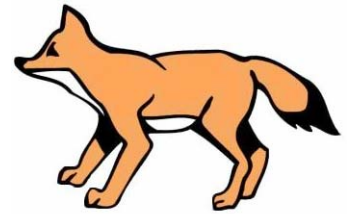


FOX TALES



Volume 22, Issue 2

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February 2009

The Snow Is Disappearing!

Jon Jackman – FVPCA President

As I am writing this is 48° outside at 10:00 p.m. and most all of the snow is gone. Things worked out very well last month for my annual snowmobile trip, and now I look forward to a trip to Tucson, Arizona. Ironically, it may have been warmer up here today than it was down there. I spoke with a friend down there who told me that it had snowed last night in the higher elevations. But temperatures down there are supposed to get up to near 70° during our stay. I will do my best to bring back whatever warm weather I can! At this point, Spring cannot come soon enough.

At the last Executive Board meeting Richard Chamberlain submitted his resignation from his position as Treasurer of the Fox Valley PC Association. This was not a total surprise, but we were dismayed to see that he has decided to step down. Richard has been the Treasurer for our association for many years. It goes without saying that when someone does a job well few people are aware of what goes on behind the scenes. Richard has maintained our financial records and kept pace with requirements for our not-for-profit status. He has seldom missed a meeting and has been at the table in the back of the room doing his job for as long as I can remember. Richard has indicated that he will stay on until a replacement is found. He intends to assist the new Treasurer as he or she makes the transition. The Executive Board invites our regular members to consider stepping up to assume the responsibilities that Richard has done so well. We will hold a special election once we have one or more candidates willing to become our next Treasurer. It is a very responsible position and one that should not be taken lightly. I am sure I share all of our members gratitude for the years all of faithful service to the Fox PC Association and thank Richard for his good work.

At our upcoming February 21st meeting, Bill Powell was to review a Sony DVDirect multifunction DVD recorder. We just learned that he has a schedule conflict! As I recently acquired Roxio Creator 2009 Special Edition (which included a USB analog to digital video connection \$78.84 at Sam's Club), I will step up and do the program. I used Roxio to convert a video that I had made for viewing on a DVD player at a planning meeting for my church. I will show Bill's PowerPoint program and give a reasonable overview of DVD capturing. Also, as April 15th will be here before you know it and it will be interesting to see how many of our members use tax preparation software. Please feel free to share your experiences and impressions of what you use during a brief panel discussion on tax preparation software.

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Windows 7 is coming soon

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
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If you ask 100 people their impressions of the Microsoft Vista operating system, 95 of them will tell you that Vista is no good, even if they have never seen or used it.

It is obvious that public opinion of Vista is in the mud. Microsoft made some major blunders when they introduced Vista. There were not enough drivers ready, so many printers, scanners, and other peripherals were incompatible. There was no noticeable speed increase over Windows XP. Vista requires much additional memory and more hardware, so it was often impossible to upgrade current Windows XP computers. Also, Microsoft did not woo the press as they did when they introduced Windows XP, so Vista got a lot of awful publicity. Vista is not a bad operating system, but Vista has gotten a bad name. Microsoft has lost the battle and they know it. So they are working on a new Windows operating system.

Microsoft hopes to make a clean break with previous Windows operating systems with this new version of Windows. They are especially distancing the new operating system from the "wicked" Vista operating system. This is obvious in the name they have chosen for the new OS. They are not using year names like Windows 2000. They are not using what they refer to as inspirational names, like XP or Vista. Instead, they will go back to their original numerical naming convention. There was a Windows 1, Windows 2, and Windows 3. Now there is to be a new operating system called "Windows 7".

If you have been following the versions of Windows as they have been introduced, you will find it difficult to comprehend that this next version is actually the seventh version of Windows, but Microsoft says that it is, so that is that. It's Windows 7.

More important than the name, however, is the fact that Microsoft cannot afford another misstep. They must make this operating system faster and better than Vista. Microsoft has already showed off Windows 7 at some developer's conferences and has made some announcements and promises.

Windows 7 will be built on the Vista base, so peripherals that work with Vista, which now includes most printers, scanners, and other devices, will also work with Windows 7.

Windows 7 will have a smaller storage footprint and will use less memory. This will allow it to run on the new small Netbooks that are now running Windows XP or Unix because Windows Vista cannot run on their small solid state drives.

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The Snow Is Disappearing! (cont'd)

Jon Jackman – FVPCA President

As you may have heard, the end of analog television was to take place on February 17, 2009. The new administration feels that not enough people were prepared for the conversion and have moved the date back. Go to www.dtv.gov for more details. I was disappointed that they decided to push things back, but as I have yet to climb up on my roof to mount the array that I had assembled recently, it is okay with me. My trip to Tucson will delay it even more, although I might be able to bring it to our meeting for show and tell!

I have been a regular user of Skype for my long distance phone calls. This past month I hosted the conference call between my brothers. It was free for me and for the ones who had land lines, although one brother accrued airtime charges. Another brother (Kirk) had signed up for Skype and I was able to connect to him via his Skype username. One of his motivations for Skype was to keep in touch as he is about to travel overseas. I urged him to look into the particulars to see if there are any restrictions on using Skype in some foreign countries. To make things easier he went and picked up an Acer AspireOne net book. I had seen one of these in use by one of my clients. Although very small, they are relatively inexpensive and can do many things that a full size notebook can do. The price has recently come down to \$299.99 at TigerDirect. I may have one to present at Show and Tell at our next meeting. Go to TigerDirect and look up "A180-8003" for the specs.

After my return from Arizona, we will schedule the network project for the First Tee of Aurora program. I have had the hardware for a while, but it had trouble working it into my schedule. The last e-mail from Kathryn Farrell indicates that February will be a good month to get the job done. Beyond the networking, they are looking at ways to manage the database for the program. I have some ideas on that too! Let's try to get this project taken care of soon!

There were several visitors last month for our demonstration of the Nintendo Wii (as well as some potential new members.) Thanks to Kris Simon for his expertise. Our apologies for the miscue on the equipment set up, but things went well. Thanks to Dean's son Collin, you were treated to an interesting program on this remarkable gaming console system.

Also at last month's meeting, we read a thank you note from Bernadette Swiss, Bill Swiss' widow. As you may recall we had a memorial article in the December Fox Tales newsletter. Bernadette wrote,

Dear members of the Fox Valley PC Association:

Thank you to all for the terrific article in the December Fox Tales remembering Bill. I'm sure he would have enjoyed reading all the memories from the members and he would probably have added a few of his own. He always looked forward to the club meetings and the discussions that went on. He felt like he always learned something each time. One of his treasures is the "Users Helping Users Award" given him in 2006. In fact it is still sitting at a table in the living room. Of course the newsletter was his baby. Sometimes he could have given up on it but then we just give it another try. He wasn't as active after we moved to Fort Wayne, but always showed interest in the newsletter area he suffered a lot the last few months and so I thank God for giving him rest. God bless you all and thank you again.

Bernadette Swiss and Family

(Continued on Page4)

Windows 7 is coming soon (cont'd)

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
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Windows 7 will boot up and shut down faster. It will have improved battery life on laptops. It is also promised to have an easier-to-use interface and to be easier to network in a home environment. Although Microsoft is officially targeting January 2010 for the launch of Windows 7, logic indicates that they will have Windows 7 ready for next year's holiday selling season.

This holiday season you'll find some great prices on computers running Microsoft Vista. If all goes well, when the holiday season rolls around in 2009, the stores will be filled with computers running the next version of Windows, Windows 7. Microsoft has made mistakes before, but I think they will do everything they possibly can to make Windows 7 a winner. So if you are looking to buy a new PC, this year will be a good time to buy, but, if you can wait, next year may be even better.

The Snow Is Disappearing! (cont'd)

Jon Jackman – FVPCA President

I recall taking over the newsletter for Bill when he was hospitalized during March several years ago when he had shingles. He was able to return and work on several more editions until his resignation for health-related reasons. Since then, I have been writing most of the articles with assistance from some of our members and an occasional "push" article from the APCUG resource library. Dean Holste has been our layout editor and our Secretary, Bill Palmer has been responsible for picking the newsletter's up from the printers and then mailing out each month's issue by US mail or by e-mail. Together we make it work for you. I'm sure Bill appreciated our work. We always invite our members to submit articles of any length on any topic related to computers.

As a tribute to Bill, we have asked members to consider making a donation to the USO by the end of our February meeting. Checks should be made out to the Fox Valley PC Association. Cash will also be accepted. We will then make a donation on behalf of the FVPCA to the USO in Bill's name. If you are unable to attend, please e-mail me your pledge intention and send a check to cover your pledge to our club:

Fox Valley PC Association
P.O. Box 369
Oswego, IL 60543-0369.

Thanks a head of time for your generous contribution.

We are looking forward to our meeting on February 21st at the Civic Center location. If you miss your opportunity to get the 2008 DOQ-4 at the January meeting, it will be available for download at our February meeting. As always, bring a friend!

Jon Jackman
President - FVPCA

Eset Smart Security Another Security Suite Review

by Larry Bothe, 2/4/2009

Those of you who follow these pages know that in recent years I have been through quite a few of the popular computer security suite programs. Way-back-when I thought Norton (Symantec) was very good, but over the years it became bloated, took over your machine, hogged up resources, and was difficult to get to do what you really wanted. I ran McAfee for a while and found it to be about the same. More recently I used Zone Alarm. ZA was good when I first started using it, but then they came up with a major revision, to accommodate some things in Vista, I think, and it went downhill from there. The user interface for ZA is pretty good, but it still noticeably slows up your machine.

My Zone Alarm subscription was running out late last year and I really didn't want to renew it. I had already switched my laptop and my wife's machine to do-it-yourself free security consisting of AVG Free, Spybot Search & Destroy, and the built-in Windows firewall; and I was considering doing that with my workhorse desktop machine as well. But then computer guru friend John Spizzirri suggested I take a look at the Eset security suite. It alleged that it uses much less random access memory and is very unobtrusive, yet still highly effective. (Sometimes I think John suggests that I look at software just so I'll write one of these reviews, but it would be unkind to come right out and accuse him of that....., oops!)

Being a glutton for punishment and forever seeking the perfect security suite, I downloaded the free 30-day trial version of Eset from www.eset.com. I figured that after a month I would pretty well know if I wanted to pay for Eset, or go with my original plan to cobble together a freeware security suite. I'll tell you up front that after about 3 weeks I bought 2-year subscription. Here's what I found out.

Downloading and installing Eset was a breeze. There is no litany of setup questions that you have to answer; you know, the ones you don't even understand? Eset just makes some assumptions and goes to work. You might conclude that Eset is being very presumptuous in deciding what you need, and it is, but you know what? – It's right. I have had little occasion to go into settings to change anything. I wanted to see just what could be changed, and I had a little difficulty figuring out how to get into it, but once there you can change just about anything you want. The good news is that it isn't necessary. The only thing I can recall changing is turning off the feature that appends a note to all your outgoing messages that says they have been scanned by Eset and found to be virus-free.

I think Eset does a good job with spam/junk messages. It learns what you consider to be spam and then puts such messages in a Spam folder for you to quickly scan through and then delete. I guess Eset is effective against virus attack; I haven't gotten any. The virus definitions update on a daily basis. The update is very unobtrusive; there is no machine slow-down. All you get is the quick flash of a dialog box telling you the update was done. I like that.

I saved the best for last. Eset doesn't hog up your machine resources and slow it down. My computer both boots and shuts down faster now that I got rid of Zone Alarm in favor of Eset. How much? I don't know exactly because I didn't record a "before" time, but it really is noticeably faster, maybe 25% or a little more.

Eset pricing is competitive with other security suite programs. Forgetting the pennies, it costs \$60 for one year or \$90 for 2 years for a one-machine license. There are discounts for 2,3, and 4 machine licenses. You go out on a limb a bit when you spring for 2 years, but you can see that the discount is substantial. Now, if they just refrain from some major update that ruins the efficiency of the program I'll be all set.

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.



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There are a growing number of locations that offer free Internet via a wireless Wi-Fi connection! We would like to find a place where we could meet and have Wi-Fi 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 for (February) 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

Joseph Cavolick

Carl Dedrick

Jon Jackman

E.W. Lowery M.D.

Stanley Naruz

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 2009 February 13 & 14, March 13 & 14

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*)

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

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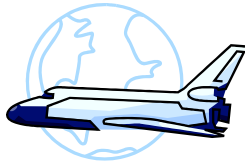
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The Fox Valley PC Association Web site is:

www.fvpca.org

Courtesy of APCUG



Have a computer hardware problem or a technical question? Head over to our website and click on the red question mark to send your question! We will research it and have an answer at the next meeting or sooner if needed.

February Program:

How to copy DVR's

Discussion on using Turbo Tax

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

February 21, 2009

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