His emergency plan B? God doesn’t have any alternative plans because everything always happens according to His plan. Elijah was led by God to stay with a widow and her son. But the Bible says they were about to starve when Elijah arrived.

Things look pretty bad for Elijah, don’t they? Because Elijah obeyed God and the widow lady obeyed Elijah, God’s incredible provision was shown again.”

Pastor Tony summarized, “when you read the rest of this seventeenth chapter you will see how how God kept filling up the food pantry, and even brought the widow’s son back to life. As we discuss some ideas here today, we need to first realize we are obeying God by first looking in His word. We’re obeying God by seeing His magnificent provision especially when we think there is no solution. We are obeying God by sharing with others truths about Him and how much He loves us. Just before Pastor went to get something from his office, he asked the group to ponder a question. He said, “do you think it is possible God let the classroom be destroyed because He had something better in mind?”

What do you think? When problems appear in front of you, do you turn tail and run? Do you get scared and blow your whole christian testimony? Do you suppose God already knows about that problem and is anxious for you to ask Him how HE wants to deal with it? (end of story)

Clip Art Company

His teeth were chattering so bad; Bob couldn't remember when it'd been worse. No. It wasn't cold and he wasn't scared. It was the railroad tracks. He said, "Todd. I'm never going to let you take this train tracks shortcut again while I'm riding on your handlebars." When Todd doubled back under the train trestle and down the embankment, Bob thought he was a gonner for sure.

Surprise #1 came when the two boys rounded the last curve and spied the house. Matt and his mom lived in a house that was little more than a shack in a really remote part of the county. They certainly had no telephone and there was no evidence they had electricity either. The questions in Bob and Todd's minds were really piling up. But the important thing was that their youth pastor asked that they visit Matt and invite him to the Computer Missions Club next Thursday.

The first impressions by the boys were that Matt would be better not to be bothered about all this computing stuff since it sure looked like Matt would never have a computer let alone use it in missions and for church. But little did the pair realize the exciting revelation God had in store for them today - that was to be surprise #2.

Bob's grandfather would caution both the boys, in a situation like this to, "Don't judge a book by its cover." Or he might also say, "First impressions are most important, but not always correct."

Only a couple raps on the rickety screen door and Matt was greeting the boys with very few words. The three teens sat on the front steps as Bob and Todd told a little bit about themselves. Matt didn't talk much but listened with great interest. Todd started to tell some about the Computer Missions Club at church with a lot of enthusiasm. Matt reached out and picked up a piece of scrap paper lying on the porch not far from him. From his ragged shirt pocket he pulled out a broken off piece of a pencil and began doodling as the boys talked.

In no time at all Matt handed Bob the finished sketch he had done while listening to the boys. It was a simple drawing that included a cross, a computer, and a couple older children. They were arranged in a way you could almost make an emblem or a logo of it. Bob almost knocked Todd off the steps in his excitement over the sketch. As Matt saw the joy his creation had made, he took it back and above it wrote, "Computer Missions Club".

The hoots and excitement prompted Matt's mom to peer through the cracked front window. The three boys spent more time bouncing around ideas about using Matt's apparent art skills as a tiny business of creating much needed computer missions clipart.

Peddling back home took a slower pace amid real remorse in Bob and Todd's hearts.

When it comes to drawing, they both certainly drew the wrong conclusions Matt's home and abilities. Though they were both might grateful to God for bringing Matt into their friendship, their continuing thoughts brought examination of other lives that had crossed their path. Had they been too quick and 'cruel' in making hasty judgments of others?

Nearing their homes, Bob and Todd agreed between them they were going to put a logo on their hearts that said something like, "Others are never matts to be trampled by our quick judgments, but provisions by God in interesting wrappers. (end of story)

Clock Conductor

"I DON'T THINK WE BETTER DO THIS. They'll throw us out," said one of the preteen clubbers to another. This was their debut too. Their silver haired club leader, Gramps, made sharp eye contact with each of the six or so members of the Computer Club waiting their cue to walk single file to the platform.

Paxton Community Church was not large, but it was packed with small town folks that had a bone deep desire to learn more ways for families to share their faith and love in Jesus Christ. Eddie was the first in the precession to the platform. He wasn't worried about forgetting his words, but rather never finding another shoelace for his other ragged tennis shoe.

Eddie remembered something he heard Gramps say in club once, "Go with what God gives you. It's always more than enough." He thought there might be someone in the crowd that had God's salvation and peace missing from their heart. He hoped the clubbers could tell them about it.

Everyone was in place as Gramps introduced the clubbers and began explaining that the clubbers are learning about TechTrash Evangelism. "We use computer parts out of the junk to learn about God's great love for us and His plans for us." Gramps had barely said, "God defines beautiful as FAITHFUL and not FANCY," when John started singing a Bible chorus. Not five seconds later Lucy started singing another song. In another moment two other preteen clubbers started their own song.

Everyone watching was thinking things had gone out of control. Then Gramps pulled out his musical baton and gave a few quick taps on the microphone. The man in the back of the room ripped his earphones off and promised his ears not to put them back on till the clubbers and Gramps went home.

Gramps pointed at the line of club members with one hand and raised the baton high with the other. As the baton came down, all the clubbers sang in practiced unison, "For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son, to die on Calvary's tree. From sin to set me free. Some day He's coming back. What glory that will be. Wonderful His love to me."

When the chorus ended, the silver haired club leader faced the audience and asked, "Were you worried at first? It's not hard to see when people are not allowing God to be in control...especially, young people."

Penny quietly stepped forward and waited for a nod from Gramps. With one hand she covered the small rip in her dress. Her other hand held up what looked like a quarter, for all to see. "This is a battery that every computer uses. It gives power to the computer CLOCK circuit." Barney took a step forward and said; "Computers are always doing several things at once." He accepted the baton from Gramps and stood behind one of the clubbers that sported a sign that said, 'Monitor.'

Barney held the baton over the monitor sign and said, "The computer clock talks to the monitor, the printer, mouse, keyboard and the whole computer, so they all work together." Other clubbers were pointed to, as their sign was mentioned.

Billy leaned his cane against the podium as he scanned much of the audience. He said, "Most groups of things and people must have a clock circuit or conductor to keep them in time with each other. No matter if it's a family or committee, or a church family with its pastor, a nation, or a choir...each must have a conductor – a leader."

Little Nenee walked up to Barney with a little homemade train conductor hat on crooked. She motioned Barney to hold the microphone down to her mouth. With a determined hand on each hip she took a deep breath staring at the microphone. In a stern tone she said, "Jesus is my conductor!"

The applause was so great that Gramps nodded to the pastor they had finished their presentation.

A few days later Gramps got a letter from the Paxton pastor. It asked, "How soon can you come again, and show us more exciting ways to tell others 'Jesus loves you'?" (end of story)

Miss Yellow Eyes

[Theme: Know the meanings of words as you work with others.]

Wake up! Go! Start! Begin!

Judy's verbal commands to the little robot kept getting louder and more stressed. But the robot remained motionless with both eyes still blinking yellow.

Beta, the little girl robot, was a gift from Judy's cousin in Denmark.

Very carefully, step-by-step, Judy followed her cousin's directions in hooking up Beta to her personal computer and loading all the needed commands for Beta to move her little arms. But it was the same as before... **Wake up! Go! Start! Begin!** No movement -- no anything.

"What's the matter, honey?" her mom asked. She took Judy by the hand, led her over to the kitchen table, where she placed a small glass of milk and a cookie in front of her. Her mother soon picked up the frustration in her daughter's explanation about the robot that wouldn't move.

"Judy, remember the lesson I learned when I left the flour out of my Apple Sauce Cake recipe? I learned then to always check off each step of a recipe or list of instructions so that none is skipped or done out of order. And, Judy – have you asked God to help you get Beta running? Let's us both ask Him right now."

Checking off each command in the instructions still did not get little Beta moving. Judy went out into the garage to ask her dad for help. She had always found him willing to really put his all into helping her when she asked. He listened as Judy related all the steps she had already taken, and then asked if she had any other toys or computer programs that used commands similar to those for Beta. He said that by making the comparison, she might get a hint of what was wrong. Probably the best advice she got though was when her dad suggested that the best way to get the little robot to work was to look into God's Word, and find direction there. He assured her that God's inspired Word is applicable to any and every need in our lives. He picked up his spare Bible lying open next to his toolbox, and showed her the verses: "*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*" Proverbs 3:5,6.

Two days later, with Beta's secret for working still not found, Judy emailed her cousin. It was hard for Judy to type the sentence stating that Beta had probably been damaged in the shipment all the way from Denmark. After all, that's on the other side of the earth.

The next day Judy was at her computer reading her email, when she suddenly let out a loud "**Yaaaahoo!**" It was so loud that her mom splattered the breakfast pancake batter into the two holes of the toaster, and onto the kitchen wall. After Judy's mom regained her composure, she learned that the reason for the yell was an email message from her cousin in Denmark, which Judy had just read. Judy held the printed-out message in front of her mom, and followed along with her finger as she read it out loud. Though most of the spoken commands were ones Beta would recognize in English, the wakeup command to start everything, had to be said in DUTCH!

After a couple of trial pronunciations of the Dutch command, Beta began to respond, as Judy wanted her to.

Do you suppose language differences ever confuse God? Certainly not. Big or unusual words don't slow Him up either. He understands Apple Sauce Cake recipes and little girl robots. (end of story)

Closet Secrets

[Theme: Cataloging saves time and space, and is profitable.]

Whatever is about to happen, I'm not going to like this.

Could it be that my dog is seriously ill? Oh, please, not Bandy!

Or did I say something that ol' doc Neese didn't like?

Ten-year-old Alex quickly thought of all the things he might have said as he followed the animal doctor back to her office. Seeing the worried look on Alex's face, Doc Neese invited him to sit down. "Now, there is nothing wrong, so don't look so worried," she began. "Actually, I wanted to talk to you about the laptop computer you've brought in with you. I noticed that in the waiting room you were doing something on your laptop, but it didn't seem to be a game."

Alex breathed a sigh of relief. "Well, for my initiation into my neighborhood's computer club, I have to come up with a good use for a computer that doesn't have anything to do with entertainment. What I like to do most of all is to make special lists called databases that you can do neat things with."

Doc saw the serious attitude with which Alex described some of the simple things for which he had made lists, but he didn't mention anything that would help him pass his club initiation. Alex had hardly finished sharing his problem with the initiation project, when Doctor Neese rose to her feet from behind a desk piled high with books and papers. She went over to a large closet, slid open the doors, and said to Alex, "I've got a project for your initiation that I think you would enjoy doing." She pointed to several large stacks of papers, all neatly tied up with strings. Alex looked puzzled.

"Beg your pardon, ma'am, but what does cleaning out this closet have to do with my computer project?" The soft-spoken animal doctor explained to Alex that the stacks of papers were actually records of the medicine, that she had given to animals brought in for treatment over the last two years. The problem was, the little animal clinic had to make every bit of money count. The biggest waste was buying too much of a certain kind of medicine, and then having to throw some of it away because it was too old to be used any longer. "Alex, it would be a big help and money saver if you would create a database list of all the medicines that were actually used," she said. Doc added, "It will be very important for you to include when, and for which kind of animal patient."

After getting permission from his parents, and praying about the project, Alex began the following Saturday. Doctor Neese was impressed by his mature approach in that he didn't even bring his laptop computer. Between patients, Alex told the doctor that good databases require good planning, even before touching the keyboard.

By the next Saturday, the office clerk had gone through every one of the old closet records and had written a number on each one. Alex wouldn't even have to type in names and addresses. Doc made the project even easier by giving Alex a numbered list of all the medications she had used on her animal patients.

Alex saw how pleased Doctor Neese was, as her chaotic medicine inventory started to take shape. And he also noticed the growing satisfaction within himself as he continued to work on such an important project, which went well beyond the initiation requirements.

Alex thought about the key ingredients he had used.

1. Pray for God's leading in the project
2. Preparation even before he touched the computer.
3. Permission from his parents.
4. Praising the Lord for His goodness. (end of story)

Computer Eyes

“Did someone put a bomb in our clubhouse?” What’s all the commotion for?” someone said as they entered the old condemned building used by the SpaceGate Computer Club. Another clubber that had arrived a while earlier said, “There’s no bomb. But it’s worse yet. Gramps has misplaced his glasses again.” Gramps, as the clubbers affectionately called him was actually the owner of the old building. His love for the preteen clubbers knew no bounds. But still, the glasses had to be found.

Not much time passed before the glasses were found and given to Gramps. This was a perfect time for the silver haired senior to share a bit of his long-ago computer wisdom in the shadows of God’s light and majesty. He made an offer to the clubbers, “if you’ll all gather around me and settle down, I’ll tell you about computer eyes that really work.” The old gentleman was aces at story telling to the young and old.

He began, “Ok. How many eyes does a mouse have?” Someone in the back kiddingly blurted out, “Two eyes, one mouth, and one tail.” Gramps replied, “No. I mean a computer mouse.”

The clubhouse turned silent as a graveyard. “Do you clubbers know that every computer mouse (of the style that has a ball in the bottom of it) has two eyes that actually work? One eye senses when we move the mouse forward and backward. The other eye tells the computer when we move the mouse left and right. It’s true. These mouse eyes are more correctly called photoelectric eyes. Some years ago we used them to open doors etc.”

He continued, “It’s almost sad though. These mouse eyes aren’t able to see the wonderful things of God’s universe. Eagles can see much farther than humans. Cats can see much better in darkness. Fish can see clearly under water. Spiders have eight eyes... But you know what?” Gramps leaned toward the clubbers just a little and took off his glasses and cleaned them on his shirttail. Not one in his audience moved a muscle.

“But you know the best part? God loves each of us so much; He reserved the best eye design for you and me. Unlike a computer we can read God’s precious Word anytime we want to. We can experience the colors of a sunset or a rainbow. I especially like to see a smile come on the face of a person that realizes that someone truly loves them, just the way they were. Maybe you’ve heard me use the phrase ‘bone-deep smile?’ Well that’s what I’m talking about. Our precious God has given us eyes to watch out for our friends and encourage them to not set their eyes on things that would ruin their testimony.

King David that killed the giant wrote good advice for us in Psalms 101; *“I will set no wicked thing before my eyes.”*

Like the building of a musical crescendo he stood to his feet, leaned toward the clubbers just a bit with his stare becoming even more intense. “And to those who’ve invited Him into their heart and becoming saved, He gives them an even better pair of eyes. Those eyes will come with a whole new body designed to enjoy their Savior in Heaven forever more.

(end of story)

Computer Fishin'

(Theme: Sequential Learning with a hard drive scavenger hunt.)

It's all Uncle Jack's fault... The map...I mean he's the one that lost it in the first place.

Just for fun, he created a map of where he stashed the tickets... Oh the tickets...

They are both for a week at Saunder's Christian Computer Camp for this Thursday.

All this is no big deal, except Biff and Thelma's Uncle Jack had to skoot up to someplace in Canada to see an old friend while the flying weather was good.

He saved the file, but didn't leave any note as to it's location... of the map.... On the hard drive.

The only thing Biff and Thelma had to go on was Uncle Jack loves fishing. No. Uncle Jack goes bonkers over fishing.

The kids did a search on Uncle J's hard drive for graphic files and found 423 jpg's, 117 bmp's, and 291 wmf files. Any one of them could be the diagram of the map.

Thelma suggested they start in the root directory and see if they found any clues. The rood dir had one file called BASS. Oh well, nothing else to try... let's do it. Once inside the BASS directory they found two folders FISHUSA and FISHCAN. Looking in FISHCAN nothing turned up. So they looked inside FISHUSA. One directory named FISHJOKES turned out to be a blind alley. They tried another folder named WHEREIFISH.

While sis handled the keyboard, Biff wrote down the list of directories as they kept getting deeper in Uncle Jack's hard drive. Biff thought of the steps they went through as something like a path through some caves. Step by step logically. (end of story)

The Computer Missions Fair

He'd never planned anything like this. Where is this all going?

Pastor had seen that for several weeks the children at church were all clustering around the senior citizens far more than usual. The children were hanging decorations for the first-ever computer missions fair with the help of the silver-haired set. Something he'd never thought of when he introduced the project several weeks before. He sensed the senior folks were more excited and involved than they ever were.

In one of the Sunday school rooms one of the silver-haired ladies was dressed to look a bit older than she really was. On the wall behind her was a large sign that proclaimed, "Granny Sims Email Riveter!" On the table in front of her were some take home short stories about Granny and others.

You won't believe it, but someone created a cardboard laptop computer from a pizza box! The words on its screen said, "If my people which are called..."

In another room at the Computer Missions Fair, old Mr. Deets was seated on a bench with very interested boys and girls looking at the insides of an old junk computer. Now something you need to know that even shocked the pastor. Old Deets had always scorned children. It was like he was allergic to them. But the scene clearly showed an old gentleman full of arthritis having the time of his life, feeling important again.

Each passerby could hear the old Mr. Deets showing the children all the large and small parts in a computer and explaining that every one of these big and small parts are depended upon to do their part in making the computer to work. "Does it make any difference what color the parts

are?" he asked the children. All the children shook their heads no and spoke the same. "Children are sort of like computer parts to God," he said. "God wants big and small children of every color to be used in His plans of love."

As pastor turned the corner into the north hallway the scene in the room about blew his socks off. HIS WIFE was sitting near the front of a computer with a gray-haired wig on. Tommy and his seeing eye dog Rascal were in front of the keyboard. Tommy had on a pair of earphones that spoke the words into his ears that were near the mouse cursor on the screen. Though totally blind, he was reading to the pastor's wife.

The small poster near the scene made it clear that technology makes it even easier for everyone to be involved in spreading the good news of salvation. No one should be left out. No one is a leftover even if you're blind.

Marty had to set up his scene in the custodian's closet, because all the other rooms were used. He was seated in front of an old computer that didn't even have a keyboard. He wore a cap somewhat like the famous detective Sherlock Holmes wore. He held a large magnifying glass close to the screen as though he was trying to pick a splinter out of the screen.

The closet light was turned out and so Marty was doing his inspection with a flashlight. One of the hallway posters next his scene said, "HELP WANTED!" in big bold letters. Another poster said in smaller letters, "The Silver-Haired Site Sleuths need you." On the other side of the closet door another poster explained that the very same determined efforts of seniors in genealogy research is needed to find wholesome sites for the church youth and adults.

Marty would occasionally interrupt his inspection to hand viewers a little blurb about how the newbies would be used. It had something to do with providing Sunday school teachers and youth leaders with websites pertinent to up coming lessons and projects. For those that didn't have or didn't like computers could be the liaisons between the teachers and the sleuths. Everybody is important. Everybody is included.

After the proceedings in the auditorium and closing prayer, everyone began moving toward their cars to go home. The scene on most everyone's mind was the one that had no words but just grandma grins and preschool giggles. Beulah was an older lady from the other side of the tracks, so to speak. Her clothes were worse than most people's throwaways. Her income certainly didn't allow for perfumes etc. She thought this caused her to have to worship in a pew by herself each Sunday. Her helper at the computer fair was a little preschooler that did more of her share of disrupting fine-tuned church services.

Beulah and her little helper sat in front of two adjacent sides cut from a cardboard box. A broken computer cable was stretched like a close line from one side to the other. Taped at one end of the cable was an older lady clipart picture cut from some church bulletin. A little girl picture was taped to the other end of the cable. The shunned older lady stuck a piece of tape to the back of a cut out heart. Tippie the preschooler taped it to the middle of the cable and both giggled as though they were away from the world of prejudice.

On the cardboard background was a clipart picture of Jesus that the two had taped hearts all around. Neither Tippie nor Beulah could read or write. So you had to imagine the sign above their scene that said, "Links of Love Like the Lord". To top it all off, Beulah didn't know what website was. She figured it was some kind of covering over people's eyes that prevented them from seeing others like God sees them. (end of story)

Computer Skin

It was pretty hard to describe. You really had to see it for yourself. Gramps was sitting in his favorite chair leaning up against the wall of the old computer clubhouse. He had just finished whittling a toothpick and began to use it. It really thrilled him to watch all the preteen clubbers cleaning up their makeshift clubhouse. Oh how he loved seeing children gratefully using things all around them, just like this old condemned building they loved to come to.

Jamal, a young African American boy had finished his chore and walked over to the old gentleman. Gramps knew Jamal wasn't much for talking. Some think he doesn't talk much, thinking people don't care what he has to say. That was all right. Gramps was extra good at hugging and loving. He picked up the little boy, hugged him to his lap and waited to see if Jamal had something on his mind. In a minute or two, Jamal took Gramp's arm and placed it along side his. With his other hand he felt the skin of the old gentleman's arm and then his own. He repeated the test.

The silver haired man silently prayed for the right words and then led Jamal over to the trash barrel. They both looked inside. Gramps pulled out the metal box that once was a computer. He and Jamal carried it back to a table away from the other clubbers. The old gentleman stuck his big red handkerchief in the top of his bib overalls that was a warning sign to the clubbers. This was his sign that said, "Stay away. Don't interrupt. I'm busy."

Out of the corners of their eyes the clubbers saw Gramps lay Jamal's dark skinned arm on top of the computer box. Then Gramps put his arm on top of the box along side Jamal's arm. The old man began comparing the computer skin (metal box) with Jamal's skin. Sure they were different colors. Like little boys and girls, computers come in different colors too. So who cares, as long as what's inside works well? The old teacher repeated the point more than once.

We can hardly begin to describe the wonders that God designed into our skin. Our skin covering holds all the hairs of our body. (And God has each one numbered too.) It has little openings that allow us to sweat when we get hot. Our skin tells our muscles to shake when we are cold. Our skin does a fantastic job at plugging cuts and telling us when it's bruised. The Bible tells about a dreaded disease of the skin called Leprosy. The verses in Leviticus 13 even describe the appearance of the skin in treating the disease.

Little Jamal then pointed at Gramps arm and lightly touched scars and skin blemishes the little boy thought might still hurt. He told Jamal that wrinkles and scars come from a life of living and loving. When the other clubbers saw Gramps point up several times and then having Jamal do the same. They figured he was telling Jamal about the new bodies that Jesus will give all those that love Him, as He takes them to Heaven.

Gramps then pointed to the palm of Jamal's hand, and then the other one. There was no doubt that the silver haired gentleman that loved the children so much, was telling them about the Savior that loves each of them even more.

(end of story)

Voice From The Empty Box

The empty box has a story to tell.

This Saturday was Ship-shape day for the SpaceGate Computer Club. On Ship-shape day all the clubbers spend club time cleaning the clubhouse. Even though the clubhouse was really just an old condemned building with no electricity, the gang was really grateful old Mr. Davis let them use it.

As the club's leader, Ben, had assigned each of the clubbers a particular task to be accountable for. Brad was in charge of keeping the workbench clean, with the few tools in their place. Today, he had finished his chores before most of the rest and went over to the trash barrel in the corner. He thought it was sort-of strange. It was like a voice that only he could hear, was calling him.

He picked up the empty computer case, called a CPU that is actually the brains of the computer. He placed it on the workbench. All the important parts had been removed from it, so it seemed to just be in everybody's way; waiting to be tossed out. Brad moved his hands over the computer case very slow and tenderly. It was like the box was trying to talk to him through his fingertips.

Brad stared at the empty case and remembered that many times he felt just like that case; empty and worthless inside. And yet he had some kind of a story inside himself, just itching to be told. Brad slowly turned the CPU case over and over, examining it from every angle. His eyes stopped on the rubber feet on the bottom of the case. He looked at the four feet and thought they must feel like orphans; like castaways.

Club time had ended and Brad slowly walked home to baby-sit little Dede. Most of the walk home he stared at the sidewalk and his shoes with one shoelace missing. He had tried to use string for a shoelace once, but it didn't last. Mom had promised to get him some new laces, but she hardly ever had any more money than for groceries and paying the rent.

The next day as Brad walked home from church with his mom, he thought about a verse that Pastor Barns read from the Bible; "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*" Brad thought if he had a lamp on his foot, he'd want it to cover the missing shoelace. But he just couldn't get his mind off those computer feet that no one thought were important.

Wednesday's walk home from school took him past the SpaceGate clubhouse. He saw Mr. Davis mowing around the building. Brad asked permission to go in the clubhouse and Mr. Davis followed. He began asking Brad about some of the things he'd been learning. Then Brad started telling him all about the computer feet and the feeling there was a story inside him that needed to be told.

"Gramps" Davis, as he was sometimes called, said, "I'm dumber than a fence post when it comes to computers, but let me show you something Brad. Look at the bottom of this keyboard. Do you see it has different feet than the ones on your big empty box? The keyboard feet fold out to lift the keyboard so that your wrists don't get tired when you type." Gramps continued, "Now look at this little do-gadget you called a computer mouse. It was designed with a special kind of feet that are supposed to slide real easy."

Then Gramps took his shoe and sock off as he pointed Brad's attention to it. Brad, "God designed that foot of mine with toes and heel to be the very best for its job. Do you know that if the Great Creator hadn't put that big toe right there, I wouldn't be able to walk. (Judges 1:6,7) Not only has God given us feet with the best design, He has given us His Word, the Bible to help us to use computers in a way that honors Him. Brad, isn't that what the SpaceGate Computer Club is teaching? That we are to use computers, shoes with no laces, and tender hearts to follow Him? (end of story)

Computers and Whittlin'

This Saturday's SpaceGate Computer Club had already started when it's leader, Ben realized he had forgotten to bring the motherboard with him. The motherboard is the biggest part inside every computer. While all the clubbers busied themselves with one thing or another, he would run the block or so home and get it.

As he left the old condemned building he spied Mr. Davis sitting in a chair tilted back against the outside wall. He had his old worn out knife whittling on a piece of wood. He'd been seen doing this a few times before and always while club was going on. Everyone figured he was listening through the wall to all the neat things the clubbers were doing and their laughter.

Mr. Davis, "Gramps" as he liked to be called, had a very warm heart for the club and the way Ben was teaching them how important they were. Gramps got choked up more than once, when he remembered he'd almost torn the building down. But it continually amazed him to think the club was using his old building to teach computers. And it didn't make any difference to the boys and girls that they didn't have a computer that worked. The clubhouse didn't even have any electricity.

Ben got back to the clubhouse huffing and puffing with the junk motherboard in his hand. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Gramps wasn't whittlin' any more but was down on his knees. His hands and his head were resting in the chair in a position you just knew he was praying. There could be no doubt he was praying for each and every one of the clubbers.

Gramps didn't care that most of the clubbers only had clothes that other folks would throw away, shoes with missing laces, and some with mussed up hair. The old gentleman with silver hair saw past all that, straight to the exciting potential of these boys and girls. God does that, you know. When you see from God's Word that He isn't impressed with the outside of things and people, you learn to look on the inside too.

Ben held up the motherboard to all the clubbers and began teaching them things about computers, themselves, and God. He spoke to the clubbers about the insides of the computers and that its cover really wasn't that important. Even if it had scratches, dents, screws missing, or dirty, it made little difference. What was really important is what's on the inside.

Ben held up a piece of discarded cardboard with part of a Bible verse on it the club would be memorizing. It said, "...*man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart* 1Samuel 16:7b." Almost as he said those words, he thought of Gramps outside the old condemned wall praying for the precious clubbers Ben was teaching.

Now the best part of all this is that a few weeks later, Gramps was seen in his whittlin' chair outside the SpaceGate Computer Clubhouse with cranky old Zeb Hicks. I'm sure Gramps wasn't teaching Zeb how to whittle. Do you suppose Gramps and Zeb were the starting of a SpaceGate Club for Seniors? Do you care about the insides of people as God does? (end of story)

End of Bundle #03