



# SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

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Serving the Roanoke Valley

November 2007

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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).



## **CHRISTMAS DINNER** **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1**

**The Home Place**

**3 PM**

**GOOD FOOD**

**LOTS OF DOOR PRIZES**

**Including Microsoft products!!!**

**\$17 per person**

**Next meeting—November 10**

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

**Place: Arnold Burton Tech Center**

**Room 105**

**Topic: Macs**

**Speaker: John Leary**

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## Secretary's Report

Saturday, October 13, 2007

The October meeting of the RVPCC was opened by Earl Abbott, President, at 9:20a.m. He welcomed all members and our visitor, Joan Leary.

### OFFICERS REPORTS:

**Secretary** - Margaret Ann Hoag stated that the minutes of the last meeting were published in the newsletter.

**Treasurer** - Helen Trenor gave the treasurer's report. She gave the Treasury balance and said that all bills were paid and the club was solvent.

**Public Relations** - John Yeatts reported that next month's program will be on Apple Computers.

**Roanoke County Schools** - Homer Duff said that there has been a big transition in management at Roanoke County Schools. The person who used to be in charge of Adult Education Classes has retired and they haven't replaced her. Lots of classes have been discontinued. President Earl Abbott appointed Homer to find out what we can do for the schools. We would like to keep our meeting place.

### CHRISTMAS DINNER:

The Christmas Dinner will be held at the Homeplace at 3 p.m. on December 1. The price is \$17.00 a person. Your check is your reservation. We would like to have about 40 people.

**DOOR PRIZE:** \$10.00 - Bill Scott.

There being no further business, that part of the meeting was adjourned. We then drove to VDOT where we had our program.

### PROGRAM:

Mike Russell gave a wonderful program on how VDOT uses computers to plan and build roads. Several software programs are used to refine and combine data. Questions were asked and answered throughout the presentation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Margaret Ann Hoag  
Secretary

## PREZ' NOTES

Well, we've got a good program on November 10 and a good Christmas Dinner on December 1 lined up for you.

The program will be one on the Apple computer by John Leary. John has a broad set of experiences to draw upon, and I am sure we will get an interesting presentation.

We are going to have our Christmas Dinner at The Home Place where the food is always wonderful and plentiful. We will be having door prizes worth hundreds of dollars, so that everyone attending should have a wonderful time. You can reserve a place by sending a check to our treasurer for \$17.00 for each person in your party who will be attending our Christmas Dinner. I hope to see a lot of you at our meeting.

Earl Abbott



Put yourself in this picture and join us for our 2007 Christmas dinner at the Home Place on December 1.

RVPCC

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**GETTING A NEW PC FOR CHRISTMAS?**

The Oct 18 Wall Street Journal included an article by Walter Mossberg on buying a computer. Here's a brief review:

First question: XP versus Vista. Mossberg said that although XP would be less hassle in the short run, more programs will be written for Vista in the future and you will fall behind.

If you opt for Vista, get Home Premium rather than the stripped-down Home Basic.

You could buy a Mac, but you should wait to get Apple's new operating system, "Leopard." It was released at the end of October.

RAM: 1 GB would be OK for Home Basic, but you'll need 2 GB for all other versions of Vista.

Video: Look for a discrete (separate) graphics card that has its own memory. Some integrated graphics systems share your main memory.

Processor: Any dual-core processor from Intel or AMD. Mossberg advised not worrying about processor speed since added memory does more for performance.

Hard Drive: Don't cheap out; even an average PC should come with 300 GB,

Performance: In the store, run Vista's built-in performance test. Click "Show More Details" in Vista's Welcome Screen. Avoid a PC with a rating below 3.0. Shoot for 3.5 or higher.

Price: You can get a bargain basement PC for under \$400, but with Vista Home Premium, a higher performance rating, 2 GB or RAM, discrete video, a large hard drive, and a dual-core processor, you'll spend \$800 or more.

If you are thinking about a new PC, you should read the full article by Mossberg. If hyperlinks in this newsletter work for you, go to: <http://online.wsj.com/public/article/>

[SB119266187772362614.html](http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB119266187772362614.html).

Hyperlinks don't work? Go to [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com). Just to the right of "FreeToday" is a search box. Enter Mossberg and hit enter. In the next screen click "Specific Date." Enter 10 18 2007 in both date boxes and hit enter. Scroll down a tad (that's a technical term) and click on the title "Demand Some Basic Features With Your PC."

**Sleazy sites**

We use security software to help block web sites that want to defraud us, steal our identities, turn our PCs into zombies, and blast us with unwanted advertising. But, wouldn't it be better to know in advance about an evil, dangerous, or offensive site? Here are a couple of interesting sites to experiment with.

SiteAdvisor, from [www.siteadvisor.com](http://www.siteadvisor.com), now a part of McAfee. You download a program, which looks over your shoulder as you use your browser and alerts you to sites it thinks are dangerous. It matches your sites to a database it has compiled about content.

Scandoo, from [www.scandoo.com](http://www.scandoo.com). This one does not require a download. You enter your search words at its website. It then transfers your request to the search engine you choose and analyses the results on the fly to look for bad stuff. Your results look the same as they always have, except that green, yellow, or red checkmarks are added to rate the sites.

Are you adventurous? How about trying these two services and giving us your opinion?

**Meeting space provided  
by Roanoke County  
Schools**

## OCTOBER MEETING AT VDOT LOCATION



Interested members—John, Margaret, and Bill



Mike Russell, Salem District Layout & Design Engineer, showing a surveying rod, which is reflecting the camera flash.



John and Bob getting a feel of the equipment



The 'old' optical transit and the 'new' laser transit surveying equipment

**HOME SAFETY VIDEO:** If you have a grease fire in your kitchen, DO NOT spray water on it! Watch the 34-second video below to see why. View the video yourself and then spread the word so that others will learn how to survive. (Hint: Cut-and-paste the URL to avoid typing it in if the hyperlink doesn't work for you.)

Go to <http://www.dsreports.com/forum/r19273430-OT-Kitchen-Oil-Fire>. Scroll down about 3/8 of the page and click on KitchenOilFire.wmv.

**We Meet the 2nd  
Saturday of the Month  
Next Meeting  
November 10, 2007**

**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.*