



# SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

Volume 24 Number 5

Serving the Roanoke Valley

May 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).

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Next Meeting  
May 10, 2008  
9:15 a.m.

Program:  
Tour of new VDOT  
Facility

## VDOT TOUR

We will be taking a tour of the VDOT Traffic Management Center for our May 10, 2008 meeting.

We will meet at Arnold Burton and go as a group leaving at 9:15 am. If anyone is running late, they can catch-up with us at the center.

The center is located at 1596 Deborah Lane, Salem, VA 24153

The tour will end at 11:00 am as the manager has to leave by 11:00 am that day for another appointment.

### Driving directions for VDOT tour

Take route 311 out of Salem toward I-81.  
Pass under I-81  
Continue about 0.1 miles on 311.  
Turn right on Deborah Lane  
Drive about 0.4 miles to the VDOT site.

Need a map? Go to <http://maps.google.com> and enter the destination:  
1596 Deborah Lane, Salem, VA 24153.



## Secretary's Report

April 12, 2008

President Earl Abbott opened the meeting at 9:17AM. **Door Prizes:** Kay Viskup - stuffed pig, Bill Farmer - LED flashlight, Helen Trenor - chocolate bar, Sandy Johnson - mug, Bill Scott - toy horn. **Officers' Reports: Secretary:** Kay Viskup reported March Minutes are printed in April 2008 news letter. **Treasurer's Report:** Helen Trenor read the current Treasurer's Report. **Roanoke County Schools:** Howard Duff was not in attendance.

Earl Abbott opened discussion re the future of Club. Bill Scott discussed need for more members. Helen Trenor stated what standard costs were to keep operation of Club. Reminder notices regarding dues should be sent to members. Membership forms are to be brought up to date.

**Public Relations:** John Yeatts mentioned that flyers regarding the Club should be distributed to public libraries, community colleges, AARP, church bulletin boards, etc. Focus on members' suggestions. Lewis Wilson will check with Jack Morris to work on flyers.

Sandy Johnson will eliminate e-mail addresses of officers from cover page of news letter; hopefully this will eliminate some of the SPAM the officers receive.

**Program:** Bill Scott gave a report on various models of remote controls.

With no further business at hand, Earl Abbott closed meeting at 11:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Kay Viskup, Secretary

RVPCC

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Meeting space provided by  
Roanoke County Schools

## PREZ' NOTES

Well, its time for another installment of Prez' Notes. A lot of people are talking about the environment, how to reduce greenhouse gasses, etc. Let me tell you a true story which may have helped the environment.

In 1965, I had bought 55 acres of land which was on a hill on top of a mountain. I was a radio amateur and wanted a good location for an amateur radio station. I had married a young woman who liked horses and other pets, so we could enjoy her pets and my amateur radio hobby at this location. Planting hundreds of white pine trees in some of our open fields would be a good way to keep less-desirable plants from taking over the open fields.

White pines could be raised to sell as Christmas Trees. If we did not sell the little pines, they could be used later for lumber, or for landscape between home sites, or for a private retreat.

My wife decided that she preferred city life and city people, so she moved back to the city. I tried living by myself, but soon decided that I was not ready to be a hermit in the mountains, and moved back to the suburbs.

The white pines continued to grow, some are now more than 50 feet tall. They are helping the environment by controlling erosion, changing carbon dioxide to oxygen and carbon, and giving beauty and purpose to some mountain land.

So, that's how it is at Bull Run Knob on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

I am now spending time at personal computing instead of amateur radio.

I invite any person interested in personal computing to visit us at our next meeting of the RVPCC.

Earl Abbott



## Recommended Programs

By Del Kirschner

CCleaner is a free registry cleaner and junk file remover that is quite effective. It allows selection of many functions and doesn't seem to cause any of the problems of some registry cleaners. The program can be downloaded from [www.filehippo.com](http://www.filehippo.com). Latest version is 2.07.575.

Another of my favorite programs is Spybot - a way to remove spyware, and immunize your system against spyware infections. It can be downloaded from [www.filehippo.com](http://www.filehippo.com). Latest version is 1.5.2.

Instead of WinZIP, which is not free, I use the free CAM Unzip program. It is very easy to install and use to extract compressed files to a selected folder. Available from [www.camunzip.com](http://www.camunzip.com). Latest version is 4.42.

To ease the entry of log-in names and passwords, I use AI Roboform. Version 6.6.7 is a free program. It can be downloaded from several web sites (search Google for this particular version). I'm not sure if later versions are also free.

Older computers do not change the Daylight Saving Time correctly since the effective dates were changed last year. Fortunately, there are patches available that can be easily installed. One patch can be used for Windows 98 and ME, and another patch is used for Windows NT, 2000, and XP. Both patches are available from the freeware download section of <http://www.intelliadmin.com/Downloads.htm>.

To prevent those annoying pop-ups that show up during web surfing, I use a free Pop-Up Stopper program. It runs in background, and is available from [http://www.panicware.com/product\\_psfree.html](http://www.panicware.com/product_psfree.html). Version 3.1 is still free.

A very useful file management tool is Free Commander. It is an alternative to the Windows

(Continued next column)



## Sources of SPAM

By Bob Johnson

Where do all these spams come from! I started looking at the country code in the FROM information. Most spams came from .com, .net, and .org, which don't indicate a specific country but are probably USA. The others were from Australia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, South Korea, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

If you too are curious, you can look up the country on a list of the domain abbreviations. To see a list, Google "internet country codes" -- include the quotes to cut down the number of hits.

Suppose you get a spam from .vu. Look it up in the country code list and you'll see that .vu is Vanuatu. Google Vanuatu and you will learn that Vanuatu is a South Pacific island nation. Isn't the information age wonderful?

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(Recommended Programs continued)

Explore program that provides a dual-screen display to facilitate file copying and moving, folder creation, filename editing and searching, and many other functions. Version 2007 is available from [www.freecommander.com](http://www.freecommander.com).

My favorite music-playing program is WinAmp. It is easier to use than the Windows Media Player and other music programs - and it is also free. Available from [http://www.filehippo.com/download\\_winamp/](http://www.filehippo.com/download_winamp/). Version 5.531.

And for those who would like to use a free, and very effective, anti-virus program, I recommend Avast. One of its advantages is an automatic update of the virus library every time you log onto the Internet. This program can be downloaded from <http://www.avast.com/eng/download-avast-home.html>. A registration license key is needed, and it can be requested at this site using the Quick Link button (registration is required within 60 days of installation). Current free version is 4.8 Home Edition.

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## Vista tips

If you are using Vista and would like some useful tips, try these two sources:

Kim Komando: go to [www.komando.com](http://www.komando.com). Click on "Tips" in the red row of subjects. In the next screen, scroll down the "Tips Archive" box and click on "Windows Vista," the last entry.

Microsoft: Go to [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com). Search for "Vista Tips and Tricks" and look at the first item in the list.

## Rearrange Paragraphs in Word

Swapping paragraphs in Microsoft Office Word can be complicated. As well as having to cut and paste, you often have to reformat line breaks afterward to make the paragraph line up properly. Instead, you can use the SHIFT+ALT keyboard shortcut. Click the paragraph that you want to move, hold down SHIFT+ALT, and move the paragraph up or down by using the arrow keys. Each press of an arrow key causes your selected paragraph to jump over one adjacent paragraph.

The above tip is from a Microsoft Daily Tips and Tricks. Although the tip was written for Word 2007, it works in Word 2000.



## Interesting websites

By Earl Abbott

Here are some websites that you may want to visit:

Climate crisis: [www.wecansolveit.org](http://www.wecansolveit.org)

Learn more at: [www.helpthehoneybees.com](http://www.helpthehoneybees.com)

GE imagination at work: [www.ecomagination.com](http://www.ecomagination.com)

Essential for living: [www.americanchemistry.com](http://www.americanchemistry.com)

## Vocabulary of Technology

(From Internet, author unknown)

NEW ... different color from previous design

ALL NEW ... parts not interchangeable with previous design

EXCLUSIVE ... imported product

UNMATCHED ... almost as good as the competition

DESIGN SIMPLICITY ... costs cut to the bone (manufacturer's)

FOOLPROOF OPERATION ... no provision for adjustment

ADVANCED DESIGN ... copywriter doesn't understand it

IT'S HERE AT LAST ... rush job; nobody knew it was coming

FIELD TESTED ... manufacturer lacks test equipment

HIGH ACCURACY ... unit on which all parts fit

DIRECT SALES ONLY ... manufacturer had argument with distributor

RUGGED ... too heavy to lift

LIGHTWEIGHT ... lighter than rugged

YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT ... finally got one that worked

UNPRECEDENTED PERFORMANCE ... nothing we had before ever worked this way

REVOLUTIONARY ... it's different from our competitors

BREAKTHROUGH ... we finally figured out a way to sell it

FUTURISTIC ... can't figure out another reason why it looks as it does

ENERGY SAVING ... achieved when the power switch is "off"

DISTINCTIVE ... a different color or shape than our competitors

NO MAINTNENACE ... impossible to fix

REDESIGNED ... previous faults are corrected, we hope

HAND CRAFTED ... machine that assembles it is operated without gloves

PERFORMANCE PROVEN ... will operate through warranty period

MEETS QUALITY STANDARDS ... ours, not yours

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED ... manufacturer's, upon receipt of the check

## Laptop Buying Guide

For several years, the Wall Street Journal's Walter Mossberg has written a twice-a-year buyer's guide for computers. His main focus has been desktops, with less attention on laptops. Now, he says laptops are outselling desktops and his main focus will shift to laptops.

He concentrates on "mainstream" laptops, not the extreme applications and not the very large or the very small machines.

Mossberg's most recent article was a quick guide to laptops. It discussed physical size, Windows vs. Mac, operating systems, video, memory, storage, batteries, wireless options, and other features. There was too much detail in his article to repeat it all here, and of course we want to keep the copyright-cops off our backs.

If you are considering a new laptop, be sure to read Mossberg's article. Go to [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com), enter "a laptop buyer's guide" into the search box, and click on "Return." Mossberg's article was published 4/10/08.

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## Re-register for the Do Not Call List?

You DO NOT have to re-register for the do not call list. The FTC no longer requires us to sign up every five years. Your number will stay on the list unless you direct the Federal Trade Commission to remove it.

If you haven't registered your landline numbers, you can do it at 1-800-382-1222 or at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov). The website also includes information such as what to do if you still get telemarketers calling after you have been registered for more than a month.

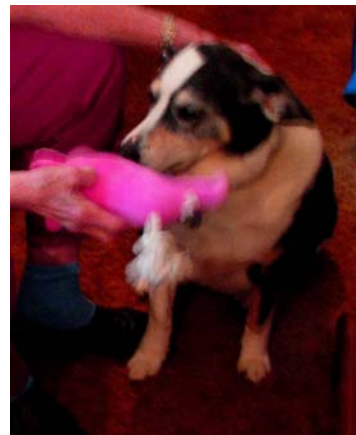
It is not necessary to register cell phone numbers since telemarketing calls to cell phones are illegal.

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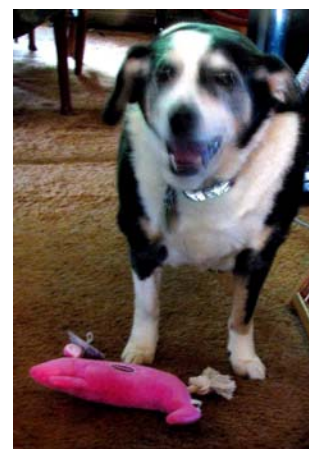
## Door Prize winner



Kay Viskup with her door prize choice



Lucy gets the door prize!



Thanks, guys, I'm going to enjoy this pig.

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