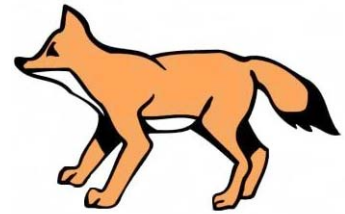


# Fox Tales



Volume 22, Issue 11

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

November 2009

## Elections Complete!

Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

At the last general meeting of the FVPCA, we voted in our officers for the next year: Jon Jackman – President, Tom Anzalone – Vice-President, Dean Holste – Treasurer and Bill Palmer – Secretary. Our thanks for the vote of confidence! We also want to thank the volunteers serving in appointed positions for their ongoing contributions behind-the-scenes. We look forward to serving our membership in the coming year. We continue to face challenges and will maintain our resolve to provide the best content for our meetings as possible.

As part of our ongoing mission to provide an educational forum for our members to share information and assist with their use of personal computers, we will be distributing a link to a brief survey that will profile our membership. In the past we have had a very good response. This year's survey will be much shorter and will only take a few minutes to complete. Please respond and take the survey! We will summarize the results at an upcoming meeting and/or newsletter article. There was a survey that went out recently to participants of the Windows 7 Launch Party. They are different!

The past two months we have showcased the new Windows 7 Operating System (OS) at our general meetings. Bill Palmer had held out to get a new PC after the demise of his older PC. (Looked like a bad motherboard...) He ended up getting a desktop that came with Windows 7 Professional, which has the XP Mode feature. He tells me that it's the best of both worlds: The new Windows XP Mode lets you run older Windows XP business software right on your Windows 7 desktop. Specifically, in Bill's case, the Acronis back-up software. W7 Pro is designed primarily with small-and medium-sized businesses in mind. Windows XP Mode comes as a separate download and works only with Windows 7 Professional, Ultimate, and Enterprise. Windows XP Mode also requires virtualization software such as Windows Virtual PC. Both are available free on the Microsoft website. We hope that Bill will summarize his experience in a short article for an upcoming issue of *Fox Tales*. I had loaned him my USB IDE adapter so he could transfer files from the hard drive on his old machine to his new drive. We will hear how it went at our next meeting.

Although I have not taken the leap yet, I have helped several friends make the transition to Windows 7. One bought a Windows 7 system from Dell, and another friend, Ray, bought a Gateway laptop with Windows Vista and a "free upgrade" offer from Tiger. We had to jump through hoops, but the Windows Premium 64 Bit upgrade has been ordered. I may have it installed by the next meeting. (You may have met "Ray" at the last meeting, as he was an invited guest of mine.)

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## Tips, Tricks and Websites...

### **Mystery File...**

I recently received an email containing a file that I could not open. After searching around the web I found [www.openwith.org](http://www.openwith.org) that allows you to search by file extension or by the type of file such as video or document. The site will tell you which programs will open the file and even suggest free software to download.

### **Save a Webpage as a PDF:**

If you would like to convert a webpage to a PDF file go to [www.html-pdf-converter.com](http://www.html-pdf-converter.com). Once you have converted it you can save it to a file or email it to others.

### **Free Delivery from Amazon:**

Amazon usually ships for free if you spend \$25 or more. Many times you are just under that amount and don't know what to buy. Try [www.superfiller.com](http://www.superfiller.com) where you can find items ranging from 50 cents to \$15.00. Simply go to the website, enter the amount you need for free shipping and the items on Amazon that most closely match that amount will be listed. Select the item you want, add it to your cart and there you go...

### **Information Please:**

Sometime ago Google came out with a free service finding businesses by calling 1-800-goog411. I have used this often and it works well. Just recently I heard about another free mobile info service which finds both business and personal telephone #'s. This would be great. I have not tried it but here is the number... 1-800-free411.

### **Let us know of your favorite tip, trick or website...**

**Bill Powell**



## **Elections Complete! (cont'd)**

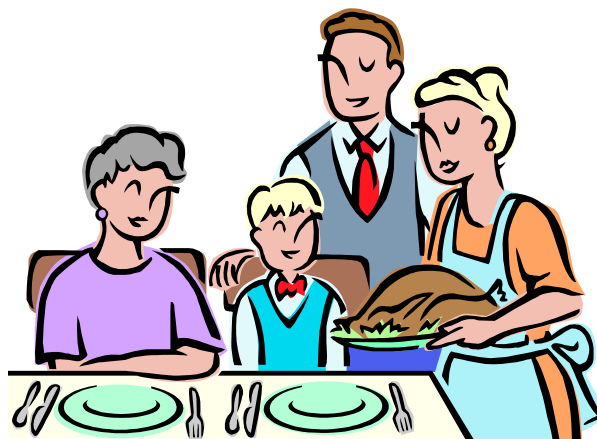
**Jon Jackman – President FVPCA**

What will be on your “wish list” this holiday? Yes, times are tough and budgets strained, so it is even more important that we get the most bang for our dollar. I took a hard look at my Comcast bill and decided to jump over to AT&T U-Verse for TV/Phone/Internet. I will be saving money and, so far, I have been very pleased with the experience. At the monthly meeting it seems that not too many members had it available at their address yet. Keep checking so that AT&T knows that there is an interest in your neighborhood and may extend fiber out towards you!

I had used TIVO for recording TV prior to getting my Comcast DVR. The TIVO was used less on the basement TV that had no DVR. After the switch to U-Verse, I have discontinued TIVO. However, several years ago my son gave me a “Slingbox – Classic” edition (Model SB100-100) as a gift. This is a device that streams TV over the Internet and allows for remote control of the set top box (STB). No need for a TV card, just a STB that is not being watched by someone else. I had held off hooking it up until just this past week. But as that model is no longer in production, I needed to upgrade the firmware and software so that I am able to access my TV over my LAN and from the Internet through my AT&T equipment. It allows me to watch TV on my desktop and my laptop! Although the Slingbox is not the HD version, it does give a decent enough picture to allow me the option to watch TV as I am multitasking in my office in the next room, or in a hotel room in Wisconsin. I will explore this at our meeting in November in our “Everything Digital” segment.

What might be in your future? Maybe you have been looking at a GPS, computer upgrade, some new software, or perhaps something to do with digital photography/video? One thing that has been on lists year in and out are video game systems. Last year Kris Simon took us on a tour of Guitar Hero using the Wii game console. He has offered to take a look at some new features again this year. It is always nice to know what is out there. Retailers will be eager to take your money, that's for sure! The crafty shopper finds the best bargains! Layaways are coming back in vogue... Let us know what you would be asking Santa for!

November's meeting will be the last for 2009. No meeting in December. We will have some things to hand out at our November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, so we hope to see you there!



**Happy Thanksgiving!  
Enjoy the time with your family!**

**From the FVPCA Executive Board**

# The Fixer's Corner

Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

I have been busy helping out friends and clients with getting their PCs doing what they want. One gal, BK, had called me asking for some help. She was having problems connecting to the Internet. As it turns out BK had recently signed up with a DirecTV plan from AT&T. She had AT&T DSL for her Internet, but when I tried to get on the connection was poor. She said that she had downgraded the speed, but there seemed to be nothing there. I noticed that there was a red light on her DSL modem. Knowing that special filters are required on the existing phone lines for a DSL configuration I looked at the two phone wall jacks. One was in the kitchen and it had a DSL filter wall plate. The other was connected to a cordless phone and the STB for the DirecTV. They were connected directly into the wall plate via a two way splitter; there was no filter. I pulled them out went into the next room and sat down at the computer and was able to connect to the Internet! We went to Radio Shack and picked up a DSL filter for \$15.95 and reconnected the two lines through a splitter and then the DSL filter. The Internet worked well. AT&T techs were to come back in a week and switch out the standard def STB with an HD one. I told BK to keep the packaging and receipt for the DSL filter and to insist that AT&T provide her with a free DSL filter, noting that there are several that are included with self-install kits. They should have given her one! BK can then return the purchase and get her money back. I am not sure what happened to the original DSL filter, but AT&T should have checked her Internet connection when installing the SD equipment. BK is now a happy camper!

As mentioned in my column, I had consulted with a few friends in their acquisition of “Windows 7 Ready” machines. John got a Dell Studio One machine before Windows 7 was released. This is a model that has a 19” Crystal clear 16:9 widescreen flat panel HD display monitor. It has an unusually thicker monitor. That is because it has all of the innards contained behind the monitor, so there is no tower to deal with. No expandability, but there are several USB ports to add USB devices. There was no wireless in this model, so we picked up a USB Wi-Fi adapter. We opted for a 802.11 G over an N router as his existing network was based on the G standard. Connection went smoothly. As John is a Comcast customer we took advantage of the free offering of McAfee for both his new and old machines. This necessitated creating a second Comcast account to get the second installation to take on the second machine. We installed Office 2007 Home & Student, which was part of his Dell “deal”. He also got a wireless printer which we installed onto the existing network. Windows Vista needed to do some updates, but it worked without a problem. He just called me and said that he got the W7 disk, so I instructed him to get some DVDs and create a restore/backup of the Vista system. We will proceed with the W7 upgrade and create another set of restore disks. It will be interesting to see how Dell creates restore disks after the W7 upgrade.

My friend Ray had been on the market for a laptop for some time. I went with him to Tiger to pick up a Gateway M688u laptop on October 6, 2009. It had Vista Premium 64 bit, and an offer for a free upgrade to Windows 7 Home Premium (regularly \$119.99 for the upgrade.) He also picked up Office 2007 Home & Student and an 802.11 G wireless router. (He opted for G over N.) I spent some time at his house getting things connected without much of a problem. We also took advantage of the Comcast McAfee bundle like I did with John. Setup went well. Ray has XP on his desktop and a laptop with Vista is a new experience for him and his wife. I invited Ray to our Windows 7 Lunch Party to get some idea of what W7 is all about. Ray says that he is looking forward to enjoying his new laptop with this new OS. He plans on taking it with him when going to Florida this winter. Update: Ray left me his laptop this past weekend and I went through the cumbersome process of ordering the Windows 7 upgrade for him. The order has been processed and I will take notes on how that process goes for a future article in *Fox Tales* after I get the OS disk.

(Continued on next page)

## The Fixer's Corner (cont'd)

Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

Bill Palmer's old machine had failed, several months ago. He brought it over to my house and despite my best efforts, it was DOA. Short of a system upgrade I suggested it was time to consider a W7 machine. Bill wanted to wait until after October 22<sup>nd</sup> to get his Windows 7 desktop and so as to not worry about going the "free" upgrade route. In the short term he needed something to manage the *Fox Tales* mailings, Internet access and his e-mails. I had an older Windows 2000 machine, so I loaned him that to allow for a short term solution until he got his new machine. The USB 2.0 PCI expansion card from his old machine was recognized in the W2K PC and allowed him to connect to his USB devices (printer, external HDD, etc.) at USB 2.0 speeds. We also slipped in the old hard drive from his old machine as a slave. (This was sort of like doing organ transplants!) After some initial glitches, we were able to get things running well enough to get by. Bill says he really likes his new machine. He has told me that he likes the XP Mode which allows Acronis to run, having had some problem getting it to run in W7. He borrowed my USB IDE adapter to connect the old drive to the new machine so he can off load his data. I will let Bill explain his experience in greater detail at our meeting and/or via an article. ;~)

One of my sons (Dan) has been rough on his XP Home Toshiba laptop over the past 5 years. I have repaired the hinges and reinstalled the OS several times, but it has reached the end of a fairly long life. The last restore did not take too long to crash. His interest is in working with Facebook and Twitter as a part of his marketing job at the Chicago Opera Theater as well as work on web pages and a media library for the COT. We have made DVDs from VHS tapes on my DUO Core XP machine with some success. His goal is leaning towards the world of design and, as he puts it, has little time to wait on Windows and related issues. He is much like the potential customer on the PC - Mac commercials.

In his case he wants to see if a Mac Book is in his future. Since he is only able to get Internet and e-mail through his cell phone, it looks like that future will be very soon! I will expose him to Window 7, and relate how inexpensively he can get started back with the PC, but I think he will be the first in my family to go Mac. Oh well... Merry Christmas!

I just had another friend who had picked up a cheap Windows 7 laptop at Wal-Mart and wants me to help him set up a wireless network so that his wife can use it anywhere in the house... It seems that a lot of people have been waiting for the chance (excuse?) to upgrade their PCs. From my exposure to this process so far, it has been worth the wait! I will keep you posted!





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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 (November) will be at South Point Center at 810 Preston Lane, Oswego, 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**

**Kimes, Kit**

**Ramme, Richard**

**Thank-You for your continued support!!**

## **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 Intel based personal computer systems (and almost anything "digital") to our members.

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### **Kane County Electronic Recycling Dates for 2009** Nov 13 & 14, Dec 11 & 12

#### **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/](http://www.co.kane.il.us/environment/)



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2009

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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



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.

## November Program:

Exploring New Features of the Nintendo Wii  
With Kris Simon

A Look at some Holiday Ideas-the Slingbox and Garmin GPS  
With Jon Jackman

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

# November 21, 2009

South Point Center located at  
810 Preston Lane, Oswego, Illinois