



# SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

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Serving the Roanoke Valley

August 2008

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### Help your newsletter

You are invited to share favorite websites, reviews of software or just general computer experiences. Send your article or notes to [editor@rvpcc.org](mailto:editor@rvpcc.org).



The Olympic Games begin  
August 8

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Next Meeting  
Saturday  
August 9, 2008  
9:15 a.m.  
Topic:  
Sony 'BRAVIA' Home  
Theater System  
By  
Earl Abbott

## Hurricane Information

With hurricanes making the news, here is an update on a site mentioned before in SoftTalk: the National Hurricane Center. Their website is [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov).

The site has been updated with improved maps and presentations. The home page map shows symbols for named storms and potential storms in both the Atlantic and the Pacific. Just mouse over the symbol for a brief advisory. Click on the symbol for maps such as expected paths.

Scroll down on the home page and click on a storm's name to see the maps plus detailed advisories issued by the Hurricane Center.

The site has a wealth of information. Start with the "Be Prepared" article, then browse the FAQs. Weather buffs can read about the Saffir-Simpson Scale and eye-wall wind profiles, or explore hurricane history. Or, link to the "Hurricane Hunters" site and see a description and pictures of flying into a hurricane.

This site deserves a spot in your favorites list.

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## Secretary's Report

July 12, 2008

The President, Earl Abbott, called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

### Reports:

**Vice President:** Ron Zoll—nothing to report.

**Secretary:** The Secretary, Kay Viskup, is still in New York. Sandy Johnson is acting as temporary secretary. The minutes from the June meeting were published in SoftTalk.

**Treasurer:** Helen Trenor reported that the club is solvent.

**Public Relations:** Bill Scott thanked everyone for their sympathy. The committee still needs program ideas. Several suggestions were made, including setting up a home theater. Any program ideas would be welcome.

**Roanoke County Schools:** Homer reported that nothing has changed.

**Door prizes:** The following members won door prizes: Jim Ruble, a dart board; Bob Johnson, tiny radio; Sandy Johnson, pen; Bill Farmer, flashlight; and Helen Trenor, coffee cup.

**Program:** Andy McLaughlin demonstrated the new Firefox 3 browser, including Pic lens, a photo web site, and Firefox 3 add-ons.

Bill Scott demonstrated Ubuntu 8.4 on his new laptop. He also passed out CDs containing the program.

After much discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Sandy Johnson,  
Acting secretary

### The IBM PC

Would you believe that the IBM PC was released 27 years ago? Or, **just** 27 years ago, as we old-timers look at it.

What amazing changes we have seen in those 27 years!

## PREZ' NOTES

July 20, 2008

I hope to see you at the August meeting of RVPCC. I will be displaying a Sony "BRAVIA" Home Theater System. Wall Mart made an offer that I could not refuse. The system includes surround sound, AM-FM-DVD-iPod dock, and wireless remote control. The speakers are small, but you may be surprised at the sound that is available. I believe other products will be demonstrated too. Members are friendly. Visitors are welcome.

Earl Abbott

[www.cuil.com](http://www.cuil.com)

Cuil, pronounced "cool," is a new search engine. It claims to be the world's biggest – searching three times the web pages searched by Google, and ten times those searched by Microsoft.

Cuil also claims that it finds better references by analyzing a page deeper. This is different from Google, which shows you the most popular sites. Cuil says it analyses the web and not its users.

Cuil also says that it does not collect any "personally identifiable information" on its users. Any preferences, such as language settings, are kept in a cookie on the user's computer, not on Cuil's computer.

Cuil presents its results in a different format and in greater detail than Google, making it easier to choose the results to read.

Cuil—have you tried it yet?

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## Kodak Gallery Restrictions

Kodak Gallery has added restrictions that make it a bit less valuable as picture storage site. In the past, a person with a free membership could download high-resolution pictures from their own albums and from friend's albums. "High resolution" meaning the same resolution that was used when the pictures were sent to the Gallery.

Now you have to be a paid member (\$25 per year minimum) to download your own pictures in high resolution. Non-paid members cannot download their own pictures in high-resolution but must order CDs of their own pictures at prices that start at 15 cents per picture or \$10 for 1 to 50 pictures. With larger orders, the cost per pictures drops until it reaches \$40 for 1,000 pictures.

Also, you can no longer download friend's pictures in high resolution, nor can you order them on CD. You can download them only in a low resolution, 40 to 60 KB. You can still have your own or your friend's pictures printed by the Gallery in clear and sharp Kodak prints for 15 cents each, or less with frequent special sales.

When asked about the restrictions to downloading friend's pictures, the Gallery answered as follows: *"Unfortunately, due to copyright laws and rights, recipients of shared albums are not allowed to download the original high resolution photos of those being share with them."*



Meeting space provided by  
Roanoke County Schools

## Do It Yourself Website

The August, 2008 issue of Smart Computing described a site for crafter's, hobbyists, entrepreneurs, and people who just like to make stuff: [www.Make-Stuff.com](http://www.Make-Stuff.com).

When your friends say, "You know you can buy one of those..." do you say, "Yeah, so?" If you love to make things, if you constantly have a project going in a back room, or cluttering up a kitchen counter, if you start making Christmas presents in June and you watch all those do-it-yourself shows on TV, then this site is for you.

The site has many ideas and instructions for:

- Crafts and Projects
- Cooking
- Formulas and Remedies
- Gardening
- Holidays
- Kid Stuff
- Recycling
- Sewing

## Firewall for Win98

Effective June 11, 2006, Microsoft ended support of Windows 98, 98SE, and ME. Several of us are still running 98 on older PCs. We need to maintain our security, but publishers of firewall, anti-virus, and spyware programs are dropping their support for these older operating systems. What are users of the older Windows version to do?

One of our members has found a free firewall for Windows 98: **Jetico**, at [www.jetico.com](http://www.jetico.com). This works on 98, ME, NT, 2000, and XP.

An article on security for older systems recommended using Mozilla Firefox. This would be more secure than the no-longer-updated Internet Explorer included in Win 98.

(Editor's note) Has anyone else found security programs that run on the older system? Free programs? Please let me know so that the information can be included in the next issue of SoftTalk.

## Smart Computing magazine

A good magazine for computerists is *Smart Computing*. The cover of the magazine says “In Plain English” which is always welcome.

Each issue is filled with useful articles. The August issue concentrated on getting rid of software glitches. Subscribers to the magazine also have free use of the magazine’s website at [www.smartcomputing.com](http://www.smartcomputing.com).

The magazine’s website shows 10 reasons to subscribe. Here’s what they say about themselves, somewhat abbreviated:

### 1. Free Tech Support

Access our database of error messages, the knowledgebase, troubleshooting articles, maintenance procedures, and installation articles. Still can’t find the answer? Call our live, local tech support (800 number).

### 2. Four Magazines For The Price Of One

You have free online access to every article produced by our sister publications, *PC Today*, *Computer Power User*, and *Reference Series*. Over 25,000 articles.

### 3. My Personal Library

Keeping track of the amount of content we publish can be a bit overwhelming. “My Personal Library” allows you to organize and store online tutorials, reviews, tips, and articles in one easy-to-access location.

### 4. Plain-English Editorial

We produce the cleanest, easiest-to-understand editorial

in the computing category.

### 5. Live, Local Customer Service

A live *Smart Computing* employee answers every call. No automated phone directory, no international call center.

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Find out if other subscribers have already answered your question. Or post specific questions and receive very timely answers.

### 7. Save 70% Off The Newsstand Price

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### 8. Minimal Advertising

*Smart Computing* is limited to 19 pages of advertising per issue.

### 9. Strict Privacy Policy

We do not sell, trade, or otherwise distribute any personal data on our subscribers.

### 10. Risk-Free Subscriptions

All subscriptions are risk-free. Cancel at any time and receive a refund for all unmailed issues.

No, SoftTalk isn’t running magazine ads. *Smart computing* is a good publication that most of us would find useful. If you are interested, go to their website and see for yourself by signing up for a three-month free trial subscription. Or, sign up for a one-year subscription for \$29.00, which includes 12 magazines plus access to the online information.



Andy McLaughlin was showing the club how the new Firefox 3 browser works.

## Texting can be hazardous

There was an interesting article by Dionne Searcey in the July 25 Wall Street Journal, “Generation Text: Emailing on the Go Sends Some Users Into Harm’s Way.” It described people texting as they walked and bumping into people and things. In London, some lampposts are being fitted with padded bumpers. Egos as well as bodies are being bruised.

Read the article by going to [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com) and enter “generation text searcey” (without the quotes) into the search box. It’s worth a chuckle or two.

The RVPCC is now on the Roanoke events calendar at [www.roanoke.com](http://www.roanoke.com). Select ‘events calendar’ and the date.

Door prizes



Jim Ruble and his grandson are going to have fun with this 'dart' board



This little tiny radio really works—you just need a magnifying glass to tune in the stations!



Earl Abbott is showing off the IBM mug



Virginia Mountain Peach Festival  
August 3 & 4, 2008  
Elmwood Park

