



# SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

Volume 22 Number 9

Serving the Roanoke Valley

September 2006

## MEET OUR NEW OFFICERS



President: Ernie Arnett



Vice President: Earl Abbott

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### Help your newsletter

You are invited to share favorite  
websites, reviews of software or just  
general computer experiences. Send  
your article or notes to [editor@rvpcc.org](mailto:editor@rvpcc.org).

## THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS

Only 97 days until

**The Annual Christmas Dinner**

**Saturday, December 2, 2006**

**The Home Place**

**3:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m.**

**\$17 per person**



### Recovery CD

New computers are often sold  
without a Windows installation CD –  
all the installation information is on a  
separate partition of the hard drive.  
A restore program on the computer  
will allow you to reinstall the entire  
operating system and programs that  
came installed on the machine.

Your instruction manual will tell you  
(See Recovery page 3)

### NEXT MEETING

Saturday, September 9, 2006

#### Topic:

Converting LPs and Cassettes to  
CDs and/or DVDs

Arnold R. Burton Tech Center  
Room 105  
1760 Roanoke Boulevard  
Salem, Virginia 24153

9:15 a.m. until noon

## Secretary's Report

ROANOKE VALLEY  
PERSONAL COMPUTER  
CLUB MINUTES  
August 12, 2006

Ernie Arnett, vice president, called meeting to order. He reported that Earl Abbott had offered to serve as Vice President and that he (Ernie) would be President until the end of the year. A motion was made and seconded that this be enacted. Approval was unanimous.

Since Azella Tingler was absent, there were no door prizes.

Ernie reported that this year's Christmas Dinner will take place on December 2nd, 2006 (3p.m.-5:30p.m.) at the Home Place Restaurant. Inclusive price: \$17 per person. We need 40-50 people. Reminders will be mentioned in future RVPCC Newsletters. One other placed Ernie had checked quoted a price of \$20-\$25.

Ernie stated we should work on a membership drive and asked for ideas.

### Roanoke County Schools:

Homer Duff reported fall classes have been announced. There is a link to the list of class at the club

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website. Homer said he presented a check for \$250 from RVPCC to the Arnold R. Burton Technical School. The money was used for various needed items, including an external hard drive.

### Newsletter:

When printing the newsletter on computers using Windows 98, Adobe 6.0 should be used. Adobe 7.0 is for XP users only. Also, Sandy Johnson requested material for the newsletter from the membership.

### Future Programs on agenda:

Ernie said he will try to get a beta copy of Microsoft's Vista, (XP's replacement) to do a demo for the club. Tim Johnson will make a presentation on Power Point. Bill Scott will show how to copy LPs and cassettes to CDs and/or DVDs.

The Question & Answer segment of the meeting followed. A wide range of subjects was covered. We ended the meeting by watching the Diet Coke & Mentos video at eepypard.com.

Respectfully submitted:  
Kay Viskup, acting secretary

**Meeting space provided  
by Roanoke County  
Schools**

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## Add RAM to your PC

Thinking about increasing your PC's memory? Bill Farmer found a website that makes that task a lot easier. It explains what the different types of memory are and how they are used. The site includes a program that will scan your machine and list the types of memory modules that will be suitable. The url is <http://www.crucial.com/crucial/pvtcontent/memorytype.asp?model=&memorytype=CHOOSE>. We might be able to persuade Tim to post the link on the RVPCC website. This site also includes information on flash cards for your digital cameras.

## SLOW BOOT UP?

Does your computer take much more time to boot than it did when it was new? Do you turn it on then go out for a leisurely breakfast to give it time to boot?

The first thing to do is to check for "evil things." Update and run your anti-virus program. Next update and run an anti-spyware program. Running two different anti-spyware programs is better since the second may find things the first one missed. If you don't have the programs, good free ones are available at Komando.com; click "Downloads," then click "Security."

If your PC still boots slowly, you may have too many programs loading themselves at bootup. Some are necessary, like the anti-virus and firewall programs. Other programs should be started manually as needed from Start >> Programs. Allowing unneeded programs to load at bootup slows the boot-

Web hosting provided by:  
<http://www.icn.net/>

**ICONS**

## PASSWORD CONTROL By Bob Johnson

After years of exploring the Internet, I accumulated 76 sites that require a password. Since each one should be unique, it was a problem keeping track of all of them. It is impossible to remember that many, a hand-written list is clumsy, and a list on the hard drive might be hacked.

The recommendations for a hard-to-break password make the problem even worse: a minimum of 8 characters, intermixed upper and lower case, numbers, and symbols, no names or any dictionary word. How can anyone possibly remember passwords like Nit5Fgm\$Nt? Even a few easy ones like FidoDog7 are hard to remember.

One scheme for developing a password is to use the first letter from a series of words, such as Four Score & 7 Years Ago Our Fathers to get FS&7YAOF. This isn't practical for more than a few passwords.

There are several password manager programs available. At least one encrypts the information on your hard drive. They are free; go to [www.komando.com](http://www.komando.com) and search for "password." These programs may be overkill.

I used a low-tech method and made a spreadsheet for my passwords. The sheet has four columns: name of the site, the ID that I use, my password, and any notes such as PIN number or secret questions.

I store the spreadsheet on a floppy rather than on my hard drive. I print out the spreadsheet and keep the paper in a drawer beside the computer. If I go on a trip, I take the paper along so that I can access sites while on the road.

New entries are penciled in, and then added to the floppy when convenient.

Not high-tech, but it is simple and secure

(RECOVERY continued)

how to access the restore program on your computer. You can copy the restore information onto CDs or DVDs and delete the hard drive partition to free up the space for your own use

It would be a good idea to make these CD or DVD copies as a standby if your hard drive fails.

However, it might not be a good idea to delete the restore partition unless you are desperate for the space. There has been a lot of discussion on the life of CD-Rs and DVD-Rs. If you do delete the restore partition, you should consider making fresh copies of your restoration CDs/DVDs every couple of years

If you have deleted the recovery partition without making CD/DVD copies, all may not be lost. Call the manufacturer's tech support and request a restoration disk. E-Machines recently quoted \$20 for a restoration disk.

### YOU KNOW YOU ARE LIVING IN 2006 when...

Every commercial on television has a web site at the bottom of the screen.

(SLOW continued)

up, uses up RAM, and takes processor capacity.

To see what is running on your PC, look at the icons in the notification area (formerly called the system tray) in the lower right corner. You may need to click the left-pointing arrow to see all the icons. Slide the cursor over an icon to see its name. Right clicking an icon might pop up a menu that will allow you to stop the automatic loading on bootup.

To find out what else is booting up, press Alt+Ctrl+Del to bring up a list of processes that are running. In Win XP, press Alt+Ctrl+Del then click the "Processes" tab. You will find a long list of processes running. Some of these are necessary, but others could probably be removed.

For a good article on how to use these lists of processes, how to learn what each process does, how to determine if it can be stopped, and how to use msconfig to stop it, go to <http://netsquirrel.com/msconfig/>.

### Great website:

Great Images from NASA at <http://grin.hq.nasa.gov/>.

### YouTube viewing:

An article by Lee Gomes in the August 30 Wall Street Journal had some interesting information about YouTube. Mr. Gomes said there were 6.1 million videos taking up 45 terabytes of storage. Also, there have been 1.7 billion viewings. 70% of YouTube's registered viewers are American, and half of those are under 20 years of age. He estimated that the total time that people of the world have spent watching YouTube since it started last year is 9,305 years.

## We Meet the 2nd Saturday of the Month

### Next Meeting Sat., September 9

**Place:** Arnold R. Burton  
Technology Center, Room  
105, 1760 Roanoke  
Boulevard, Salem, Va. 24153

**Time:** 9:15 a.m. - noon

*This newsletter is  
published by the RVPCC.*