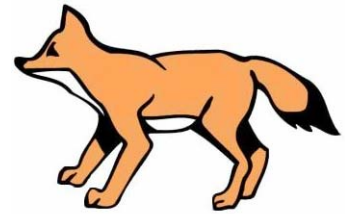


# Fox Tales



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*"Established January 1985"*

April 2007

## Comments From The President

Jon Jackman- President - FVPCA

Last month was the debut of our new Downloads of the Quarter program. There were numerous offerings in various categories which were included on the 1 GB thumb drives passed out to the subscribers. We will have compiled a more detailed list of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter's programs that were available for subscribers and other interested members at our next meeting. If you have test driven any of them, please submit your review so that we may include it on the list. If you have any suggestions for our next DOQ, please let us know!

I was fortunate enough to end the month on a cruise in the Caribbean. I certainly wanted to take some photos of our trip. My old Canon PowerShot A40 2.3 megapixel digital camera has served me well for many years. Some time ago I dropped it and broke the latch that held the battery compartment closed. I was able to get it to work by carefully drilling into the camera body and then screwing down the battery compartment lid. (That was a royal pain when I had to switch out the four AA rechargeable batteries.) The A40's larger size was also something that made it somewhat difficult to tote around. I looked around and settled for a new camera: the Canon PowerShot SD1000, and also picked up a 2 GB memory card. This tiny camera really served me well for the week on the cruise. It is smaller than a pack of cigarettes, but can do some amazing things. It has a much larger LCD preview screen than the A40, which made on the spot sharing more enjoyable. I ended up with over 100 snapshots and several videos with sound. I may share some interesting photos at our next meeting!

I had hoped to upload many of the photos onto a website. I began to look into the steps that I needed to do this and began to feel stymied by what I needed to do to get them up onto my Comcast home page using FrontPage 2003. I mentioned the project to my son (the computer engineer.) He suggested that I download Picasa. He explained that Picasa uses Google to organize the photos for easy sharing on the web. Apparently, all you will need is a Google sign-on to enjoy this program's features. It is supposed to locate and organize all the photos on your computer. You can even edit and add effects to your photos with a few simple clicks using this software. Picasa will then allow you to share your photos with others through email, prints, and [on the web!](#) It is touted as being fast, easy and free! I hope to have a mini-program on that at our next meeting. I have a brother who is headed out on a cruise of his own and this may be something that he will be able to use too! Check it out here: <http://picasa.google.com/>.

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To help pass the time waiting at the airports, on the plane and while I relaxed under the warm Caribbean sun doing Sudoku puzzles, I also brought along an MP3 player that I had recently picked up. The Creative MuVo V100, has a 2 GB capacity, and will record voice memos (though I did not test this feature.) It can also display lyrics to some encoded songs. (A feature that I did not try out either, yet! I did not want to embarrass my wife as I sang out songs a cappella! Besides, one never knows what the TSA might make of my singing voice!)

Ironically, I deliberately left my laptop at home. I checked into the cost of going online while at sea, and it just did not seem very reasonable. There was the concern of transporting my large 15.4" laptop around. On my last trip to Florida two years ago it proved fairly cumbersome, so I left it behind on a trip to New York City last year. I ended up using the free Internet in the business center at the hotel, and that worked fairly well. This year there were terminals available on the ship (Carnival Victory), but I did not feel that I had to do any serious web surfing. It could wait until I got back... after all I was on a vacation! There were plenty of other things to do. (Then again, I had about 100 e-mails waiting for me when I returned!)

The Constitution and Bylaws are pending further review and publication. We will be taking a last look at the revisions and pass them on along to the recently appointed Board of Directors. Then it will be published and voted on at the following meeting.

We will be meeting again this month at the Civic Center. Tom Anzalone will be going into detail on "How to Build a Home Theater PC" which was detailed in the past two issues of our *Fox Tales* newsletter. We are looking forward to that!

Also, if you have run into any issues or PC problems, send in your query to the FVPCA help desk via our web site [www.fvpca.org](http://www.fvpca.org). Click on the question mark and submit your questions. We will try and get some sort of solution for you at the next meeting's Q&A segment. Don't forget to share any new toys at our "Show and Tell" segment as well.

We certainly would like to get some of that warmer weather. It was so nice in the tropical regions that we visited. As I write this, there is a forecast for some snow up in Northern Illinois! It sure seems like winter lingers longer and that spring is getting shorter! To really appreciate spring, don't you think that it should last for a longer period of time than what seems like a few weeks? Before you know it, summer will be here and people will begin to complain of the heat as they turn down the thermostat for their air conditioners . Then again baseball has started, so there is hope for nice warm sunny days in the near future! And of course some storms are bound to pop up. A good reminder: have you got your UPS hooked up?

See you at the meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup> at the Civic Center!

Jon Jackman

# Software Review – Zone Alarm Security Suite 7.0

By Larry Bothe, 3/21/2007

Regular readers of my intermittent ramblings will recall that at the beginning of the year I went on a campaign to rid my machine of software that seems to just take over, does whatever it wants, is difficult to control, and causes long boot-up times. First to go was AOL. I ended up with Thunderbird as an e-mail handler, Comcast as the ISP, and AOL's web-based services for Calendar and Portfolio. That eliminated the need to have AOL's software on my machine.

After AOL the next most obtrusive program I had was Norton Internet Security. I used to be a big fan of Norton (Symantec), but recent iterations of their security software have become increasingly difficult to control and seem to take half of forever to load at boot-up. There are a number of security suite software products on the market. It would have been a costly pain in the butt to try run all of them so I began asking around among some data processing professionals I know to find out who liked what. I had previous personal experience with McAfee, which I also found difficult to control, so I ruled out that product. Nobody had anything good to say about security products; they just viewed them as a necessary evil. I can relate to that. It is a pretty sad commentary on our society that all these demented people out there either want to attack and harm our machines, or steal from us. When I was a kid we routinely left keys in cars. Not any more.

Finally, John Spizzirri suggested that I ought to look at Zone Alarm Security Suite. They had just come out with version 7.0. Nobody had anything bad to say about it, and there were positive reviews in the trade journals. I went to their website (see For More Information below) and looked at screen shots and read their descriptive material. I liked what I saw, and I was so anxious to get rid of Norton that I bought the Zone Alarm product for \$50 even though I still had 2 months to go on my Norton subscription. Zone Alarm offers a 15-day free trial, but note that 15 days isn't a very long time with respect to getting to know a security program. They "learn" as you use them, and they aren't finished after only 2 weeks. I'm still occasionally tweaking ZA after 2 months.

Zone Alarm provides the usual comprehensive protection of a software firewall, antivirus, spyware scans, and parental control. They claim some other protections, like instant messaging and identity theft. (I personally hate instant messaging so I have it turned off at the boot-up level; I just don't let the function start on my machine.) For the identity theft protection you have to put identity-sensitive files in your "vault". I haven't done that yet.

After running Zone Alarm for about 2 months I can tell you that I like it. If I had to do it over again I would still buy the Zone Alarm product. Here are some specific observations.

**Control:** The thing I like best about ZA is the ease of control. The menus to change the various settings are logical. There is one main control window, and from there you go directly to what you need to adjust. In Norton I always had a difficult time finding where to change a setting, or figuring out what setting to change. Not in ZA. Their whole control system is very straightforward. The ZA system is better.

*(continued on page 4)*

## Software Review – (cont'd)

**Scanning:** Like other security products, ZA wants to scan your machine once a week to look for any virus that may have gotten past the virus protection, and to ferret out accumulated spyware. ZA combines the virus and spyware scans. I found that the ZA scan takes longer than a Norton scan, and at first I thought that was a negative. However, the slower ZA scan doesn't use as many machine resources as the Norton one. That means you really can continue to use your machine while a ZA scan is in progress. Norton says you can keep on working during a scan, but it swallows up so many resources that your machine comes to a crawl.

You can avoid the whole slow-down thing if you schedule the weekly scan at some time when you are not using your machine. If you leave your machine on all the time then have the scan run in the middle of the night while you are sleeping. I turn mine off when not in use so I had to think of a time when the machine would be on but I didn't need it for a while. That turned out to be Tuesday evenings because I have meetings out of the house at that time. On the Tuesdays when there are no meetings we usually go out for pizza & beer. Perfect.

**Loading time at start-up:** Security programs scan boot records every time you start your machine. The programs are actually pretty sophisticated; they all have a long load time. I think ZA is a little faster loading than Norton, but not much.

**Annual subscription cost:** ZA charges \$35 for a 1-year renewal; \$60 for 2 years. The first year is of course included with the program when you buy it. Software updates, even major ones, are included with the annual subscription fee. Norton charges \$40 a year for the virus definition subscription (no multi-year discount), and always beats you up to buy the latest year's version of the program for another \$10. While I haven't had ZA long enough to tell for sure, it appears that they do not intend to try to force a new version of the program on you each year the way Norton does.

**Nits to pick:** Security programs seem to be very proud of their work. They want to tell you each and every time they think they might have protected you from something. The little pop-up security notification boxes are annoying. You will for sure want to turn them off, and thankfully that is easy to do. I also turned off the scan of outgoing e-mail messages. It slowed down the message transmission more than I could stand.

**For more information:** Specific details and descriptions of all the ZA features, with screen shots and FAQ's, can be found at [http://www.zonealarm.com/store/content/catalog/products/sku\\_list.jsp?dc=12bms&ctry=US&lang=en](http://www.zonealarm.com/store/content/catalog/products/sku_list.jsp?dc=12bms&ctry=US&lang=en).

If you are going to change security programs be sure to uninstall the old one before installing the new one. Security programs DO NOT play well together. You can't have two of them on your machine at the same time. The exception to that statement is in stand-alone spyware programs; you can run more than one. I still occasionally manually run the free version of Adaware even though ZA has spyware protection built in. It is not really necessary to go out and pay for an integrated security suite like ZA. You can cobble together your own version for free, although it won't be as convenient or thorough as a purchased one. The Windows XP operating system has a firewall included. It is lame in that it is one-way; it only protects from outside threats.

## Software Review – (cont'd)

It doesn't protect from a program already on your machine going out to the Internet in some malicious way. However, the XP firewall is already on your machine, it's free, and it's way better than nothing. All you have to do is go into Control Panel, Security Center, and turn it on. Zone Alarm itself still offers a free two-way stand-alone firewall. You can get it at [http://www.zonealarm.com/store/content/catalog/products/sku\\_list\\_za.jsp?dc=12bms&ctry=US&lang=en](http://www.zonealarm.com/store/content/catalog/products/sku_list_za.jsp?dc=12bms&ctry=US&lang=en), click on Free Download.

Free antivirus and spyware protection programs are available from Grisoft. Go to <http://free.grisoft.com/doc/1> and download both products. Adaware from Lavasoft, [www.lavasoft.com](http://www.lavasoft.com), is another option for free spyware protection. But if you don't want to fool around with several different programs, and have to run some of the routines and updates manually, then you will have to pay for an integrated security suite. If you're paying then I think Zone Alarm Security Suite 7.0 is the best of the bunch.

*Larry Bothe is an associate member of CAEUG and an honorary member of FVPCA. He was President of CAEUG for a time back in the 90's when he lived in the Chicago area. Larry presently resides in southern Indiana where he is retired from the plastics industry and currently teaches people to fly airplanes. He also performs pilot examinations for the FAA. He can be contacted at [LBothe@comcast.net](mailto:LBothe@comcast.net).*

## April 07: Tips, Tricks, and Websites

This month has some useful websites:

HP All in Ones Printers, Scanners, and Cameras conflicts with IE7, the HP Director software does not display after installing IE7. Click on the link below to find a solution:

[http://h10025.www1.hp.com/ewfrf/wc/genericDocument?docname=c00802504&cc=us&dlc=en&lc=en&jumpid=reg\\_R1002\\_USEN](http://h10025.www1.hp.com/ewfrf/wc/genericDocument?docname=c00802504&cc=us&dlc=en&lc=en&jumpid=reg_R1002_USEN)

Have problems keeping track of your entire bookmarks try <http://del.icio.us/>

Got a problem and don't know where to go for an answer. Try <http://answers.yahoo.com/> or <http://answers.yahoo.com/> by Microsoft

How's the weather... Look at [www.weatherbonk.com](http://www.weatherbonk.com)

Replacing that old Hard Drive, erase the data first. Check out these free sites

<http://dban.sourceforge.net/>

<http://cmrr.ucsd.edu/Hughes/SecureErase.html>

<http://www.heidi.ie/eraser/>

Tell us your favorites – go to [www.fvPCA.org](http://www.fvPCA.org) and click on Forum...

Happy Computing...

Bill Powell



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**There are a growing number of locations that offer free Internet via a wireless WiFi connection! We would like to find a place where we could meet and have WiFi too!**

*THE FOX VALLEY  
PC ASSOCIATION*

**The Fox Valley PC Association is dedicated to the task of providing computer information to our fellow members. We are a non-profit organization. The group has been active since January 1985. The dues are \$30 per year. Our meetings are held on the third Saturday of the month (except December.)**

**The meeting place this month (April) will be at the Oswegoland Civic Center at 5 Ashlawn Avenue, Montgomery, Illinois. The formal meeting starts at 9:15 A.M. Non-member visitors are always welcome. If you can, please come early & help with set-up. Thanks!**

**The following members have renewed their membership:**

**E.W. Lowery, M.D.**

***Thank You!***

***Please check the label on your newsletter to see when your subscription is due!***

## The "FOX TALES" Newsletter

The "Fox Tales" Newsletter is published monthly by the Fox Valley PC Association, Post Office Box 369, Oswego, IL 60543, a non-profit organization, established to provide information about IBM PCs and IBM Compatible personal computer systems (and almost anything "digital") to our members.

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### Recycle Corner

If you have an old computer or other electronics you want to get rid of, check out these recycling websites...

[www.mygreenelectronics.org](http://www.mygreenelectronics.org)

[www.Earth911.org](http://www.Earth911.org)

[www.computertakeback.com](http://www.computertakeback.com)

[www.dell.com/recycle](http://www.dell.com/recycle)

[www.hp.com/hpinfo/globalcitizenship/environment](http://www.hp.com/hpinfo/globalcitizenship/environment)

Kane County residents should check out:

[www.co.kane.il.us/Environment/recycle/electronic.htm/recycle.doc](http://www.co.kane.il.us/Environment/recycle/electronic.htm/recycle.doc)



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# Fox Tales

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The Fox Valley PC Association Web site is:

**[www.fvpca.org](http://www.fvpca.org)**  
Courtesy of APCUG



## Program for the April Meeting: How to Build a Home Theater PC

Presented by:  
**Tom Anzalone**

**The Next Meeting Will Be at 9:15 A.M.**

# **April 21, 2007**

At the Civic Center location  
5 Ashlawn Avenue, Montgomery, Illinois