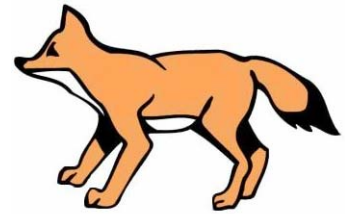


FOX TALES



Volume 21, Issue 4

Official Publication of the
Fox Valley PC Association
"Established January 1985"

April 2008

It's Tax Time of the Year

Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

April 15th is rapidly approaching. Have you sharpened all of your pencils and read up on all the subtle tax laws for 2007? Maybe you have used one of the tax preparation programs. My wife used to work for H & R Block, so I'm the fortunate one!

For the past several years she has used the Tax Cut tax preparation software, marketed by H & R Block. She tells me that it is a friendly program to use. She has used it to not only complete our tax forms, but her mother's and our son's as well. It comes in several flavors and is available for purchase online. You can download the software and get started figuring out both simple and complex tax return scenarios quickly. Since we had been using the Tax Cut software previously, we had received a CD in the mail late last year. After purchasing the registration through the Tax Cut website, I was able to complete the installation without a problem. I then updated the program to make sure we had the latest tax rules installed. Once complete, you are able to file your tax return electronically. In addition to Tax Cut, Turbo Tax is another popular tax preparation software package. You can find a review of several tax preparation offerings at: <http://www.consumersearch.com/www/software/tax-preparation-software/>. But don't delay! The April 15th deadline rapidly approaches! I just saw an ad for a free Federal TurboTax download for the 1040EZ and simple returns here: <http://turbotax.intuit.com/>

Our March meeting was held at the Yorkville Public Library. Although we experienced some connection problems on their Wi-Fi network, several of our members had laptops which connected wirelessly. They were able to review some of the work done by a volunteer webmaster, Ivan Rood. (He lives in Devon, UK!) We discussed the need for changing our web host provider to accommodate the new features that he has been working on. Things seem to be moving along and we hope to have more details at our April 19th meeting!

During the "show and tell" segment of our meeting, Dr. Ana Eng showed off her new DigiMemo digital note pad. She had been on a quest to find a tool that would help her take notes at conferences. Ana wanted something more than a PDA, but did not need an expensive, fancy tablet notebook. With this device you use a special pen to write your notes on a pad of paper. The writing is captured in an image file, which you can upload to your computer via a USB port. Go to the Tiger Direct web site and key in the item number: **S144-1032**. There is a short video clip that you can preview that demonstrates the features of this neat little device. It presently lists at \$149.00.

(See Page 2)

Tom Anzalone made a presentation on Drivelmage XML, a free backup program. During the program, I noticed that he had used several specialized cables, rather than a hard disk enclosure, to connect a spare hard drive for the demonstration. This seemed to be a much simpler and convenient solution than what I had been using: a hard disk drive enclosure. I went to TigerDirect and picked up one of these handy tools for about \$20. It supports 2.5 inch, 3.5 inch and SATA hard drive connections, and comes with a power supply to boot. This device is a handy thing to have if you work on computers like I do. I do not even have to remove the drive from the computer, just attach the cables, provided there is enough clearance. You can then run diagnostic and anti-virus tools from another working PC or laptop on the drive. Cool bananas!

At this moment, I am using the Drivelmage program to back up a hard drive before I attempt a Windows XP Repair Installation. (Seems that it worked out alright. I used various disk tools and ran AVG using the cables to connect the hard drive to my laptop and it now boots just fine! I will run Acronis shortly and rest comfortably!)

We had nine members purchase the subscription for the 2008 Downloads of the Quarter (2008 DOQ-1). If you missed the opportunity, we will have the 2008 DOQ-1 available for download at our April meeting. (\$20 for all 4 DOQs or \$7 per session..) We also sold another 2008 Membership Directory (\$2). Also at the meeting, Kathie Long announced that she has some surplus Epson equipment. We will try and post a list on our web site. If you have an interest, contact her for details.

At our recent Executive Board meeting, we tried out the new Epson 83 C PowerLite LCD projector. It plays video in very high resolution and is capable of auto detecting other devices that may be attached. It had no problem switching between Tom's laptop and mine. It also has speakers that will be adequate for our smaller meeting areas. This model is much brighter than the Epson S1 that we have been using for the last several years. We will be offering the Epson S1 in an upcoming private online auction. See the specifications in any special article "Epson Powerlite S1 LCD Projector For Sale" included in this newsletter. Details of how the auction will work are being finalized, but we will have them available by our April meeting, and have the S1 projector there for a look-see. We will send instructions out to all members with valid e-mail addresses.

We are working to get some plans finalized for us to offer the Midwest Regional Conference in Chicago that will be held in September as an alternative to our general meeting in September. We have been encouraged to seriously consider attending by the APCUG Region 6 Advisor, Patty Lowry. This will be the first APCUG Midwest User Group Conference and will be held at the Prairie State College in Chicago Heights, IL, September 19 – 21. The Chicago Computer Society will host this event. The theme of the conference is "Technology for the Rest of Us." This three-day conference will feature topics that will cater to the membership of organizations rather than its leadership. The conference begins on Friday with registration and an evening social gathering with light snacks being provided. Saturday will feature vendor and member presentations. Sunday will feature a Vendor Fair and end with a prize drawing. As more details are provided, we will share them with you. If you have any suggestions for a topic that you would like to explore, please pass it on so that we may share it with Patty Lowry. If you are real ambitious, we may consider suggesting getting directly involved with a program of some type... We will see.

And if you had an interesting experience with anything computer related lately, we are always looking for good stories to put in our *Fox Tales* newsletter. It would not have to be long, but just a simple explanation of a problem and how you solved it, or perhaps some comments about some software that you have tried and really like, or did not like. Maybe you would like to post a few remarks about one of the offerings in the Downloads of the Quarter? Send it on to me and I will be happy to try to get you published!

Epson Powerlite S1 LCD Projector For Sale

In 2003, the Epson S1 projector sold for just under \$1,000.00. The S1 used by the FVPCA has been in service since its purchase on 02/07/04, for \$895.66 and has served our club well. We have just replaced the batteries (CR2025 x 2) in the two included remotes, as they were just now beginning to wear out. To date, The S1 has logged 141 lamp hours of use. It is rated at 1,000 lamp hours. With the acquisition of a newer model (83C), we are offering this used LCD projector to our members via an e-mail auction: After our April meeting, an e-mail announcement will be sent to all members' e-mail addresses. Just follow the instructions to participate, or choose to opt out. It is up to you. Bidding will begin at \$100. All proceeds will go back to the FVPCA Treasury.

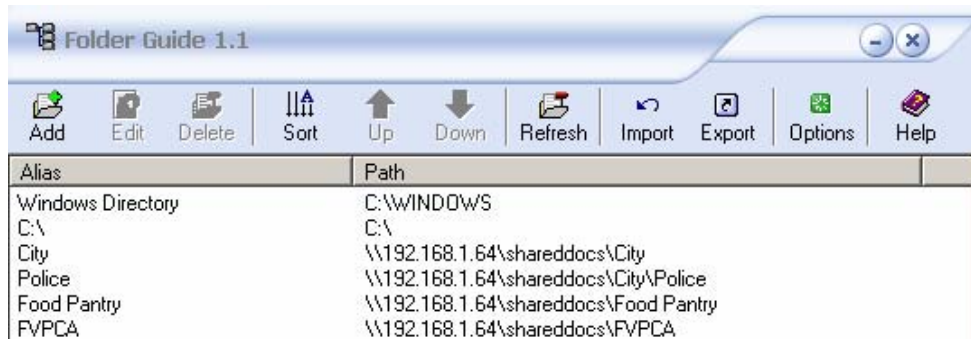
Here are the specifications of the Epson PowerLite S1:

Features	
Display Type	LCD projector
Aspect Ratio	16:9, 4:3
Resolution	800 x 600
Brightness	1200 ANSI lumens
Color Depth	24-bit
Included Components	Speaker
Light Source Life	2000 h
Light Source Power	180 Watt
Light Source Type	UHE
Max Operating Temperature	95 °F
Max Screen Distance	37 ft
Min Operating Temperature	41 °F
Min Screen Distance	3 ft
Colors	16.7 Million colors
Audio Output	Mono
Speaker(s)	1 x mixed channel
System Type	PC
Video Standards	NTSC, SECAM, PAL

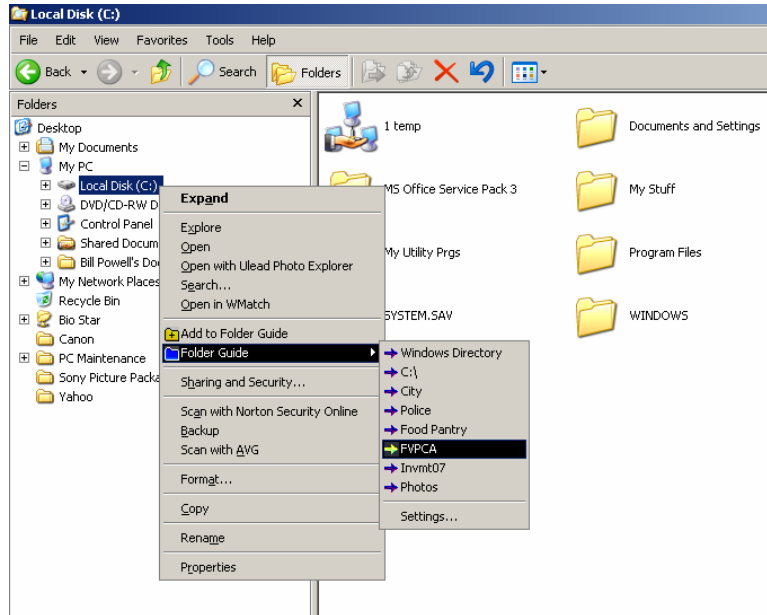
My Favorite Utility...

There are many utilities that make your PC life easier. One that I like is called **Folder Guide**. In essence, it creates shortcuts to quickly drill down windows explorer tree (identify the desired path) folders that you use most often. Since I have many folders and subfolders it really saves me a lot of time and clicking to get to the folder I want.

Folder Guide can be found at <http://www.freeware365.com/desktop/folderguide.htm>. As you can see in the figure below, to add a folder just click on the add icon in the menu bar.



Once you have created the **Folder Guide** shortcuts, just right click within windows or even other programs such as MS Word, and the shortcut menu appears.



This saves me a great deal of time one click at a time...

I think it's worth a look...

Bill Powell

It's Tax Time of the Year (cont'd)

Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

The topics for the meeting on April 19th will include: “The Premier of the Epson 83C PowerLite LCD Projector” by Jon Jackman, and Norm Hoube will take us on a tour of various helpful web sites in a program, “Exploring Some Special Web Sites.” Norm has a great deal of computer experience and has taught classes for seniors at Waubensee Community College. He also repairs computers for clients. Norm has asked me to put a note in the April newsletter requesting everyone bring their wireless laptops (if they have one) to the meeting. This way he can more effectively demo the websites that he will cover in his presentation. (At least to those folks.)

Our membership is on the rise. We were happy to see some visitors at last month's meeting. Please consider bringing along a friend at next month's meeting. We try our very best to live up to our motto: “Users Helping Users!”

Jon Jackman
President FVPCA

(From Page 3)

The PowerLite S1 is rated at 1200 ANSI lumens with 400:1 contrast ratio. The unit features three 0.5" LCD panels with Micro Lens Array, which contributes to a softening of the pixel grid and reduces the screen door effect... (800 x 600 pixels may be viewable up close.) Though still visible, a combination of reduced interpixel gap and Micro Lens Array produces a remarkably suppressed pixel matrix by traditional SVGA resolution LCD standards. It is very easy to watch movies on this machine without being bothered much with pixilation.

This projector has a small 130W UHE lamp with a 2000 hour life. (Replacement lamps cost less than \$200. A replacement lamp is part no. V13H010125. The original lamp is still in use!) The S1 is designed for portability. It comes with a soft-cover carrying case. The cool down cycle takes only 20 seconds. You should allow the bulb to cool down before completely powering off the unit to maximize bulb life.

The fixed lens is a mild wide angle, throwing a fairly large image from a short distance. This projector is compatible with all major data and video formats including HDTV 1080i, 720p, and component progressive 480p, NTSC, PAL, and SECAM. It will compress and display an XGA resolution data signal.

The connector panel on the rear of the unit is simple. There is one 15-pin VGA port for computer and component video inputs. There is one 15-pin VGA output for monitor loop through. There is one each of composite and S-video jacks, and one set of audio inputs to drive the single 1W speaker on board. Lastly, there is an RS-232C control port.

Another feature is that it is able to be mounted upside down or right side up from a ceiling mount. It can even be mounted behind a translucent screen. Sound as indicated is only at 1 W, so alternate audio playback equipment is suggested for home theater use.

In addition to the soft case, the unit comes with a VGA cable, power cord, 2 remotes, an IR USB adaptor (remote mouse for presentations), and an owner's manual. A PDF manual may be viewed at www.fvpca.org

Good luck!



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Recycling Tips

Obsolete electronic gadgets -

Don't pitch them, recycle them. Check out www.epa.gov/ecycling or www.earth911.org for info about electronics recycling.

In Illinois, http://www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/bureaus/energy_recycling/recycling and http://www.illinoisrecycles.org/byteback_text.html.



*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 for (April) will be at the Oswego Civic Center, 5 Ashlawn Ave, Montgomery, IL 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!

"USERS HELPING USERS"

Membership Renewals

**Gwynne Barba
Richard Chamberlain**

**Thank-You for your continuing support!!
Don't forget to check the mailing label for your dues date!**

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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Kane County Electronic Recycling Dates for 2008

May 10, June 9, July 14, August 11

Location:

Kane Co. Circuit Clerk Office
540 S. Randall Rd. St.Charles, Il 8:00am-12:00pm

Items Accepted for Recycling:

Personal Computers, Monitors, Printers, Scanners, Modems, Tape, Disk, CD Drives, Cables, Keyboards, Mice, Plotters (*Limit of 25 pieces on Towers/CPU's and Monitors*)

Televisions, Camcorders, Cameras, Stereo Equipment (no speakers), Game Players, Joysticks

Telephones, Cell Phones, Pagers, Answering Machines, Typewriters, Calculators, Adding Machines, Fax Machines, Shredders, Copiers, Postage Meters

Electronic Media: Floppy Discs, Compact Discs (and cases), Videotapes, Audio Cassettes)

www.co.kane.il.us/Environment/recycle/electronic.htm



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The Fox Valley PC Association Web site is:

www.fvpca.org
Courtesy of APCUG



April Program:

The Premiere of the Epson 83C Powerlite LCD Projector
Jon Jackman

Exploring Some Special Websites
With Norm Hoube

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

April 19, 2007

At the Oswego Civic Center
5 Ashlawn Ave. Montgomery, Illinois