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AVOID BECOMING A HACKER'S NEXT VICTIM

Susie Brown and Tara Noah

You hear about it nearly every week, some new company has been hacked. From Home Depot, to Target, to Equifax, and most recently Sonic - no one is beyond a hacker's reach. Here are some basic precautions you can take to help prevent you from becoming a victim of hackers.

The best thing any of us can do to protect ourselves is change our passwords; and that means to every single thing we access (e.g. bank, credit union, Amazon, other shopping sites, iTunes, App Store, etc). Many people use the same password that they used in college, but did you know that most universities have been hacked? So, if one entity is compromised and you use the same password for everything you do, hackers can easily access all your other logins. Scary!! Ideally, we should be changing our passwords every year, and they need to be at least eight characters comprised of upper-case and lower-case letters, numbers, AND special characters (e.g. HappyDay2017! or IHateHackers\$\$). It may seem like a headache, but having your accounts hacked or your identity (even if it's your digital identity) would be a much bigger headache. So, how can we switch this from full-on migraine to more of a tension headache?

Well, most computers have tools that can generate passwords and keep track of them, which can essentially take away the pain of all that hassle and remembering. However, if you don't have those tools or simply don't trust them, keep a notepad and write them down and use phrases to make remembering them easier. Some examples are BeTheChange@2017 or "Four score and seven years ago" could be 4score&7YearsAgo. Another idea is to exchange numbers for letters. O's can be replaced with 0's and E's with 3's (e.g. The Browns → TheBr0wns or The Moores → TheM00r3s). Get creative, but more importantly be smart and be protected.



*"Come, little leaves"
said the Wind one day,
"Come to the meadows
with me and play.
Put on your dresses
of red and gold;
for summer is past,
and the days grow cold."*



NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

A big "Thank You" to neighbor, and owner of Heidelberger Outdoor Advertising, George Heidelberger for creating and donating our Neighborhood Dues signs. We appreciate you, thank you!

Congratulations to the September Yard-of-the-Month winners:

1st place: Becky & Mike Owens, 9714 Lakeland Rd.

Runner-up: Orlean & Larry Elliott, 6941 Basswood Canyon Rd.

**Thank you Wanda Reynolds, BNA Landscape Committee chair, as well as Camille and LaDawn who scoured the neighborhood to choose this month's winners!

Our Annual Briarcreek Business Meeting was held September 14th during which all members of the current Neighborhood Association Board elected to continue in their current capacities and were accepted by those present. There are vacant positions within the Board, as well as Block Captain vacancies. If you are interested in serving our community, particularly on the Compliance Committee, please email Susie Brown at info@briarcreekonline.com.

October is a busy time, with no shortage of Halloween and Fall activities. We were unable to get enough volunteers together to make our Annual October Neighbors' Night Out happen. However, we will still have a FB Halloween costume contest plus another contest (which will be announced and held on FB), with prizes!!, so be sure to watch for those. "You've Been Boo'ed" will also make a return this month, starting soon, and I hope everyone will participate! We DO plan to still hold our Annual Neighbors' Night Out, but will be shaking things up a little bit, so watch for more information about that next month!

Boo!

This Halloween there's something new,
A sweet surprise that's called a "Boo!"

Secret friends have left it here,
To bring your family ghostly cheer!

You've been boo'ed; now the turn is yours,
To "Boo!" in secret two NEIGHBORS' doors.

Put together two treats, spooky and fun
Then leave them at their doors and run!

Enclose this poem and one thing more,
A "We've Been Booed" sign for their door!

OCTOBER GARDENING

- ❖ Harvest your winter squash and pumpkins, leaving an inch or two of stem on each, before the first frost, and dig up your sweet potatoes before a bad freeze.
- ❖ Place wire guards around the trunks of young fruit trees for protection against mice and rabbits.
- ❖ It's time to plant your spring bulbs, and if you do so among hostas, ferns, daylilies, or ground covers, then as those plants grow in the spring they will hide the dying bulb foliage! Protect your newly planted bulbs from squirrels and dogs by covering them with chicken wire. WAIT to plant your tulips until the last week of October.
- ❖ Spring bulbs for forcing can be potted up now and stored in a cool, frost-free place until it is time to bring them indoors, usually 12 to 15 weeks.
- ❖ Finish seeding your lawn before mid-month, but continue mowing until growth stops.
- ❖ Make sure to winterize your lawn mower before storing for the winter. From the lawn and garden experts at Consumer Reports, here's how: Step 1: cleaning the deck - essential before winter to prevent moisture in the grass clippings from causing rust and corrosion to the underside of the deck. Step 2: stabilize the fuel - if you store the mower in a garage or shed, it's better to fill the tank with gas, then top it off with a fuel stabilizer and then run the mower for a 5 minutes. (You can also run the tank dry if there's only a little fuel left after your final mow.)
- ❖ Keep leaves raked off lawns to prevent smothering grass.
- ❖ It's that time again to head-off cool-season weeds like chickweed and dandelions. Consider an organic method of weed control, such as corn gluten or other more natural choices. There is a wealth of information on the internet, as well as lawn companies who will follow natural/poison-free methods for a beautiful lawn that isn't harmful to the environment or your pets and family.

THE BRIARCREEK Boo!

Many of you have probably participated in some sort of anonymous gift game before – Secret Santa, Secret Sweetheart, etc. "You've Been Boo'ed" is very similar and oh so fun! Check out the cute poem, Left, which I've adapted slightly for our neighborhood Boo! A few of the NA board members will get the ball rolling by "Boo'ing" a few neighbors, who will then "Boo!" 2 neighbors each, so that hopefully lots of us will get to join in the fun before Halloween. If you get "Boo'ed," here's what to do:

- ✓ Enjoy your treat!
- ✓ Hang your "We've Been Booed" sign on your front door where it can be seen!
- ✓ In the next TWO DAYS, make two copies of the poem with instructions and "We've Been Booed" signs, and put together two treats.
- ✓ Choose 2 neighbors who do not have a sign posted yet, and SECRETLY leave your goodies on their doorstep!

**A copy of the poem/instructions/sign will be emailed and also available on our website should it get lost or if you'd prefer to print.