



SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

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Serving the Roanoke Valley

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In this issues:

Summer meeting sch.	1
Goodwill directions	. 2
May Minutes3
Prez Notes 3
Newbies-	
What's a Font 4
"Show Desktop"	... 5
Google Drops Support for Old Browsers	. 5
Peak at Win 8 5
Pics from May 6
2011 Index7

Next Meeting
Friday, June 24, 2011

9:30 a.m.

Topics:

Goodwill Tour

&

Google Goodies

by

Andy McLaughlin &

Bob Johnson

SUMMER MEETING SCHEDULE

**Friday, June 24 Special meeting at Goodwill
Headquarters on Melrose Avenue at
9:30 a.m.**

See Page 2 for directions to the Goodwill Site

Saturday, July 8—No meeting

Saturday, August 12—No meeting

Saturday, September 10—Regular meeting at
Andrew Burton

We will be back to our normal schedule when
the schools open again in September.

ALL DUES ARE DUE—Have your cash or
check book ready.

Special meeting on June 24th.

The club program will be on Friday, June 24th. We will meet at 9:30AM at the Goodwill Industries of the Valleys at 2502 Melrose Avenue, west of downtown Roanoke. Here are directions:

If coming from the Salem area, take East Main Street (US460) east, and it will turn into Melrose Ave. Look for the Goodwill plaza on your right.

From downtown Roanoke, take Orange Avenue west. Look for and follow the signs for US460/US11 the whole way. Just after a CVS store on the left, the route will bear slightly left onto Salem Turnpike, and at the next light it will bear right onto Melrose Ave. The Goodwill plaza will be just ahead on the left. Turn into the parking lot, and park all the way over on the left. The corporate offices are in Suite A, which is on the left end of the building, looking at it from the parking lot. Enter at the main entrance, sign in with the receptionist, and the conference room is just inside on the left. Goodwill's phone number is 581-0620.

Some folks who have lived here for a while also describe the plaza as "the old K-Mart plaza" on Melrose.

Our host will be Joe Custer, the IT Director for Goodwill Industries of the Valleys. He will arrange a presentation of about an hour or so on an overview of Goodwill and it's activities, volunteer opportunities, and their IT infrastructure. Then we can take a break, and reconvene for our regular club meeting, where we will be doing short tours of Google applications - Google Maps, Earth, Docs, and Talk. Maybe we should call the program "Google Goodies"?

Be sure to come to the meeting for the special Google presentation. Andy McLaughlin will be doing Google Docs and Google Talk remotely live from New York and Bob Johnson will be doing Google Maps and Google Earth at the site. It should be an interesting presentation.

The End of Moore's Law?

Moore's Law says that the number of transistors that can be installed on a microchip will double every two years. Now at the 50th anniversary of the patent for a silicon integrated circuit, there are growing signs that Moore's Law is ready for retirement. The rate of progress is finally beginning to show signs of slowing down As the microchip industry increasingly comes up against the laws of physics. The most advanced processors now contain transistors that are just 100 to 150 atoms across. Designing a microchip with such precision takes hundreds of man-years, and the financial risks of pushing further are not worth the return. The economics are beginning to bite.

This does not mean that there will not be more powerful computers. There will continue to be faster chips even though the rate of increase is falling. However, the major advances will be in parallel computing, where problems are broken up into smaller ones, which are solved simultaneously by microchips with multiple processing cores.

Home computers now have multiple cores, and the software to use them is now beginning to be developed.

Read the full article at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/8466142/The-microchip-at-50-the-end-of-Moores-Law.html>

Secretary's Report

May 14, 2011

President, John Leary, called the meeting to order at 9:15AM.

Helen Trenor, Treasurer, was not present. John reported for her that the school had been paid and the next payment for the web site is due in August.

There was some discussion about the meetings for the summer. Andy McLaughlin suggested having a meeting on June 24th at 9:30AM at Goodwill Industries of the Valleys. Joe Custer, IT Director, will present a general overview of Goodwill and discuss volunteer opportunities available. The club will also present a short program about various products offered by Google (Google Talk, Google Earth, Google Maps, etc).

John suggested publicizing the June 24th meeting by sending an email to former club members, posting a notice in libraries and placing a notice on roanoke.org.

Bill Farmer recommended recruiting new members by placing flyers in computer repair shops and libraries.

There will be no meeting in July or August.

Door prizes were won by: Sandy Johnson, Bill Farmer, Ronald Gordon, Earl Abbott, and Robert Johnson.

Ron Gordon made a presentation on SyncBack, a freeware program that can be used to back up a particular folder on a schedule or sync folders so that changes made in one folder are immediately changed on the target folder. The program has numerous options that, for example, allow you to exclude certain sub-folders from being backed up or excluding particular file types from the backup (e.g., tmp, html, bak, etc). The program can be downloaded from: <http://www.2brightsparks.com/freeware/>

Bill Scott gave a demonstration of Dropbox, a program that can be used to save any documents (data, music, photos, etc) on all of your computers and smart phones. Your Dropbox can also be accessed from the Dropbox web site. Information added from any computer is available on all of your computer/phones. You can also share folders with other people. The free version allows up to 2GB of data. Additional storage is available for a fee. The program can be downloaded from: <http://www.dropbox.com/>

The meeting was adjourned at 12PM.

Ron Gordon, Secretary

PREZ' NOTES

June 17, 2011

John is away this month so there will be no official Prez Notes.

The up-coming meeting will be a bit different from our usual meetings.

Andy McLaughlin, the program chairman and one of the presenters, will also be away BUT he will be giving his part of the program LIVE from New York. He is going to be connecting with a computer at Goodwill using TeamViewer. Not only will he be talking to the group but he will be able to answer questions that come up about his part of the program.

Bob Johnson will be doing his portion of the program in person at the Goodwill site.



Newby's Corner: What is a Font?



Back in the old days of inked metal type pressing against a sheet of paper, an individual slug of metal with a single letter was called a **font**. A set of **fonts** that included all the letters and symbols in one size and appearance was a **typeface**.

In the digital age, the term **typeface** is not often used and **font** now refers to a set of characters and symbols with a matching style or appearance.

Some example of fonts:

This font is **Verdana**. It is often used on web pages and applications.

This font is **Arial**. It is considered a rip-off of Helvetica, which was developed in the nineteen-fifties and became one of the most popular typefaces in the world. The differences are evident only to a purist.

This font is **Times New Roman**, designed for the London Times. It is a typeface that's narrow, so it's economical, but very readable. It is the default on many office applications.

This font is **Courier New**. It resembles a typewriter since each character has the same spacing. It is useful when characters in different lines need to be aligned.

Fonts can be divided into two main categories: **serif** and **sans serif**. Serifs are the small features at the

end of strokes within letters. If the serifs aren't used, then the style is sans serif (from French *sans*, meaning *without*).

The size of fonts is traditionally measured in points, where a point is 1/72 of an inch. A description of exactly how the measurement is applied would cause the reader's eyes to glaze over. Those who feel they must know can read the 4th paragraph in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typeface>. This article goes into great detail on fonts.

Fonts also come in proportional and non-proportional (also called mono-spaced or fixed width) spacing. Proportional gives each letter a space according to its size, while non-proportional uses the same spacing for each letter, wide or narrow. An example is `iiiiwww` (proportional) and `iiiiwww` (non-proportional).

You will run into terms like True type and Bit mapped, but these can be safely ignored. They refer to how the computer makes the fonts larger and smaller on demand.

Your computer has hundred of fonts installed and ready to use. Try some of them by typing a few lines and see how you like them. Remember that your documents should be readable as well as unusual or artistic. If the built-in fonts aren't enough, many hundreds more are available on the 'net, many of them free. Searching for "fonts PC" yields 56 million hits!

Just don't get carried away and add too many fonts or you may slow down your computer's start-up.



“Show Desktop” in XP and 7

Suppose you have several applications running and you need to get back to the desktop. You can do it by minimizing each of your running applications one by one to uncover the desktop.

A much easier way to handle this is to use the Show Desktop to do a mass minimize. One click and everything is instantly minimized. Click it again and everything is restored, just as it was.

In XP, the Show Desktop icon lives in the Quick Launch section near the left end of the toolbar at the bottom of the screen.

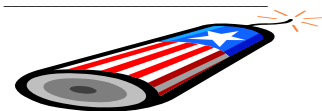
Your XP doesn't have the Quick Launch? Right click anywhere on the dark blue toolbar. Click Toolbars in the popup menu, mouse over the arrowhead to the right of the word Toolbars, and make sure there is a checkmark in front of Quick Launch in the next popup menu. If it isn't there, click Quick Launch to activate it.

Windows 7 did away with the Quick Launch feature since 7 allows icons to be pinned to the toolbar so that are always available. The Show Desktop icon also disappeared. However, 7 has the show Desktop feature, just in a different form.

On the 7 toolbar, look at the extreme right end, beyond the time and date display. That vertical gray rectangle is 7's Show Desktop control. Mouse over it and all the open applications become transparent so you can see the desktop. Click it, and all open applications are minimized, the same as in XP. Click it again to restore everything.

There is one small gotcha applies to both XP and to 7: if you have opened a new application after the mass minimizing, then the mass restore won't work. But, each application can be restored individually by clicking its icon.

For the musophobes: In both XP and 7, hold down the Win Key and press M to do the mass minimize. Hold down the Win Key plus the shift key and press M to do the mass restore.



Google Drops Support for Older Browsers

From eWEEK.com, June 3, 2011

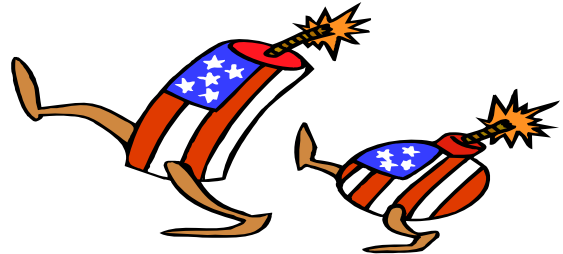
Google has announced that on August 1, it will phase out support for Firefox 3.5, Internet Explorer 7, Safari 3 and their predecessors in favor of Chrome and other browsers that handle HTML5, such as the newer Firefox, IE, and Safari versions.

Examples of features that require browsers that support HTML5 include Google's desktop notifications for Gmail and drag-and-drop file upload in Google Docs.

What this means is that users of these older browsers may have trouble using certain features in Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Talk, Google Docs and Google Sites. Eventually, Google said these applications might stop working at all.

Google will support only the current and prior major releases of Chrome, Firefox, IE and Safari on a "rolling basis." This means each time a new version is released, Google will begin supporting the update and stop supporting the third-oldest version.

There is precedent for this at Google, which in March 2010, shed support for IE 6.0, Firefox 2.0, and Safari 2.0.



Sneak Peek at Windows 8

Microsoft has released a video preview of Windows 8. The operating system features a radically redesigned interface. Microsoft says Windows hasn't undergone such a design change since Windows 95. The operating system will run on PCs and tablets. Click here for a sneak peek at Windows 8: <http://mashable.com/2011/06/01/microsoft-offers-first-sneak-peek-of-windows-8-video/>

Pics from May meeting

Door prize winners



Ron Gordon



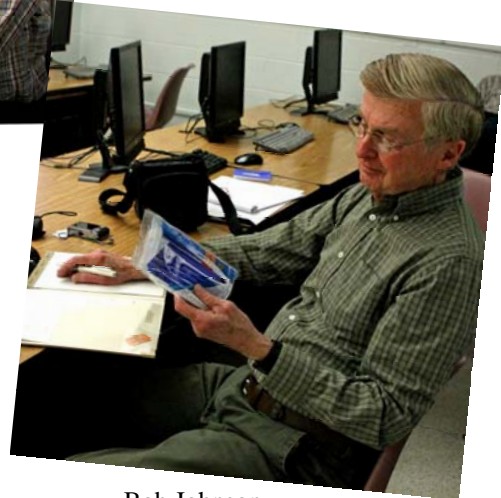
Bill Farmer



Earl Abbott



Sandy Johnson



Bob Johnson




Bill Scott—showing Dropbox

SoftTalk will be on summer vacation for the months of July and August. Beginning with September, we will be back to the regular publishing schedule.

All of you have a great summer vacation !

SoftTalk 2011 Index

ARTICLE	ISSUE	PAGE	ARTICLE	ISSUE	PAGE
Fun			Space		
Is it Disk or Disc	5	5	End of Space Shuttle Program	5	6
Living in the Computer age	1	3	SETI Operation to Shut Down	5	6
Hardware			Taxes		
End of Moore's Law	7/8	2	Tax Scam	4	1
Hints for 'Newbies'			Tips for Filing 2010 Taxes	3	8
Computer Jargon	1	3	Tips		
Easier Downloading	4	4	Internet Speed	4	6
Finding the Cursor	2	4	Travel		
Microsoft Antivirus	3	4	Web		
What's a Font?	7/8	4	Internet Speed	4	6
Member			June 8-World IPv6 Day	2	3
Bill Scott	3	1	What the Internet Killed	1	2
Ron Zoll	4	8	Windows		
Misc			Change in AutoRun	4	3
ATT Capping Broadband Data	5	4	Faster & Better Googling	3	4
Emergency Kit for Car	2	6	Operating Systems & Windows	5	3
Information Deprivation Disorder	2	1	Showing Desktop	7/8	5
iPads for Menus	3	3	Sneak Peak at Windows 8	7/8	5
Letter of Appreciation	3	5	Using IE 6	5	4
What Time is it in Sydney?	5	5	_____		
Photo					
End of Kodachrome	1	1			
Glimpse of Holland	5	5			
RVPCC					
Weather Notice	2	5			
Security					
Creating Strong Passwords	2	3			
Sites					
Astronomy & Space Photos	2	4			
Home Energy Audit	2	3			
Recovering Lost Property	3	3			
Slideshows on Web	2	4			
Software					
Firefox 4	4	5			
Google Drops Support for Older Browsers	7/8	5			
IE-9	3	5			
Libre vs Open Office	3	5			
X-files	2	5			