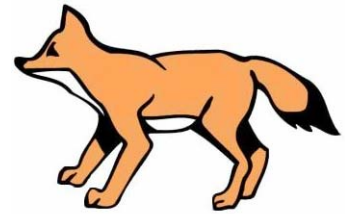


# FOX TALES



Volume 21, Issue 1

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

January 2008

## Welcome Back!

We hope everyone had a good holiday season and have gotten the New Year off to a good start. 2008 promises to be an interesting year!

I've started some initial downloads for our first quarter download a quarter. (Available in March at our meeting in Yorkville.) The usual security programs will be included. These will be versions that are 12 months newer than the last releases, so you should not receive a message that it is out of date or require you to download large updates to catch up on program updates and virus definitions to bring it up to date. There will be new offerings as well. As promised last year, the annual subscription for the four DOQ's will be \$20. Those wishing to purchase each quarterly offering separately, will pay seven dollars. Downloads will be made to either the 1 GB thumb drive or a member's thumb drive, during a meeting. If you have any suggestions please feel free to send us an e-mail via the question mark link on our home page.

We were able to access the Web Site and have updated the information. I used a freeware program to edit the web pages (KompoZer) and then an FTP client to upload the information to our website. I was not too confident when deciding whether to use the FTP tool in KompoZer to do the uploading task. So I downloaded a trial client version of WinFTP and was able to upload files and get things somewhat back to normal. Once this newsletter is published I will have to go in again and make some more adjustments, though the December issue has a link to that issue on the site. As noted previously, Bob Tuftee's expertise has been missed, but his handiwork within our website has been admirable. If you have an interest in HTML, consider helping us out with our webpage! Were you able to check out our memorial tribute page for Bob?

Go here: <http://main.acsevents.org/goto/Bob.Tuftee> . We set up an initial goal of \$300, (or 80% of all our membership at \$10 each.) Amazingly, this goal was achieved by just five of our members! Another \$25 was received in the mail, so we have exceeded our goal! As of this writing we are at \$325 for cancer research. Well done! Bob would be proud of the effort and grateful for the gifts.

The KompoZer program mentioned earlier may not have all the bells and whistles, but it does the job of maintaining the present FVPCA website. I just had to make note of which files I would need to modify or upload to the website. If I had selected to use FrontPage that I have used before to manage web pages, I may have lost some of the functionality built into the existing site. FrontPage extensions are required to be installed on the hosting site if you use FrontPage.

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## Welcome Back! (cont'd)

These extensions offer the ability to monitor changes to a website and would automatically make adjustments, among other things. I have not had enough time using the KompoZer program to explore its features in more detail. Microsoft is discontinuing FrontPage and is now going to Expression Web. I may try to get a copy of Microsoft Expression Web to see if that will do the job. If I do, and it looks like it will do the job, it will be available for our new webmaster to use.

Darn, I missed the opportunity for a software sale at Fry's electronics. Namo Web Editor Professional was available for \$9.99 after various mail-in offers. This was the program that Bob had used when creating our website. Unfortunately, we have been unable to get it re-registered yet. I also saw that Acronis True Image 11 Home was available for free if you purchased any of the tax software titles listed. Unfortunately this sale ended yesterday. I sure miss those Fry's ads in the Beacon News! Bill Palmer gave me his copy from the Friday issue of the Chicago Tribune at our recent executive committee meeting. I've not had much time to look it over and was disappointed that I missed some good deals. Generally, if there is an advertised price that is irresistible I may drive all the way over there to purchase something. I try to discipline myself to just sale items, or perhaps unusual novelties. I generally go to Tiger Direct, or maybe Office Max or Office Depot when I need computer parts and accessories. Some of the deals that Fry's are hard to beat!

But, I have been getting busier since the holidays. This past weekend we got started on redoing our dining room. We removed the wallpaper and painted the walls, and it sure looks better. Next up: pull up the carpeting! Looking forward to an upcoming snowmobile trip to Minocqua, Wisconsin. We keep on hoping that the recent unseasonably warm weather does not affect the trails too badly. Talk about weird weather! 63 degrees, tornadoes!? And the winner, I prefer frozen ground and a good snow cover. It makes it much easier to clean the dogs paws when she comes in from the yard!

Anyway, I have had a few more experiences with Vista. Both were the Vista Home Premium Edition. First of all, both machines had dual core processors and at least 1 GB RAM. The security features have been bumped up and require more user intervention. (I guess you can get used to that after awhile.) The interfaces look pretty slick, and require some retraining to figure out. I'd still wait for the first Service Pack release before trying it out. We had made a brief tour of Vista last year, and we will begin to look more closely at Vista in the coming year. We will try to pay attention to Vista compatibility in our DOQ offerings. I have another article describing my challenges with several machines later in this newsletter.

An alternative operating system, Ubuntu, will make its appearance this year at one of our meetings. If you're not in need of Windows for gaming or Windows specific programs, there are many open-source programs that run quite well in Ubuntu. If you have had experience with Ubuntu, contact us! I recall when a sales rep demonstrated Windows Millennium at one of our meetings. If you recall, that was a program that did not do too well. Many people were better serviced by Windows 98 Second Edition, then skipping over ME and upgrading to XP. The idea of Special Interest Groups (SIG's) being held before our general meeting has been bantered about, but no decisions have been made. Hopefully the 2008 survey will help clarify some of the issues going on in our club. We are beginning a closer review of prices for the replacement LCD or DLP projector. Prices have begun to fall since the holidays. More details at our next meeting.

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## Welcome Back! (cont'd)

We will also be taking orders for the Fox Valley PC Association Membership Directory in January. They may be available at that time, but delivery to our members will more likely be at our February meeting.

And then there are gadgets! What did you get for Christmas? Is it something that you could bring to our meeting and share with our members? My son picked me up a copy of a game that works quite well on my new Core2 Duo machine: Crysis, a futuristic first-person shooter. Amazing graphics! Anyone score a Wii as a gift? They were very difficult to get! Tom was able to get one, so we may have a demonstration at an upcoming meeting. They are amazing! I picked up a Sony Digital voice recorder after Santa failed to bring one to me. I will share it at our meeting. I have to begin to train myself to use it effectively. I have been getting some interesting ideas on how to use this little gadget.

Our January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held at the Civic Center. We will have be having another shotgun approach to our program offerings. In addition to show and tell, "What I (almost) Got for Christmas," Tom will be giving a short program on "Running Portable Applications off a Thumb Drive." Jon will be reviewing, "10 things you should do to a new PC before connecting it to the Internet." Come and join us at the Civic Center. See you there! Bring a friend.

Jon Jackman  
President - Fox Valley PC Association

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## PC Commando Notebook

Jon Jackman

Recently, Ivan and Marlene collared me at donut breakfast after church. They were having some problems connecting on their broadband and said that Comcast told them that they had a virus. Marlene needed access her work e-mails, so I stopped by the next day and had a look at their HP Pavilion 7550. XP Home was the operating system and it had a CD-R and a DVD-ROM drive and an AGP video card. AVG anti-virus was already installed and the last scan showed no active viruses. (There were several in the virus fault however.) It also appeared that they had not been able to successfully download any updates, although I could connect to the Internet. I had to invoke a trick to get Windows update to run. (Thanks Google!) I also had to manually install IE 7.

The machine itself ran quite slowly. Using the BelArc Advisor tool, I saw that it only had 256MB of RAM in one of three slots. I later looked in the case and there was one 256MB PC133 memory, and two open slots. I put in another 256 MB of PC133 RAM module into the second slot and the machine's performance improved... @ 512 MB! I reset some programs that were choking their desktop so that they would not automatically start when Windows loaded. Photos were moved from the desktop to the My Photos folder to clean up the desktop's appearance. Then we dumped the machine's junk ware. Finally, I put some shortcuts on their desktop for easy access to their e-mail account, work login page and Google.

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## PC Commando Notebook (cont'd)

While I was working in Device Manager I was unable to get their fax modem recognized. As they did not need it at the present time, I opted to explore what they wanted to do with the computer and deferred the modem for the time being. Ivan explained that he wants to convert his cassette tapes to CDs. I installed Audacity on his machine and showed him how it would work to create wave files from the recordings and then he could burn the collection to a CD. (I intend to return at a later date as a mentor, as Ivan did not know there was a CD-R in the computer. I will review the basics with him at that time so that he has a better understanding of how to use his computer. I also invited them to one of our meetings in case they have any computer-related questions.)

After the Windows Update allowed IE7 to load, and all updates were current, things seem to be running better. We tried to connect to her worksite and she got an error message that suggested that she contact the IT guy. I cut the error message and pasted it into the e-mail to the IT contact which we then promptly sent out asking for his assistance. I suspect her name needs to be in a database for it to enter their e-mail server. We will see.

Another challenge was presented when I got a call from a friend of mine who had assembled a PC, but was unable to get it to boot. I took it home and took a peek. Everything seemed to be connected okay. However, when turning it on, it would only twitch and then turn itself off. Upon closer inspection the motherboard (nForce 680i SE) had two additional power connections other than the 24 pin standard power connector. One was for a Molex type power connector that is to provide additional power for high-end PCI express video cards. Another was an eight pin connector to the motherboard. The power supply (Ultra X Connect 600W) in the new machine did not have an eight pin plug connector. I reviewed the manual and it suggested that a four pin plug would work, but an eight pin plug was recommended. I gave it a shot and when I turned the machine on it began to run normally. Yea! Suddenly, I noticed smoke coming from the new (and fortunately empty) 300 GB SATA hard drive! Then there was fire! Holy smokes! I immediately yanked the power cables and connections, while blowing out the now toasted components on the SATA hard drive's PCB. After upgrading the power supply (Ultra X2 750W) and replacing the SATA drive, I was able to connect the board properly. I held my breath and flicked the switch. Viola! It booted! I was then able to proceed with installing Vista Home Premium. (My friend will attempt to RMA the defective drive for another. It should not be a problem installing another drive as this motherboard will support up to six SATA connected drives! The new power supply will have no problem with it either.) The machine has 2GB of DDR2 RAM. I have had limited experience with Vista. It is always interesting when exploring its features on another person's system. There are a number of differences between XP and Vista. The firewall in XP was limited to incoming traffic. The firewall in Vista is supposed to be for both ways, but I learned that outbound traffic is not controlled automatically. You need to enable this feature. Using the downloaded Vista Firewall Control you are now able to configure the Windows firewall in Vista in both directions, which appears to be an improvement over the one way solution in XP's firewall. The user interface for this can be pretty intimidating and frustrating for a new user. I noticed a number of security alerts that would pop up when starting programs.

Recently my son's girlfriend Katie asked me to take a look at her Vista laptop (Compaq F572US.) The original problem showed up after her boyfriend had restored the laptop using the supplied CD. (Not sure why he did that.) She said that it is supposed to have an 80 GB hard drive, but that it was listed as only having 25 GB. She also complained of random events when the screen would go into sleep mode. Additionally, Norton Internet Security was not working properly and it displayed a message indicating that it needed to be configured.

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## PC Commando Notebook (cont'd)

Going through Control Panel and Administrative Tools, I was able to expand the 25 GB partition to its full size. The data was intact, but I ran a check disk through the Disk - Properties - Tools menu. Things seem to be running fine, though a bit quirky.

I went to the Compaq website and reviewed the current drivers that were available. I was able to flash the BIOS to the latest release, and then upgraded the soundcard, network and video drivers. Vista Firewall Control was installed. I tried to configure Symantec Norton Internet Security that came with the machine, but ended up removing it. It was a free 60 day trial anyway. So I then installed the free versions of the AVG antivirus and anti-spyware programs, as well as AdAware SE. Scans were uneventful. Katie said that she wanted an external hard drive for data backup. I picked up a 250 GB external hard drive at Sam's Club for about \$90. The deal I wanted at Tiger Direct for a 250 GB Western Digital "MyBook" was sold out. The SimpleTech 250 GB model came with a basic backup program, and I noticed that the Roxio program installed on the laptop also had a backup option. We did not explore these in great detail. She does want a sound backup solution and we will be looking into that.

I was intrigued with some issues when I tried to boot from the DVD in attempting to run some backup software. For some reason, when I tried to boot off the Ghost 2003 CD, the program was unable to load the needed USB drivers. The program would not recognize the external hard drive; neither would Acronis True Image 9! I was unable to get the Partition Magic CD to boot either. Weird!

Other than that, things seemed to run okay. The C: drive was now at 100%, and there was no video flicker. After tweaking some startup programs things were running smoothly. I did run across a few odd cases where I had to set permissions as administrator in order to get some programs to run. There were a lot of pop-up boxes that requested permission to proceed. I guess that's the price of security in Vista!

When Katie stopped by, she was pleased that it was running well. I explained what had been done, and what she needed to do for security. She explained that she found out that her Wi-Fi connection in her apartment had been left open and unsecured. That might explain a few things! I gave her information on how to setup her Linksys Wi-Fi router and how to enable Wi-Fi security. Katie said that she would call me if she had any problems. She also indicated that she would go and pick up a backup program that could run in Vista. Acronis True Image 11 was added to her list. She seemed eager to try setting things up on her own, but I still offered her my assistance if needed.

It seems that sometimes when there are answers there seem to be more questions! I always enjoy the challenge of fixing PCs. No two PCs seem to have the same problem!

At the January meeting I will review "10 Things You Should Do to a New PC before Connecting It to the Internet." See you there!

Jon Jackman  
President - Fox Valley PC Association



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To make a donation in Bob's name to the American Cancer Society, click on the link below:

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

*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 (January) will be at the Oswego Civic Center at 5 Ashlawn Ave 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!**

**"USERS HELPING USERS"**

The following members have renewed their membership:

**Richard Bremer**  
**Gerald Novak**

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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## Recycling Tips

Obsolete electronic gadgets -

Don't pitch them, recycle them. Check out [www.epa.gov/ecycling](http://www.epa.gov/ecycling) or [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) for info about electronics recycling.

In Illinois, [http://www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/bureaus/energy\\_recycling/recycling](http://www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/bureaus/energy_recycling/recycling) and [http://www.illinoisrecycles.org/byteback\\_text.html](http://www.illinoisrecycles.org/byteback_text.html).



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2008

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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



## January Program:

10 Things your new PC needs before connecting to the Internet-

Jon Jackman

Portable Applications - Tom Anzalone

What did you get for Christmas?

**Bring your toys for a show and tell!**

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

# January 19, 2007

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