



SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

Volume 24 Number 6

Serving the Roanoke Valley

June 2008

RVPCC Officers

President: Earl Abbott,
president@rvpcc.org

Vice President: Ron Zoll,
vicepresident@rvpcc.org

Secretary: Kay Viskup,
secretary@rvpcc.org

Treasurer: Helen Trenor,
treasurer@rvpcc.org

Public Relations: Bill
Scott, pr1@rvpcc.org;
John Yeatts, pr@rvpcc.org

Membership Chairman:
Del Kirschner, 989-8913,
membership@rvpcc.org

Roanoke County Schools:
Homer Duff, 774-6862,
rcschool@rvpcc.org

WebMaster: Tim Johnson,
562-0140, web@rvpcc.org

Email: info@rvpcc.org,
members@rvpcc.org

Web: <http://rvpcc.org>,

Newsletter Editor: Sandy
Johnson, 774-3979,
editor@rvpcc.org

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.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

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Next Meeting
June 14, 2008
9:15 a.m.

Topics:
How to load the operating
system UMBUNTA onto a
computer
By Bill Scott
Q&A

An "Are You Sure?" for email

As originally installed, Outlook Express is configured so that when you press "Send," the spelling is checked, then the message is placed in the Outbox and is immediately sent out. You can change this immediate sending so that the email won't be sent until you click on Send/Recv.

In Outlook Express, click Tools, then Options. Click the "Send" tab. Here you'll find the line "Send message immediately." Help says, "Specifies whether Outlook Express should immediately forward to your mail server any messages you send. If you clear this check box, message you send are placed in your Outbox and are not sent until you click the Send/Recv button on the toolbar."

This is like an "Are you sure?" question for email. It gives you another chance if you suddenly realize you spelled a word wrong or gave an incorrect date – the kind of thing you always think of just one millisecond after the message is sent.

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Secretary's Report

May 10, 2008

President Earl Abbott opened the meeting at 9:15AM.

Since we were heading for our tour to the VDOT Traffic Management Center, there were no door prizes distributed and no Officer Reports given.

We departed at 9:30AM and arrived at the VDOT Traffic Management Center at 9:45AM. We were greeted by Tim Martin, SW Regional Traffic Manager, and entered the Center. He led us into their reception area which overlooked onto a glassed-in operations room. He then brought us into the operations room which consisted of motorized desks manned by computer operators who were monitoring the two large televisions which showed screens from 18 solar-powered cameras. These cameras showed how traffic was moving from different points of I-77, I-81, and other local roads.

Along with Tim Martin, John Kornhiser, VDOT System Administrator for Open Roads Consulting, explained the main operational works behind this Center. They then proceeded to take us into the main computer room containing the equipment being used by the Center.

The tour ended at 11:15 AM.

No further business was held.

Respectfully submitted,
Kay Viskup, Secretary

See Page 5 for pictures of the tour.



Meeting space provided by
Roanoke County Schools

Prez' Notes

June 6, 2008

This week, I shared my thoughts with the Junior Senator from Virginia on the LIBERMAN-WARNER CLIMATE SECURITY ACT. I could have sent an email. I figured my opinion was worth at least forty two cents, so I used snail mail instead of email. I have heard that our Senators and Representatives receive many emails, so the decision was an easy one to make. I was respectful and brief. I will probably get a courteous reply. My letter probably will not change any opinions in Washington, but it was the right thing to do, and I'm glad that I did it. We are fortunate to have the Government that we have, and should share our thoughts from time to time with our elected leaders. We are also fortunate to have the freedom and standard of living that we have in this country. We can vote or not vote. We can belong to this or that club. Our decision to attend, or not attend a club meeting is a vote "in favor" or "not in favor" of the activities or attractions of that particular club.

On June 14, we will have a meeting of RVPCC. Your "in favor" vote would be appreciated. I hope to see you there. We will have a good time talking about computers, and not politics or religion.

Earl Abbott

Enlarging font size quickly

Sometimes we encounter a font that is too small to read comfortably on the screen. Here's a quick trick to fix that.

Hold the control key down and roll your mouse wheel up and down to change the size of the font.

This doesn't work in all applications, but when it does work, it is convenient. Give it a try.

RVPCC
P.O. Box 322
Salem, Va. 24153

Web: <http://rvpcc.org>
Email: info@rvpcc.org

Quotes from the Past

From the Internet, author unknown

“Computers of the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons.”

Popular Mechanics, 1949

“I think there is a world market for maybe five computers.”

Tomas Watson, Chairman of IBM, 1943

“There is no reason why anyone would want a computer in their home.”

Ken Olson, President, Chairman, and founder of Digital Equipment Corp.

“This telephone has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us.”

Western Union, Internal memo, 1876

“The concept is interesting and well-formed, but in order to earn better than a “C”, the idea must be feasible.”

Yale University Management Professor in response to Fred Smith’s paper proposing an overnight delivery service. Smith went on to found Federal Express Corp.

“We don’t like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out.”

Decca recording Co., rejecting The Beatles, 1962

“Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau.”

Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics, Yale University, 1929

“Everything that can be invented has been invented.”

Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Patents, 1899

“640K ought to be enough for anybody.”

Bill Gates, 1981

Earthquakes!

Earthquakes have been in the news recently. Quakes might worry you if you plan to move to California, but you probably don’t worry about them here in Virginia. There is a chance, however. Virginia has had over 160 quakes since 1977, but only 6% were felt. That averages 1 quake a month, with 2 felt per year. The largest earthquake in Virginia was a 5.8 in Giles County in 1897.

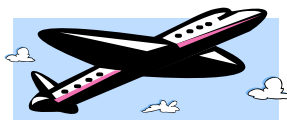
Would you like to read more about earthquake preparedness, or learn what to do if one occurs? California has published a guide that is useful. It is also a bit scary to read how to tie down your water heater and Velcro your vases to shelves! The guide is “Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country” and is available at www.earthquakecountry.info/roots. You can read it online, or download a PDF, or request a free copy by mail.

The “Roots” guide is for southern California. The same website also offers similar guides for the San Francisco Bay area, northern California, Nevada, and Alaska.

Interested in the latest news about earthquakes around the world? Try the U.S. Geological Survey site at <http://earthquake.usgs.gov>. Remember the small quake we felt in Roanoke a few years ago? It appeared on this USGS website within 20 minutes.

In addition to the maps of earthquake occurrences throughout the world, the USGS website has many links to additional sources of information about quakes. One link is to the “Top 10” lists which are especially interesting -- and scary. Another link is “Earthquakes for Kids” which would help children understand earthquakes.

Closer to home, Virginia Tech has a seismological observatory, the VTSO. Its website is <http://www.geol.vt.edu/outreach/vtso/>. It includes a list of Virginia’s 15 largest earthquakes, beginning with a 4.5 quake near Petersburg in 1774.



No Floppy Drive?

By Del Kirschner

Here's a helpful hint concerning the absence of a floppy drive in current computers. As most power users know, the floppy drive is a necessary item when you want to format a hard drive or perform other DOS-based system functions. I had a recent need to completely re-format a hard drive in a laptop that had no floppy drive. However, it did have a CD drive.

I found that booting the computer from a CD was easy (must set the boot sequence to CD before Hard Drive), but the CDs that I had available would only install Windows. There was no way to access DOS system programs such as FDISK and FORMAT, or other program utilities that I have available on my master boot floppy.

I searched the Internet to find out how to create a bootable CD that would do this job. The best advice was to use Nero burning software. When I examined the Nero program on my computer, I found that one of the options available for burning a data disk, is the selection to burn a Bootable Data Disk. Tried it - and it worked. I copied all of the files on my master boot floppy to the new CD, and followed the directions to create a new, bootable DOS CD.

When this CD is used to boot a computer, it operates as an "A" drive. All of the functions are usable in the same way as booting from a floppy.

Open Office 3.0

There is now a beta copy of Open Office 3.0. It is reviewed by Adrian Kingsley-Hughes at blogs.zdnet.com/hardware/?p=1822&nl.ee539.



Human Thumb Drive



Found at:

www.flickr.com/photos/e-discoveryteam/1346995811

Calendar Magic

Here's a free program that might be both fun and useful: Calendar Magic ver 17.0, from www.stokepoges.plus.com/calendar.htm, a calendar and conversion utility.

Calendar Magic is an easy-to-use freeware Windows 95, 98, Me, XP, 32-bit Vista based program that is entertaining, informative, educational, and of equal applicability in the home and in the office.

A list of the features of Calendar Magic would take up most of this newsletter, so an abbreviated list is shown below. Go to the stokespoges website to see the complete list and to download the 2.7 MB program.

Facts about your birth date:

Day of the week: birth date and next birthday

Julian day

Time lived: years, days, minutes

Chinese year (horse, rat, etc.)

Astrological sign

Convert any of 25 calendar system dates to any other.

Print any calendar with various formats.

Lists of worldwide festivals, holidays, and observed days.

Day of the week for any date.

Number of days between dates.

Reminders (birthdays, meetings, etc) with alarms

Solar or lunar eclipses out to the year 3000.

Distances between 8,000 locations on earth.

Calculators - 11 types including scientific, financial, and even pregnancy.

VDOT TOUR

Pictures by Kay Viskup



Our group with John Kornhiser



Our group on the tour



Tim Martin showing highway maps



Banks of equipment and cables



John Kornhiser at one of the motorized desks. Note the number of screens that he's using.



This cabinet contains over 3 miles of cables!