



# SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

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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).

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Next Meeting

Saturday

July 12, 2008

9:15 a.m.

Topics:

How to Load the Operating  
System UMBUNTA onto  
a computer

by Bill Scott

The New Firefox Browser  
by Andy McLaughlin

### In this issue:

June Minutes . . . . .	2
Prez' Notes . . . . .	2
Food for Thought . . . . .	2
Web Warnings . . . . .	3
Forgotten Password . . . . .	3
Do Not Send . . . . .	4
Disaster Preparedness . . . . .	4
Member Picture . . . . .	4
Free Alternatives . . . . .	4



## Secretary's Report

June 14, 2008

The meeting was called to order by the President, Earl Abbott, at 9:16 a.m.

He described a computer-controlled grow light that he is using in his basement to grow tomatoes..

**Secretary's report:** The minutes from the May meeting were published in the June newsletter

**Treasurer's report:** The club is solvent

**Roanoke County Schools:** Homer Duff: reported that nothing has been changed. There may have to be a change in the meeting site due to summer cleaning schedule. Members will be alerted ahead of time

**Public Relations:** July program will be the postponed June program, Bill Scott's program on Umbunta. Also Andy McLaughlin will demonstrate the new Firefox 3 browser.

A sympathy card for Bill Scott was signed by members of the club.

A **Q&A** session followed.

Bob Johnson demonstrated an analog/digital converter from Radio Shack that can be used to record from a stereo system to a computer. This provides a quick method of converting analog vinyl recordings to digital CD recordings.

Bob also did a quick demonstration on using Photoshop Elements for editing digital pictures.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by  
Sandy Johnson, acting secretary



## PREZ' NOTES

July 2, 2008

I hope each of you is well and happy and enjoying personal computing. We are indeed fortunate to have the machinery and networks that we have today. Recently, I was reminded how much computers have improved during my adult lifetime. Last week, my high school class had its 50-year Reunion. We had a chance to meet together and make comparisons of our appearances, our friends, our cars and other toys.

My science fair project in 1958 was a 4-bit binary counter consisting of vacuum tubes, discrete resistors, interconnecting wires, etc. If you want to compare 2008 hardware with 1958 hardware, you could de-cap a present-day microprocessor, and use a powerful microscope to observe a very small portion of its architecture for your comparison.

Today's high school seniors can have their 50-year Reunion in the year 2058. They should have some interesting memories to compare.

I hope many of you will be able to attend our July Meeting of RVPCC where we will have a good time discussing present-day computers.

Earl Abbott

### Food for Thought

What disease did cured ham have?

Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?

RVPCC

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## Website warnings

Wouldn't it be handy to have programs that warn us about sleazy or dangerous website content? Well, look no farther – they exist! And they are free. Here are two of them:

**McAfee SiteAdvisor** from [www.siteadvisor.com](http://www.siteadvisor.com). This requires you to download and install a small program. It works with Internet Explorer and Firefox browsers, and with Google, Yahoo, and MSN search engines.

SiteAdvisor compares a site's name to a database of sites that include malicious software or invasive advertising techniques and of sites that generate spam or popup ads. It also evaluates the ads that come with the sites. However, it does not evaluate a site for offensive content such as porno.

SiteAdvisor places a small icon at each item in your search-results pages – green for a safe site, yellow for caution, red for a dangerous site. SiteAdvisor can furnish a detailed explanation for its rating.

**Scandoo** from [www.scandoo.com](http://www.scandoo.com). This does not require a download. You use it by entering your search term on the Scandoo web page, which then transfers the search term to the search engine of your choice; Google (by default), or Yahoo, or MSN.

Rather than look at a database, Scandoo scans each site on the fly and modifies the results page to identify sites that may be troublesome. In addition to looking for malicious software and invasive advertising, Scandoo looks for offensive content – you can select the content you want flagged, such as pornography, hate speech, and gambling.

Scandoo places a small icon at each item in your search-results pages – a black bug for dangerous software, and green/yellow/red colored circles for “offensive” ratings.

**The bottom line:** These programs can be useful. Walter Mossberg at the Wall Street Journal reported two years ago that Scandoo was better with offensive content, and SiteAdvisor was more comprehensive and tougher with malicious software and invasive advertising.

Programs change and evolve -- you should try them both.

## Forgotten Password

Suppose you use XP and forget the administrator's password or find that the password was changed by accident or by someone else. Or, if you don't use a password, suppose one gets added by “persons unknown.” Suppose you can't access your own computer!

If your computer has a second account with administrative privileges, you can use it to reset your password.

Without that second account, just use your Password Recovery Disk. You did make one, didn't you? If you haven't, then do it today. Here's how:

Open the Control Panel and double click User Accounts. Click Change an Account, then Click Administrator.

In the Related Tasks box in the upper left, click Prevent a Forgotten Password to bring up the Forgotten Password Wizard, and then click Next.

Insert a formatted floppy into your A: drive. On the screen, select 3-1/2 Floppy A: and click Next.

On the next screen, type in your current password, or leave it blank if you aren't using a password. Click Next, and then Finish.

Label your new disk “Password Reset.” Store the disk in a safe place since anyone can use it to reset your password and log onto your computer.

In the future, when you attempt to log on and use an incorrect password, you will be prompted to insert the Password Reset disk. You will be able to enter a new password and gain access to your computer. Then you can relax and think about how smart you were to be prepared!

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Meeting space provided by  
Roanoke County Schools

## Do Not Send?

by Sandy Johnson

You've all heard about the 'Do Not Call' list but have you noticed the offer to "opt-out of prescreened" offers of credit? The notice usually appears at the bottom of the credit card application.

I don't remember if there is a web site but I do have the telephone number which I used about 2 months ago. It works! Our junk mail has really leveled off.

The toll-free phone number is 1-888-567-8688. You will be asked a number of questions, including one relating to your current phone number. After answering the necessary questions, your name will be added to their 'do not send' list. This will stop solicitations for 5 years. You will also be sent a form to fill out. When the form is returned, your name will be permanently added to the list.

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## Disaster Preparedness

It's time again to think about summer storms. In this area, we can have floods, tornados, wildfires, and heavy winds and rain. Are you prepared?

Do you have a supply of bottled water? You also need food which doesn't need to be refrigerated or can be prepared on an outdoor grill in case of a power outage.

Do you have pet supplies (medications, food, and their bowls and bedding) handy in case you have to evacuate?

[www.readyvirginia.gov](http://www.readyvirginia.gov) has a list of items that should be included in an emergency kit. These are things that you should have handy in case you have to evacuate your home. Be sure to check out the list for people with disabilities as the list includes things like spare eye glasses, hearing aid batteries, and diabetic supplies.

Do yourself a favor. Be ready.



## Meet the Members



Jim Ruble at the June meeting

## Free Alternatives To Expensive Software

Does anyone NOT get the Kim Komando newsletters? If you are one of the few, you missed a good article in her 6/21/08 weekly newsletter: "10 free alternatives to popular pricey programs." The alternatives she listed were:

Create documents, spreadsheets and more:

### Open Office

Download e-mail: **Thunderbird**

Manage appointments with a calendar: **Sunbird**

Layout professional documents: **Scribus**

Edit photos: **GIMP**

Refine your drawing skills: **Inkscape**

Be creative with graphics: **Tux Paint**

Edit digital videos: **Avidemux**

Design Web pages: **Nvu**

Create PDF files: **PDFCreator**

Manage your money: **TurboCASH**

That's interesting; looks like there are 11 items in her list of 10. Maybe #11 is a bonus. Whatever the count, read her article to see a description of each program and a link to download it at her website. Go to [www.komando.com](http://www.komando.com) and enter "10 free" in the search box. The article should be the first in the results list.

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