

FOX TALES



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General Ramblings

By Jon Jackman / President - Fox Valley PC Association

We have grown accustomed to receiving the Fry's Electronics ads in the Beacon News, often bringing the large flyer from the Friday paper to hand around at meetings. It is interesting to review the "deals" on a wide range of electronic items.

In September did you notice that we no longer get them in the Beacon News? At last month's monthly meeting, several members pointed out that they received the Tribune and the Fry's ads were now available in that publication. Seems that the far western suburbs no longer appear to be worthy of the Fry's ads. I did find the current ads available online at the Fry's website: www.outpost.com where you can subscribe to get the weekly ads sent to you if you'd like. (I have a similar subscription to TigerDirect and get several ads e-mailed to me every week, sometimes several every day!) You can look up the advertised specials at this site too. It is quite a drive, but if the item is on sale, it may be worth the trip (in time, gas and tolls.) I will miss reviewing the ads in the morning as I sip my coffee. Then again, I could get a subscription to the Tribune!

We have submitted our entry into the APCUG Jerry Award contest for our community service project at the Our Lady of Good Counsel Elementary School. We will see how it goes. There is a convention in Las Vegas in January and it sure would be nice to take a small break and go out there and pick up the award!

Elections are upon us again. It seems like we just had them! Time has really flown by this year. At the September meeting we tabled the nominations until October as the attendance at the Batavia Library was rather low. So we will appoint a Nominating Committee and move ahead in October. Nominations for officers will be accepted and closed at the meeting prior to the designated election meeting. (In this case, elections will be held at our November meeting.) No member should nominate any member without first obtaining that member's assurance that he or she will serve if elected. Also, members must be in "good standing" (dues paid and up to date.) Election results will be announced at the end of the November meeting and published in the next newsletter. We will be looking for anyone interested in a position. We do need a Secretary, and we also need volunteers for some of the appointed positions. Some members at the September meeting expressed an interest in helping out to some degree. PLEASE give it some thought. We can use your help. More on this at our October meeting, which will be held at the AmericInn location on Douglas in Oswego on October 21, 2006. Look for Tom's e-mail regarding an upcoming "special event."

XP or Vista?

By Elaine Drain, President, Senior Surfers Computer Club, Delaware
www.nscseniorsurfers.com

From talking with our members, it seems that quite a number of you with older computers running Win98 or ME are in a quandary as to whether to go ahead and buy a new computer now with XP or try to hold out until Vista arrives on the scene. As Jim and I tell our members when asking for buying advice, it's a personal choice you have to make depending on your needs and your budget. We can, however, provide some general information to help you choose, so read on.

XP certainly is superior to Windows 98 or ME, especially now that 98 and ME are no longer supported. Microsoft will probably continue to support XP for 4 or 5 more years (but no one can say for certain on that one). XP, even with its vulnerabilities, is a very stable operating system. Jim and I are both running XP Pro and have been satisfied with its performance overall. I have been doing a lot of reading on Vista and, from the information available, feel that it will be superior to XP, but not everyone will require all of the features that will be included in the full version of Vista.

So given that information, here are some choices:

Current Computer with 98 or ME: If you are currently running Windows 98 or ME and don't want to spend a lot of money next year for a new computer with Vista, you may want to go ahead and buy a new computer with XP soon. The Back-To-School prices for computers right now are very enticing. Certainly, the newer computers next year running Vista will cost substantially more because of the increased hardware requirements.

If you would like to upgrade to a new computer with XP now and have minimum needs only using your computer for email and surfing the Internet, and do not plan to upgrade to the Vista operating system down the road, a budget-priced computer with a Celeron or Sempron processor may suit your needs, even though you would have fewer upgrade options in the future.

If you would like to upgrade to a new computer with XP now and may wish to upgrade to Vista later on and also have higher needs such as working with digital photos and editing programs, spreadsheets, databases, powershows. etc., you should consider spending a little more to get a Pentium or Athlon processor. I would recommend a bare minimum of 512 MB of memory (RAM) if you are working with multimedia (photos/music/movies/radio) for now but you should plan to add another 512 MB of memory when you upgrade to Vista.

If you are wondering about the minimum requirements for upgrading your current computer to Vista, the following information was taken from the Microsoft website: Windows Vista Minimum Supported System Requirements

PCs that meet the minimum supported system requirements will be able to run the core features of Windows Vista with the basic user experience.

Processor	800 MHz 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor
System Memory	512 MB

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GPU	SVGA (800x600) (GPU means Graphics Processing Unit, or in other words, Monitor)
Graphics Memory	(not stated, although I have heard a minimum of 128 MB)
HDD	20 GB (Hard Drive)
HDD Free Space	15 GB
Optical Drive	CD-ROM drive

Keep in mind that the above specs are for running the BASIC version of Vista and not the fully functional version which has a multitude of new features. Although Microsoft is currently stating that Vista will run with 512 MB of RAM at a minimum, I would make certain the computer could be upgraded to 1GB of RAM. Minimum requirements are just that – bare bones minimum – and I would recommend that your computer exceed these minimums. Vista is currently in the Beta2 stage and is nearing (so they say) finalization before debut, but that does not mean that the system requirements stated here won't change by the time the system is ready to sell, so stay tuned on that.

Personally, if your current computer came with Windows 98 or ME, I would not recommend attempting to upgrade your old computer to Vista unless you originally purchased a high end computer with a Pentium processor with the capability of 1GB of RAM. Even then, it may not be worth the time, effort and money to upgrade. The cost to purchase the Vista operating system, plus any installation charges, plus the cost of the memory upgrade, not to mention the graphics card requirements, would add up to a tidy sum and in the end you would still have a very old computer (that may or may not work well with Vista).

Current Computer Came With XP: If your current computer came with XP already installed, you may want to hold out and wait to see what Vista offers and how it operates before you take the plunge.

Excellent Comparison – Vista vs XP: If you would like to take a peek and see how Vista compares with XP side by side, follow this link:

<http://www.bentuser.com/article.aspx?ID=332&page=1>

If you're wondering how the Apple operating system, Tiger, compares with Vista, this article may be of interest to you:

<http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,1895,1842175,00.asp>

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



POTPOURRI

By Jon Jackman, Acting Editor

We have been reporting on the progress of the WiFi project in Aurora. We had a report at last month's meeting from Richard R. He indicated that he parked his car downtown and was able to connect wirelessly to the Internet on his laptop. There was a space for an advertisement banner, which had not yet displayed any ads. He reported that the connection was stable and adequate for e-mail and web surfing. As I drove through downtown Aurora this week I counted several more WiFi access point antennas attached to light poles. I did not have my laptop with me at the time, or I would have given it a test run. (I may have a report at the next meeting.) It will be interesting to see how this "free" Internet project takes hold.

Naperville is also signing up with the company selected by Aurora (MetroFi), as they look to jump in on the "free" Internet bandwagon. There was an article in the Beacon News on October 11th that mentions that Yorkville will be offering water tower space so that WiFi will be available for a fee... (not free like Aurora is trying to do.)

October 11, 2006

By HEATHER GILLERS, STAFF WRITER YORKVILLE --

Residents could have wireless Internet access as soon as February. The City Council Tuesday approved an agreement to rent space atop five city water towers to North Aurora-based PDQlink. The company plans to broadcast a wireless signal from antennae placed on the towers, and residents would be able to subscribe to the service.

Access would be available to any resident with a clear view of the towers and cost up to \$25 per month, according to preliminary estimates. It will take about four months to set up the network, according to PDQLink. PDQlink will pay the city \$100 per month per tower in rent and offer free wireless access in city parks and in the Beecher Community Center. The company has comparable arrangements with North Aurora and Oswego.

More details about this service are available on the PDQLink website: www.pdqlink.com. Prices vary by speed...

I went to a wireless connection from West Waves for a year back in 2002. It was quite a bit faster than dial-up, and it was also my first taste of broadband at home. (Back then I had a T1 connection at work that rocked!) Though the owner, Jason, ran a small shop that was not able to provide the 24/7 support that might be common with the big name outfits, it did the job until cable came along. I have not gone back to dial-up, and have been a "fat pipe" junkie ever since.

My brother in Rhinelander has very few options to get on the Internet. His solution was to go with a

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satellite Internet connection. I was just up there this past week with a third brother. We were able to connect simultaneously on our laptops with no problem. That connection is costly at about \$60 a month. I might add that each month, my four brothers and I connect via a free tele-conference service called 781382CALL, for the price of a long distance phone call to Boston. Now that we all have some form of broadband access, we are hopeful to make a transition to video conferencing in the near future. (We are looking into CUWorld, a free way to go. Has anyone used that?)

You may have seen the Verizon commercial that touts the availability of broadband Internet access via their wireless PCMCIA card... when the boss learns that he can do his job wirelessly in Vegas, he puts on his sunglasses and promptly leaves! (A worker exclaims, "Vegas Baby!") Tom had a Sprint card in his laptop during our Executive Meeting last week, and we were able to connect from my dining room table. Now that was amazing! We may be able to see this in action at our next meeting, though that will depend on whether Tom is on call or not and has the card...

Looking forward to the October meeting, we will be having a brief overview of the Delorme's latest version of their mapping program: Street Atlas USA 2007. This is a program that I use in conjunction with my GPS receiver. For my part-time job, I would literally be lost without it as I drive around Northern Illinois looking for obscure addresses. Tom will have something else in store as well. ;~) And of course, there will also be the nominations for the elections.

Oh, and last month we did a program on: "Creating and Printing Business Cards and Labels." Some members wanted the links to the topic that we used. These may prove to be helpful for those interested. One of the tools used was a free download from Avery.

The FAQ page may be found here:

<http://www.avery.com/us/downloads/software/faqs/FQ0103.pdf>

Choose "Avery Wizard" to see the video tutorial on how it works here:

http://www.avery.com/us/software/support_tutorials.html

Microsoft has a "How to" Knowledge Base article that describes how to make business cards... (KB #170130 for Word; KB # 292277 in Publisher.) In Word you can find some help at: "Tools" - "Envelopes and Labels"... With the holidays approaching, it may be a good idea to get those mailing lists in order!

APOLOGY OFFERED

I apologize for being late on mailing out the September *Fox Tales*. The online version was out before the meeting, though the hard copy was delivered afterwards. We will make an effort to get this issue out and delivered to you before the next meeting. It will be available on our website as soon as it is ready to send to the printer. This is just another indicator that we need some people to help us out. If you do not want to try for Editor, maybe you could be a "staff writer." We all face various trials and tribulations when it comes to personal computing in this digital world, and writing up your experiences may be of interest to other members. Did you know that Dave Chrestenson's article is being distributed to other user groups via APCUG? (<http://www.apcug.net/editorial/2006/090306.rtf>) Would you be interested in being "published?" Maybe you would prefer having a "ghost writer's" name?





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**The AmericInn has WiFi !
So bring your laptop and connect during our
meeting!**

***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 (October) will be at the AmericInn at 1050 Douglas Road, Oswego, Illinois. The formal meeting starts at 9:15 A.M. Non-member visitors are always welcome.

“USERS HELPING USERS”



**The Following Member has
renewed his membership
Joe Waldeck**

Thank You

Remember: Members must be current with their dues to vote in the upcoming election!

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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Fox Tales



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The Fox Valley PC Association Web site is:

www.fvpca.org
Courtesy of APCUG



The title of the October
“Program of the Month” will be:
“Delorme Street Atlas USA 2007 with GPS”



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

October 21, 2006

At the AmericInn location
1050 Douglas Road, Oswego, IL (WiFi enabled)