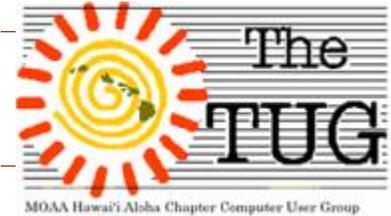




# THE TUG



With Tax Season upon we felt it appropriate to hold a presentation on tax preparation. Luckily, we have two members who do tax prep in a volunteer status for the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide.

*Jeanie Lew and Lenore Hansen-Stafford* have been helping folks with their tax preparation and submission for a number of years now. They are not licensed certified tax consultants/preparers but their knowledge in the procedures to take and the forms necessary to file via the electronic method are in the expert category.

AARP FOUNDATION TAX-AIDE offers free, individualized tax preparation for low- to moderate-income taxpayers – especially those 50 and older – at nearly 5,000 locations nationwide.

Since 1968 the volunteer-based program has helped nearly 50 million low- to moderate-income taxpayers.

“[AARP Foundation Tax-Aide](#) offers free tax preparation help to anyone and if you’re 50 and older, and can’t afford a tax preparation service, we were made especially for you. We understand that retirement or other life changes may mean your taxes are a little more complicated now. With the help of our team of IRS-certified volunteers we make it easy for you.”

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide has more than 5,000 locations in neighborhood libraries, malls, banks, community centers and senior centers. There’s no fee and no sales pitch for other services and AARP membership is not required.

Jeanie and Lenore explained what documents that needed to be brought to the location. We were given a list of ALL the sites on Oahu that do tax prep showing the location, hours, and highlights those that need reservations, most do not.

Both also answered many tax related questions and related a few stories of their experiences with very senior people. These volunteers are never allowed to accept gifts, since no money is exchanged for this service, and it could be perceived as gratuity for helping ‘pad’ their return. However, they had several occasions where seniors, being seniors, felt that they just had to show their appreciation in some form. All those who offered money were gently and respectfully refused. Some then left the center and returned with food, pastries and drinks for the volunteers. If the seniors bring enough to feed the entire group of volunteers, it is legal for the gifts to be accepted.

They told us about one center in a small town on the mainland where the volunteer knew of undeclared income by one of the clients but did not record it on the return. Just so happens, there was a secret customer involved.

Secret customers are randomly sent to centers by the IRS to insure accuracy, integrity and honesty by all the volunteers. In this instance, the entire center was shut down and that small community no longer has the AARP Tax-Aide services available to them. A boon for paid tax preparers.

The Tax-Aide program submits all returns electronically so the client will get a receipt knowing that their return has been submitted and received by the IRS. And, in the event someone had stolen their SSN and submitted a return in their name, they would be alerted to that fact immediately and would be able to take steps to correct the theft.

Any funds due to the taxpayer can be automatically deposited or a check can be sent to their home address. All this without having to pay for the services.

If you, or someone you know, needs their tax preparation services, click on the AARP Foundation link above to find a service center near you. There are sixteen service centers on Oahu covering East, Central and Windward areas of the island.

Then gather up the necessary papers (a list is on the cite) that you’ll need and get filing. Uncle Sam and all those dependent on your tax money will appreciate an early filing.

# Those rascally pranksters

On April 1, 1700, English pranksters begin popularizing the annual tradition of April Fools' Day by playing practical jokes on each other. Although the day, also called All Fools' Day, has been celebrated for several centuries by different cultures, its exact origins remain a mystery.

Some historians speculate that April Fools' Day dates back to 1582, when France switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar, as called for by the Council of Trent in 1563. People who were slow to get the news or failed to recognize that the start of the New Year had moved to January 1 and continued to celebrate it during the last week of March through April 1 became the butt of jokes and hoaxes. These included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April fish), said to symbolize a young, easily caught fish and a gullible person.

In modern times, people have gone to great lengths to create elaborate April Fools' Day hoaxes. Newspapers, radio and TV stations and Web sites have participated in the April 1 tradition of reporting outrageous fictional claims that have fooled their audiences.

In 1957, the BBC reported that Swiss farmers were experiencing a record spaghetti crop and showed footage of people harvesting noodles from trees; numerous viewers were fooled. In 1985, Sports Illustrated tricked many of its readers when it ran a made-up article about a rookie pitcher named Sidd Finch who could throw a fastball over 168 miles per hour. In 1996, Taco Bell, the fast-food restaurant chain, duped people when it announced it had agreed to purchase Philadelphia's Liberty Bell and intended to rename it the Taco Liberty Bell. In 1998, after Burger King advertised a "Left-Handed Whopper," scores of clueless customers requested the fake sandwich.

If you'd like to see what "Techies" of today do for April Fools Fun, check out: **17 Diabolical Tech Pranks for April Fools' Day** at: <https://tinyurl.com/y7mtqvaq>

BTW, I don't recommend you try any of them but it's pretty interesting to see what they dream up 😊

Now that you have looked up all the pranks, how about some "no-prank tips" for how to avoid upsetting your techie? With thanks to Ondrej Kubovič, here are: "5 Things You've Done Wrong Asking Your Techie"

Has your computer broken down or is it not working right? Who do you tend to call when your device is on the blip? I bet you know a person who fits the so-called "techie" category. You know who I mean – someone who studies, works or is just plain good with computers and goodhearted enough to help you out. But, for some unclear reason, your techie gets upset every time he or she fixes some of your gear. In this article, I will try to explain what you've been doing wrong.

## 1. Is your device plugged in? Did you try to restart it?

I guarantee you that these two questions will be the first to be asked by any techie. Save them the trouble of making an effort for no real reason by only calling them after you've checked your device has plenty of juice and a simple restart didn't solve the problem.



## 2. Have a list of “errors” at hand

If your techie promises to stop by, s/he will have a few questions you should be prepared to answer. For example, be ready to describe what went wrong with your device. Also, it can be extremely useful to **write down everything** you’ve been doing before and after the error message popped up. A screenshot of your error log might be of help too.

Note: Be ready to “confess your sins”, as most of the time, it is you, the user, who caused the error. Trying to shift the blame onto someone else or even the device itself will only annoy your techie. So, if you downloaded a suspicious file, or you’ve done something wrong, don’t be afraid to confess it.

## 3. Small talk isn’t fixing your computer

Do not ask **too many questions**. Your techie is trying to fix the mess you caused and it often isn’t as straightforward as it might seem. If you think you can find the answer on Google, go ahead, but don’t call for help next time.

Small talk is sometimes a dead end. In fact, if you can find any activity other than looking over techie’s shoulder, go for it. It’s better for everybody involved – you, your techie and your device as well.

## 4. Your guesses aren’t helping

Trying to talk the problem away isn’t going to help either. Your techie is most probably an IT professional who knows how to localize the error. So only answer the questions they ask and keep the theories of what might have gone wrong to yourself. If they give you any advice, follow it. It can be anything from using better passwords to applying security solutions. These simple suggestions can save you time, money and keep you out of unnecessary trouble.

## 5. Patience, patience, patience

“It is only a minor thing. Probably not even worth your time, but could you come over and look at it anyway?”

Techies hear that a lot. But, most of the time, trying to find the patch for the army of (virtual) bugs you unleashed isn’t that simple. To fix an error on an unknown machine can easily take a half of a day. **Be patient** and let your techies do their job for as long as needed.

Hope your April 1<sup>st</sup> has been a fun one.



*Aloha,*  
Lou, and in spirit, Pooky





### Windows Voice Recorder

We've all had that moment when a thought, or idea, comes to mind and we don't have any way to preserve it. Could be you wake up at night with the answer to a problem; driving to work (or the golf course) and realize you've come up with the perfect plot line for your novel or play?

And, I'm sure we've all had a thought while at the computer that we really didn't want to lose? Maybe a profound comeback to a heckler? Or, instructions on how to perform a task within Windows 10 that covers 3 pages on-line, but can be summed up with a few bullet points? Practicing the words of a song for the next karaoke session? Working on your resume and want to remember some stellar accomplishment? Writing the great American novel and want to get the words saved for posterity? You get the idea. Well, we have the solution for you.

*Use the Voice Recorder that is built into Windows.*

Click on the Start button, scroll down to Voice Recorder and click on it. If you've never used it before Windows will ask permission to access your microphone (neat security feature), click on Yes and once the mic is activated you'll see a large blue button resembling a studio microphone on screen. Click on it to start your recording.

The recorder even has an on-screen timer so you know how long your recording is. You can pause and resume if you get interrupted.

A list of recordings will be displayed on the left side of the screen. Left click and select the Rename button to give it a unique name, i.e. My Mic Dropping Retort, or whatever. Right click and select Rename from the context menu to do the same.

To play your recordings, open Voice Recorder and pick the one you want from the list.

Voice Recorder, yet another useful tool buried within the coded maze we call Windows.

### Windows Update Heartburn

*This time it's personal!*

I have been trying since early March to install an important Windows update, KB4088776, to my full-time desktop. The progress bar goes until about 34% and then jumps to 100%. After a few seconds an error message appears informing me that the install failed and here's your sign, in the form of an error code.

I copied the error code into my browser and saw numerous suggested solutions. None of which have worked up and until March 30<sup>th</sup>.

Solutions included:

Opening the Command window and typing in lengthy paths, file names, and instructions to turn something off, delete its contents and turn it back on.

Disabling the Update Service which, when I try to do, tells me that it's not running.

Renaming the Update folder and re-booting to have it reset itself.

Manually download the update and install directly from Windows.

Get the latest update file and make sure that was installed and then try the faulty one again. When I downloaded the latest and tried to install it, I was informed that it was already installed!!

I've lost track of the number of times I've done this.

Today (3/30) I fired my notebook and checked the installed updates only to find the very same one, shown above, failed to install and to try again. So, relying on my industrial grade troubleshooting prowess, I have deduced the problem lies with the Updates and not me.

Anyone else having problems with Updates?

Lemmeno if you have, or are.



Bear is on the Binnacle List for a couple of months. Sadly, he has a torn Achilles heel and is required to wear a boot cast on his right foot. Consequently, he can't safely drive because he is unable to operate the accelerator properly.  
From all of us - Get well soon, Bear.



Need plenty of Ice? Make a lot of slushies, snow cones or frozen cocktails? Well, there is an ice maker for you. The Opal Flake Ice Maker from FirstBuild. Only \$399. Preorders can be placed at [www.firstbuild.com](http://www.firstbuild.com) Makes up to 36 pounds of soft ice per day.

#### Options Abound ~

Two browsers with Virtual Private Network capabilities are Opera and Aloha Mobile Browser. Using VPN you can avoid tracking, hide your IP address, surf the web privately and securely. Bing'em to get the downloads.

"DuckDuckGo is an Internet search engine that emphasizes protecting searchers' privacy and avoiding the filter bubble of personalized search results. DuckDuckGo distinguishes itself from other search engines by not profiling its users and by deliberately showing all users the same search results for a given search term, and emphasizes returning the best results, rather than the most results, generating those results from over 400 individual sources, including crowdsourced sites such as Wikipedia, and other search engines like Bing, Yahoo!, and Yandex." As stated at [www.duckduckgo.com](http://www.duckduckgo.com)

Supercars ~ if you're interested in super and exotic cars, visit <https://supercarblondie.com/viral>

c|net has a short (1.15) video showing how to protect your personal data on Facebook. Visit this link <https://www.cnet.com/videos/protect-your-data-on-facebook/?ftag=CAD090e536&bhid=26712158503139314968388711889526>

Take pictures with Siri on your iPhone. Just visit <https://www.cnet.com/how-to/how-to-take-iphone-photos-with-your-voice/?ftag=CAD3c77551&bhid=26712158503139314968388711889526> for the How-To provided by c|net.

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