



# 2007 Passes On Into 2008

## President's Message

Well it's that time of year again. December is the one month where we do not have a monthly meeting. This is a time of year where there are many things going on in our lives during the third Saturday of the month, so historically we have not had a meeting.

As it turns out we need the time to recover from a difficult month. As most of you know, we lost our webmaster, Robert Tuftee, November 18, 2007 at his home in Yorkville. There was mention of him being ill at our meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>, but it did not appear to be as serious as it turned out to be.

Several members of the Fox Valley PC Association were able to attend the visitation on Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>. In this issue of the *Fox Tales* we have included a memorial tribute that was shared with the family. There were also flowers delivered to the funeral home on behalf of the FVPCA. The family asked that memorials be directed to the American Cancer Society, so we have set up a special donation page through the ACS website for concerned members to submit donations. Please consider visiting the site and making comments in the guestbook.

The link is: <http://main.acsevents.org/goto/Bob.Tuftee>

Several of our members have indicated that they wish to donate. We have set a preliminary goal of \$300. You can also visit the ACS website to check the progress of our donations. (I recently sent an e-mail out to all members, letting them know of this link.)

Unfortunately, we neglected to have an adequate backup plan for administering the website or message board. The proper usernames and passwords may still show up somewhere, but we are scrambling to get things back in order. As of December 12<sup>th</sup>, we have not been able to get into the FVPCA website. (It appears that we have a new address for it from APCUG, which hosts our webpage. No doubt they sent an e-mail to Bob! However, the old link is broken so we need to work with the Domain Name Registrar to fix things.) In the meantime, this prevents us from posting our December newsletter, or anything else on the FVPCA website. We will be sending this newsletter out to all members electronically, and also mail a copy out to those members who wish to receive it via the US mail. Since we have no meeting this month, we have been busy trying to get things back in order, so the newsletter will not be out at its usual time. Our apologies! Some of the challenges that we face are detailed in the "Bad Request" article in this newsletter.

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## What is a Chumby?

The Chumby is a compact device that displays information from the web using your wireless internet connection. Always on, it shows — nonstop — what's online that matters to you. Once you receive your Chumby, you go to the website and register for free. Once registered, you log on and customize your Chumby by choosing from hundreds of widgets from the many available categories. The Chumby comes in three colors, black, latte, and pearl.

The Chumby sells on-line for \$179.00 dollars. Although the company is in the US, the Chumby ships directly from China. It was interesting to track it's progress once I placed the order and received the order confirmation and tracking number via e-mail. Some of the Chumby features are; Wi-Fi connectivity • access to the free Chumby Network • 3.5" LCD color touch screen • two external USB 2.0 full-speed ports • stereo 2W speakers • headphone output • leather casing • AC adapter included.



See the Chumby at the January meeting.

## 2007 Passes On Into 2008 (Cont'd from Page 2)

Our 2007 – 2008 membership directory is just about finished. We will be contacting our members to determine if they want a copy. The cost will be two dollars to cover expenses. Thanks to Bill Powell for all his hard work. We hope to have them available for purchase at our next meeting on January 19, 2008, at the Civic Center location.

Looking ahead to 2008, our program offerings will be enhanced by our recently acquired Internet access at the Civic Center. There is a discussion of demonstrating how to set up a message board, as we will need to do that anyway to replace the existing FVPCA message board. Our circumstances will place us in a learning mode regarding setting up web pages. We will share that experience with our members in a program on Web Basics as well. We continue to seek members who would be interested in putting on a program. If you are intrigued by a particular topic, perhaps you could share it with our club at an upcoming meeting.

This year we will be looking to purchase a new projector for our club that will be more compatible with higher resolution laptops. Eventually we will sell the old LCD projector at a silent auction. The Epson S1 served us very well and was a great replacement for the 32 inch television that was used for years. It has inputs to let you play a DVD or video feed. Detailed specs will appear in a future newsletter.

We will be taking a look at a free open source operating system, Ubuntu. That may also involve a dual boot configuration, which is another topic that we could explore at one of our monthly meetings. There is a wide variety of free software that will work on that platform. The choices / solutions of applications that run in Ubuntu will be reviewed. This raises the issue of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) which may better service the diverse needs of our members. Plans are underway to have a survey to determine what members want, as well as basic computing habits.

And of course we will have the first Download of the Quarter for 2008 at our January meeting. If you already have a thumb drive, the cost for a year subscription has been reduced to \$20, or \$5 a session.

Please note: we have learned that the Civic Center will be unavailable on March 15<sup>th</sup> (Beware the Ides of March!) We have tentatively scheduled that month's meeting at the Yorkville Public Library.

The Executive Board wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! We look forward to an exciting year ahead for our club.

Jon Jackman  
President - Fox Valley PC Association

# Bad Request (Invalid Hostname)

By Jon Jackman

With the passing of Bob Tuftee, the webmaster for the Fox Valley PC Association website, we are scrambling to gain access to our club's homepage: [www.FVPCA.org](http://www.FVPCA.org). We have been in contact with APCUG in order to obtain access privileges. This evening I took a look at the site and was shocked to get the message: **Bad Request (Invalid Hostname)**.

In our December Executive Board meeting the need for a disaster plan for succession was discussed. Unfortunately, we did not have the critical information needed from Bob. That would include usernames, passwords and more detailed information about how our website and message boards are set up. Hopefully, we will have the needed information by the time our next newsletter goes to press in January, 2008. If all goes well we will be able to keep the existing website intact. The worst case is that we will have to start from the ground up and rebuild all the content from memory. That would be a daunting task to say the least.

Bob knew HTML. He had taken classes and also used a program to help him design our website. I understand that he used a program called SJNano, which is a web editor suite. My experience with HTML is limited to what Microsoft FrontPage writes for me. However, Microsoft is discontinuing FrontPage support. Actually, that is a good thing as FrontPage had its limitations and requires FrontPage extensions on the hosting website. I am ready to try something else at this point in time. FrontPage has served me well over the years. I was able to use it to create the two surveys that the Fox Valley PC Association used in recent years. I also used it to create a data collection instrument for a consultant who works for the United States Department of Justice.

Bob also had set up a message board that allows registered users to post messages in several forums. That URL is: [fvpca.proboards22.com/index.cgi](http://fvpca.proboards22.com/index.cgi) and is still active for the time being.

There are 13 registered members on that site, but only Bob is the administrator. This presents another problem and I have contacted their support administrator to seek a solution. I am hopeful that with our new Internet connection that Bob was able to negotiate for us that we will be able to make greater use of our message board at our meetings. It has not received much use lately but as much promise for dynamic interaction among our members and guests. The response from the proboards help desk was to create a new message board and to ensure that we have more than one administrator in place. My thought is that we could demonstrate how to set up a message board at a meeting and accomplish two tasks in one.

The good news in all of this is that as we move ahead we will be able to share our experiences with our members. If you are interested in creating a website, we will share the basics with you. As mentioned, we will be setting up a message board at one of our meetings. This will demonstrate its usefulness as a communication tool for our members.

It will become much more dynamic than what it was if we have more traffic on it. So it seems that there will be some good things that come out of the very bad situation.

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## Bad Request (Invalid Hostname) (Cont'd)

By Jon Jackman

If there are any members interested in website creation and maintenance, please consider this opportunity to help our club. The Executive Board will discuss whether the club will provide the necessary software to help with the project. We also thought of obtaining software from vendors, either free or at a discount. A member who would be interested in owning the software might get it for free or at a discount if he/she would review it at a meeting after trying it out. Something to think about.

We will also be looking at making sure that we have an adequate disaster plan in place so that we have the ability to rebound should we run into another trying situation. We have come to truly appreciate all of Bob's good work now that he is gone. Although we may have taken Bob's contributions for granted, we can now admire what he did for us. Now we are struggling to figure out the best response needed to try and get things back to normal. The saying, "You don't know what you got till it's gone," rings loud and true today.

This may be a good lesson for all of us. We have had programs on making backups. But I wonder how many of our members have their own disaster plan? If you have a computer loaded with special data it may be wise to share it with someone in your family. Downloaded photographs might be the most important. If you, like Bob, have setup a website you may have important information with special details in an envelope that would be opened should the need arise. Perhaps a collection of index cards for various websites may help keep track of passwords, account numbers and payment methods. This would make for a good discussion at an upcoming meeting.

Jon Jackman  
President - FVPCA







