



SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

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Serving the Roanoke Valley

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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.



In this issue:

Cloud Computing	1
December minutes	2
VHS tapes are dead	2
Prez Notes	2
Super-speed USB	2
Winter weather alert	2
Pics from Dec dinner	3
More pictures	4
On-screen calculator	4

Next Meeting

Saturday, January 10

9:15 a.m.

Topics:

Show & Tell

And

Bill Scott will demo his new
Epson scanner

Bring your Christmas
electronic surprises and show
them off to the club



Winter Weather

Alert

Page 2

Cloud Computing

“Cloud Computing” refers to accessing software applications and files on the Internet, not on your own PC. Instead of buying the software for your own personal use, you will pay a fee for the time that you use the software. Cloud computing for mobile devices is taking off with the expansion of high-speed wireless networks around the world.

The cloud was started in the mid-1990s when Hotmail, Yahoo, and Amazon allowed consumers to manage communications, appointments and shopping via the Internet.

One attraction is the lower-cost PC required. The "netbook" has been introduced over the past two years – it is a laptop that is stripped down to be smaller and less expensive. The netbook is designed primarily to access the Web. It has little storage capacity and generally does not come with DVD drives.

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Secretary's Report

December 13, 2008

President Earl Abbott opened the Christmas Party meeting at Pheasant Ridge Independent Living Center at 6:45 PM.

He presented the slate of officers for 2009:

President: Earl Abbott

Vice President: Ron Zoll

Secretary: Kay Viskup

Treasurer: Helen Trenor

Public Relations: Bill Scott and John Leary

Roanoke County Schools: Homer Duff

Web Master: Tim Johnson

Ron Zoll moved that the slate be accepted by acclimation.

Bill Farmer seconded the motion.

The slate was unanimously elected.

After the election of the officers, meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Viskup, Secretary



VHS tapes are dead

VHS tapes are going obsolete after three decades of service. In October, the last major supplier shipped his final truckload of VHS tapes.

The VHS tape began its downward slide when the DVD arrived in the late 1990s. Major retailers soon began changing their shelf space from VHS tapes to DVDs. Now they are making room for the latest format, Blu-ray discs. The last major Hollywood movie released on VHS was "A History of Violence" in 2006.

Stand-alone VHS players/recorders are becoming difficult to find, although a few combination DVD and VHS machines are still available.

PREZ' NOTES

I hope that each of you had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. This Saturday, January 10, we will have a Club Meeting, and anyone with an interest in personal computers is invited to attend. We enjoy talking about PCs and PC applications.

We had a very enjoyable Christmas Dinner on December 13 at Pheasant Ridge. The food was fantastic. The meeting room was just the right size for our group. I believe everyone who attended enjoyed the food and the fellowship.

Respectfully,
Earl Abbott

Super-Speed USB 3

The specifications for the latest version of USB was released in November, 2008. This next generation of USB will be 10 times the speed USB 2.0 to keep up with new gadgets and large files. Products containing USB 3.0 should be in stores in 2010. The new USB 3.0 standard is backwards compatible with USB 1.1 and 2.0.



WINTER WEATHER ALERT

WHENEVER ICE OR SNOW OCCUR ON OUR MEETING DAY, CHECK THE WEB SITE, WWW.RVPCC.ORG, TO SEE IF THE MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELED

RVPCC

P.O. Box 322

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Our Christmas Dinner



The Farmers and the Scotts



Carolyn Zoll and Kay Viskup



The Duffs and the McLaughlins



Bob and Sandy Johnson



Helen Trenor and Earl Abbott



Ron and Carolyn Zoll

Meeting space provided by
Roanoke County Schools

More Christmas dinner pictures



Showing off their loot



Sandra won a poinsettia



We could barely see Bill Scott
through his poinsettia



Kay got an angel

On-Screen Calculator

“Calculator,” the Microsoft program mimicking a hand-held calculator, has been included with every release of Microsoft Windows, remaining almost unchanged since Windows 95. The screen image looks like a hand-held calculator. Numbers can be entered with the PC’s keyboard or by mousing and clicking the keys shown on the screen.

The Calculator program opens as a “standard” four-function calculator. Clicking “View” changes it to “scientific” mode which includes the features that scientists and engineers love.

An improved calculator is Moffsoft FreeCalc at www.moffsoft.com. It adds a simulated tape that can be printed out, a larger screen image, and “00” and “000” keys.

Microsoft offers a newer version of Calculator, named Calculator Plus. It has the same “standard” and “scientific” modes as the original Calculator, plus a “conversion” mode.

Calculator Plus’s “conversion” mode has eleven

categories such as length, area, volume, and weight. It is fast and easy to look up a conversion, like 1 liter = 3.8 U.S. fluid ounces.

One of the conversion categories in Calculator Plus is “currency,” but it is not easy to convert US dollars. Also, the latest conversion rates are not automatically loaded. Currency conversion websites like expedia.com, oanda.com, and travlang.com are much easier to use.

To get a free copy of Calculator Plus: Go to www.microsoft.com and enter “calculator plus” (with or without the quotes) into the search box, and click search. Then click on “Download details: Microsoft Calculator Plus,” probably the first entry in the search-results list.

Having a calculator at your fingertips is convenient. Place an icon onto your toolbar or desktop to make it easy to load and use at any time. Some PC keyboards have specialized keys which can be programmed to launch a calculator.
