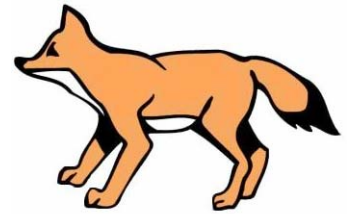


FOX TALES



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January 2007

Happy New Year Indeed

Jon Jackman, President FCPCA

We are hoping everyone had a very happy and healthy holiday season and wish everyone a happy New Year. Our executive board meeting was well attended and there was a lively discussion about what we want to try to do this year. Bill Powell has taken over the responsibility of membership coordinator. He has been working on a draft for a new membership directory and has some other ideas about membership that look promising. Dean Holste has accepted a position as layout editor for our newsletter and we will be trying to get the newsletter out in a more timely fashion through a cooperative effort among several members. We will need to stick to deadlines to get it out in time!

Last year we had difficulty putting out a utility CD on a regular basis. This year we will be looking at some way to do that more efficiently. We will discuss having a subscription type service, which would involve a specialized FVPCA USB drive which members could bring to meetings and download programs off a host laptop. We'll discuss this at our January meeting.

Tom Anzalone will be unable to attend the January meeting because of work obligations. His program "Virtual Machine Part One: Just the Basics" will be delayed until February. We decided to have a new program segment that will kick off in January. "Show and Tell" will feature opportunities for members to show off their latest gadgets. Bill Powell has put together a program, "What I got for Christmas." In our e-mail reminder this month, we will be asking members to consider bringing in an item that they may want to show club members. I have a few items that I will bring in. No doubt, some of these items may develop into programs in the coming year. For instance, right now I am using Dragon Naturally Speaking-Preferred Edition. It allows me to dictate instead of type. Once I get the hang of it, it should make for a pretty interesting program.

We will continue to meet at the Civic Center location for the time being. Tom Anzalone has a Sprint broadband wireless access card which we can use at meetings when he is able to attend. The Aurora Wi-Fi project is expanding. Those attending the meeting were able to see one of the new access points on a street lamp across the street from my house. I should have an update by the meeting on how that works.

At the time of our executive meeting, the APCUG Convention was under way in Las Vegas. On Tuesday we have not heard anything one way or the other, so we took a look at the website to see the outcome of the Jerry Awards. Surprise! In the category, "How the Community Service Project Is Managed: this category who requires user group to provide documentation on how it runs the program", the Fox Valley PC Association and North Texas PC User Group tied for first place! Each earned a \$1500 award. How about that! Our thanks go out to all the Fox Valley PC Association members who volunteered over the summer to make the project successful. More details are available at www.apcug.net

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A congratulatory e-mail was received from Heather Burns Knierim, the Vice President of Programs for the National Cristina Foundation.

On behalf of the National Cristina Foundation, we would like to congratulate you on receiving the 2006 Jerry award from APCUG. Your hard work and commitment to your program and community is commendable. Our president, Yvette Marrin, was one of the judges and is closely involved with APCUG.

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite you to apply to the National Cristina Foundation to become part of our partner network and become eligible to receive donations of used technology. The National Cristina Foundation provides donations of computer technology and solutions to organizations and schools committed to providing people with disabilities, students at risk and economically disadvantaged persons the opportunity, through training, to lead more independent and productive lives.

The National Cristina Foundation is working to ensure that used computer technology resources that no longer meet an enterprise's or individual's needs are given a second productive life as a tool for developing human potential.

You can learn more at: <http://www.cristina.org> and access our grant application directly at: http://cristina.org/learning_partner.html?live=partner

Again, congratulations on your accomplishments!

Sincerely,

*Heather Burns Knierim, MSW
V. P. of Programs
National Christina Foundation
500 West Putnam Avenue
Greenwich, CT 06830*

And now for something completely different!

Back in October, 2004 I wrote an article (kindly published in Fox Tales) on my early experiences with computers as an IBM engineer in the late 1950's. In it I mentioned that, when taking IBM classes at Endicott N.Y, we started off the day by singing IBM songs, praising everyone from Thomas J. Watson (anybody remember him? He was the founder of IBM.) I also mentioned that I, being the packrat I am, had saved lots of stuff from back then. Including a copy of the IBM songbook. While straightening out the garage the other day (so that I would have more room to store other junk) I came across it and thought some of you might be interested in a sample to show you just what the atmosphere was like in those Jurassic days of pre-PC's. So, here it is, one of many.

To Thomas J. Watson, President, I.B.M.
Tune: "Happy Days are Here Again"

Happy days are here again! And every heart in I.B.M.; All loyal T.J. Watson men; Love our noble President. His leadership stands out alone; He's honored everywhere he's known; We proudly claim him all our own; In our world-wide I.B.M.; By him we are all inspired; To do whate'er he desires. Happy men of I.B.M., Throughout the world good citizens, With faces bright as Diadems, Happy days are here again!

Now, aren't you glad I picked a short one? And that those days are gone forever?

Told you it was different., Dave C

A Quick Review - PDF Converter 4 Professional

By Larry Bothe, 1/9/2007

If you have ever read any of my earlier articles, and if you read the fine-print information about me at the end of an article, you might recall that I am up to my ears in aviation down here in southern Indiana. Among other activities, I am the editor of the monthly newsletter for the local pilots' association. I originated the newsletter shortly after I moved here and joined the group in 1999. Back then only about a quarter of our members took the newsletter electronically, but over the years that has increased to a little over half. But 80% of our approximately 100 members have e-mail (remember, this is not a computer users group), so there is a significant potential for more members to receive the newsletter by e-mail each month. We would like that as it would save money on both copying and postage, and the distribution person wouldn't have to work as hard on the stickers/labels/stamps routine.

One of the things that has prevented more members from taking the newsletter as a download is that I create it in Microsoft Word, and then send that Word file attached to an e-mail. The problem is that many people don't have Word on their machines. A lot of machines come with Microsoft Works preloaded, but Word (part of Microsoft Office) is an expensive option. Works doesn't read Word files. There is a free Microsoft Word reader but not many people know about it, and it's a little hard to find on the Microsoft site.

The almost universal way to send out documents is to put them into Adobe Acrobat (.pdf, aka PDF) format. Nearly everybody has the free Adobe reader on his or her machine. My problem with that has always been that the full version of Adobe Acrobat that creates the PDF files costs about \$300. That was never in my budget. While visiting a friend in Texas in October I saw an ad in *PC Magazine* for a program called PDF Converter 4 Professional (PDFC4P) with a list price of \$99. It allegedly did essentially all the things that Adobe Acrobat does for 1/3 the price. When I got back from my trip in November I saw the program available at Staples for \$89, and I bought it. It took me until early January to find time to load it up and run it.

I put the program to the real test yesterday. After completing the January edition of the *Freeman Flash* in Word I converted it to a PDF file and sent it out to all 80 members with e-mail. PDFC4P facilitates that action by providing a little envelope icon in the Word toolbar. Clicking on that icon converts the Word file to PDF and opens an e-mail with the PDF file already attached. Pretty slick! So far nobody has complained that they can't open the file. Two members have e-mailed me back and said it works great. I find it convenient to use.

The carton says the program will do things that even the \$300 Adobe program won't: Convert a PDF file into a fully formatted Word file, turn a PDF form into a fillable PDF form using a routine called FormTyper, convert existing scanned PDF files into fully formatted documents, forms or spreadsheets, and convert existing PDF files into human-sounding audio files for listening to on a PC, MP3 player, iPod, etc. I have not tried any of these functions, nor do I know how important they are in everyday usage. One thing that I think will be useful to me in the future is the ability to directly edit a PDF document. No need to convert it to something else if you have one of these full-blown PDF programs.

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Nail Those Intrusive E-Mail Senders!

By Jon Jackman, President FVPCA

It seems that eventually we all get an e-mail from a suspicious source, which appears to be the real deal. I recently received one apparently from PayPal and another apparently from eBay asking for personal information or to update my account information. As mentioned previously in this newsletter, there are steps to be taken if you suspect someone is "phishing" for you.

From prior experience I forward suspicious e-mails off to eBay or PayPal. If that happens to you, forward them to "spoof@eBay.com" or "spoof@PayPal.com". Every time I have done this I have received a reply from both sites indicating that the suspect e-mail was in fact bogus. They offer tips to prevent this from happening. Here is the auto reply received from eBay...

Thank you for contacting us about a potential fraudulent (spoof) email or Web site. We will investigate this situation immediately and inform you of the results in a separate email. If you are reporting an email or a Web site that is asking for personal financial information, it is best to assume it is fake until you receive a response from us.

In order to reply as quickly as possible, we are sending you an automated response about the following topics:

1. IDENTIFYING FAKE EMAILS AND WEB SITES
2. USING EBAY TOOLBAR WITH ACCOUNT GUARD
3. PROTECTING YOUR ACCOUNT AND INTERNET SECURITY

Please submit other questions or concerns through our Contact Us System, which can be accessed by clicking on the "help" button on the top of any eBay page. This allows us to dedicate our resources appropriately.

1. IDENTIFYING FAKE EMAILS AND WEB SITES

The best defense against fake emails and Web sites is learning how to spot them. You can learn more about fake emails and Web sites through our Spoof Tutorial at the following Web page:

<http://pages.ebay.com/education/spooftutorial/>

You can also use My Messages (located at the top of the My eBay page) to detect Phishing emails. If an email from eBay affects your eBay account or asks for personal information, it's now in My Messages. Any email sent to your registered eBay email address from eBay that concerns your account or requests personal information will now appear in My Messages.

2. USING EBAY TOOLBAR WITH ACCOUNT GUARD

One of the best tools to protect yourself from fraudulent (spoof) Web sites is eBay Toolbar with Account Guard. The Account Guard feature indicates when you are on an eBay or PayPal Web site and warns you if you are on a known spoof site. To learn more about eBay Toolbar with Account Guard open a new browser and type www.ebay.com/ebay_toolbar into the address bar.

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Nail Those Intrusive E-Mail Senders! (Cont'd)

3. PROTECTING YOUR ACCOUNT AND INTERNET SECURITY

We recommend that you keep your browser, operating system, and virus protection software up to date. Check for updates at the "Windows Update" link on www.microsoft.com and scan your computer for viruses often.

If you think your personal information has been compromised in any way, you should take immediate steps to change your eBay, PayPal, and email passwords. You should also contact your bank to see if there has been any suspicious activity on your account. You can find more information about protecting your identity at the following help page:

<http://pages.ebay.com/help/confidence/problems-identity-theft.html>

Thank you again for sending us your report. We appreciate your efforts to keep eBay and PayPal safe.

Regards,

eBay Trust & Safety Team

(Continued from Page 3)

A Quick Review - PDF Converter 4 Professional (Cont'd)

I admit that I have used only one of the many (12) features of this program. It may be that I will never use a lot of them. But it accomplished my need to be able to create and send out PDF documents attached to e-mails, and did it for a fraction of the cost of Adobe Acrobat. If you have wanted the capabilities of the Adobe product but, like me, haven't wanted to spend \$300, you would do well to consider PDF Converter 4 Professional.

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.

Did you see any video from the Consumer Electronics Show (CES2007) in Las Vegas? Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates was the opening session keynote speaker last Sunday January 7th. You can see the video of his address at www.cesweb.org and click on the keynote speaker link to view.

For you Mac users, Apple Chairman Steve Jobs introduced the new Apple iPhone at MacWorld. You can view his keynote at www.macworld.com and look for the "Recent Stories" link to view keynote highlights.



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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 (January) 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:

**Alen Hergenbahn
Gaylon Mace
Stanley Naruz**

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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COMPUTER SHOWS

The Great Midwest Computer Show has suspended operations. At this time, there are no future shows planned. If new shows are added, they will be listed on their site. Please visit the

Great Midwest Computer Show

Web site at:

www.codshow.com

The Midwest's oldest and largest Computer Show, since 1984

Also see:

www.giantcomputershow.com/



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2007

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The Fox Valley PC Association Web site is:

www.fvpca.org
Courtesy of APCUG



**The revised title of the January 2007
“Program of the Month” by Bill Powell will be:
“Show & Tell: What did you get for Christmas?”**

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

January 20, 2007

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