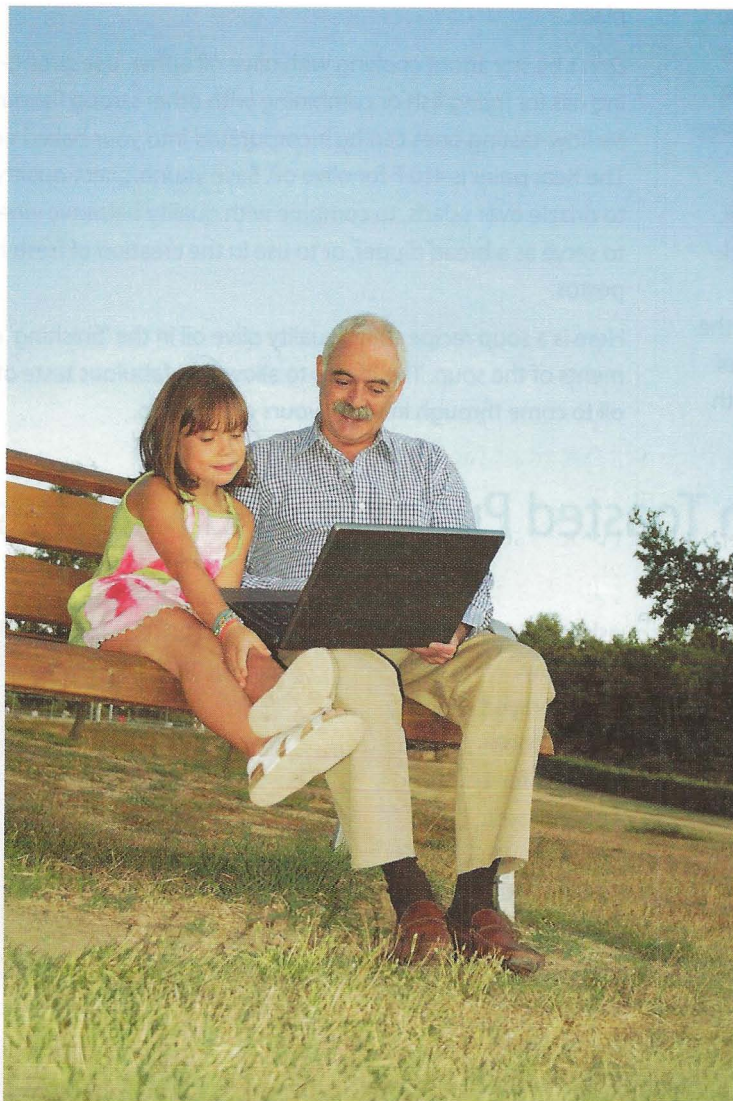# Become A Computer-Wise Grandparent

by Pamela Tabak

The grandchildren have left and the house seems empty, so you go to your computer to write them a message. To your dismay, the computer will not "boot up" and if it does, the whole appearance of your desktop has changed! "What could have happened?," you ask. The answer is obvious; your grandchildren have been having fun on your computer and have changed not only the appearance of your desktop, but many of the settings in your programs as well. They may have even downloaded games and music, which often come along with "spyware" which has slowed down the system.

Be a computer-wise grandparent and protect your computer <u>before</u> problems occur. **Here are a few simple steps that you can take:**

1. Create a **"Guest Account"** with **limited access** so that no important changes can be made and no programs can be installed or downloaded.

For Vista: Start > Control Panel > User Accounts > Manage another account > Create a new account

For Windows XP: Start > Control Panel > User Accounts > Create a new account

2. Place a **"Password"** on your account and do not give it to anyone. You may even decide to change the password from time to time to make doubly sure that no one has access to your files.

Start > Control Panel > User Accounts > Change your password

3. Make a **"Restore Point"** the day <u>before</u> your visitors arrive, and return to that "Restore Point" after they leave. This really clears out a great deal of unwanted "matter" from your computer.

Start > **All programs** > **Accessories** > **System Tools** > **System Restore** > **Create a restore point**

4. Place a password on your important "Office" program files, i.e. EXCEL or WORD and make sure that they are not displayed in "Shared Folders."

(With your "Office" document open, click on Tools > Options > Click on the Security Tab > Add a password) Now your personal files cannot be accessed or changed.

Making the above adjustments to your computer before your visitors arrive will ensure that you will be able to bring your computer back to "normal" after your visitors leave and that none of your important files or folders will be changed.

A closing thought: since most people own a laptop, it may be a good idea to ask them to bring it along with them. Nevertheless, I would suggest making the security changes above, in case they decide to use your computer instead.

Pamela Tabak specializes in computer help for mature users. She has recently published a book – "Computer Tips for Seniors" – which is available on her website at **www.computertutorinc.com**.