



# SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

Volume 25 Number 11

Serving the Roanoke Valley

November 2009

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### In this issue:

Christmas dinner . . . . .	1
October minutes . . . . .	2
Prez Notes . . . . .	2
Learn to Play Bridge . . . . .	2
Win 7 is Here! . . . . .	3
Simplifying XP to 7 . . . . .	4
Try Secunia PSI . . . . .	4
Pics from October . . . . .	5
Dinner Menus . . . . .	6
Map to Pheasant Ridge . . . . .	6

Next Meeting  
 November 14, 2009  
 9:15 a.m.  
 Topic:  
 Editing High Dynamic  
 Range Photos  
 by  
 Andy McLaughlin



It's time to make your reservations for our annual Christmas dinner.

The dinner will be held at Pheasant Ridge on December 5th at 6 p.m.

We will vote on the dinner menu selection at the November meeting. (Selections and prices are listed on page 6.)

Checks can be made payable to RVPCC and given to the treasurer at the November meeting or mailed to RVPCC, PO Box 322, Salem, VA 24153

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## Secretary's Report

Minutes for October 10, 2009

The meeting was called to order by the President, Earl Abbott, at 9:22 a.m.

### Reports:

**Treasurer:** Earl gave the treasurer's report because Helen was going to be arriving late to the meeting.

**Secretary:** The minutes from the September meeting were published in the October SoftTalk.

**County Schools:** Homer said there were no new developments.

**Program:** The November program will be a discussion of High Dynamic Range photo editing by Andy McLaughlin.

**Nominating Committee:** The following slate of officers for 2010 was presented:

President: John Leary

Vice President: Bill Scott

Secretary: Kay Viskup

Treasurer: Helen Trenor

Membership Chairman: Helen Trenor

Roanoke County Schools: Homer Duff

Public Relations/Program: Andy

McLaughlin & Bill Farmer

WebMaster: Tim Johnson

Sandy Johnson will continue as the editor of SoftTalk.

Door prizes were won by Andy McLaughlin, John Leary, Bill Farmer, and Bob Johnson.

Christmas dinner: It was decided that the Christmas dinner will be held at Pheasant Ridge, where it was held last year, at 6 p.m. on December 5. We will vote on the menu at the November meeting.

Program: Bob Johnson presented a program on photo editing with Adobe Photoshop Elements 7. He also discussed free programs that are available. He also showed how he solved a plumbing problem with TurboCad 14, which he said was a very good drawing program but had a high learning curve.

Following the program, we all had a piece of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cake.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Johnson, acting secretary

## PREZ' NOTES

Nov. 5, 2009

I hope everyone is well, happy, and enjoying personal computing. I have enjoyed "tooting my own horn" by sharing my thoughts with you with these "Prez' Notes" articles.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that people in China read our Soft Talk newsletters. People in other States, and people in Virginia read Soft Talk. I want to say "Hello" to Craig, a faithful reader.

We have an excellent slate of Officer Nominees willing to begin serving in January after our December elections. I look forward to attending future RVPC meetings. It has been a pleasure to serve as an Officer in RVPC.

Your friend,  
Earl Abbott

## Learn To Play Bridge

Here is a website where a beginner can learn to play Bridge. Free on-line instruction courses are available from the American Contract Bridge League.

This free software has been downloaded by tens of thousands of players worldwide. **Learn to Play Bridge I** is for beginners; **Learn to Play Bridge II** is for those who know the basics but want to develop their playing, bidding, and defense skills. The software was developed by Fred Gitelman of Bridge Base Inc. and funded by the ACBL.

Beginners can use Learn to Play Bridge I to learn the basic rules in five minutes, or go through the entire program and digest the equivalent of a 1,000-page book. Link: <http://web.acbl.org/LearnToPlayBridge/>. Registration (free) is required.

This link came from a Wall Street Journal article from October 24-25, by Alexander McCall Smith, titled "The Game That Trumps All Others." To read the full article, go to <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704500604574483341946253958.html> or google "The game that trumps all others" including the quotes.

## WINDOWS 7 IS HERE!

Walter Mossberg, the Personal Technology Columnist for the Wall Street Journal, is an enthusiastic supporter of windows 7. In an October 8 article, he said “With Windows 7, PC users will at last have a strong, modern successor to the sturdy and familiar, but aged, windows XP...” Mr. Mossberg believes Windows 7 “is the best version of Windows Microsoft has produced.” He “heartily” recommended Windows 7 to mainstream users. He felt that instead of Microsoft being far behind Apple in operating systems, it is now almost a toss-up between Windows 7 and the Mac OS X, with just a slight edge going to Apple.

Pretty strong statements. Those of us that have tried Vista and found it lacking, and those of us still using XP, are hoping that the statements are correct.

Upgrading an existing Vista PC should be relatively easy (although the computer may need to churn for several hours) for an upgrade to an equal or better version of Win 7. This will allow keeping all files, settings, and programs in place. Murphy’s Law says to do a backup before the upgrade.

However, Microsoft says that upgrading from XP to Win 7 will require backing up all data, reformatting the hard drive, installing 7, and then reinstalling all programs plus all the patches and upgrades to those programs. Microsoft will provide a free Easy Transfer Wizard, but this won’t move programs, just personal files.

To read Mossberg’s full article, go to [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com), search for “mossberg” and click on the Oct 8 article “A Windows to Help You Forget Vista” in the results list. Mossberg also has a 5 1/2 minute video, dated October 8, on Windows 7. In the same results list, look for “Video: Mossberg: Windows 7 ‘Vastly Better’ than Vista.”

Kim Komando reminds us that Windows 7 will not come with some features we are used to, such as email, photo editor, and movie maker. However, those programs can be downloaded free from Windows Live Essentials. To read more on this, go

to <http://www.komando.com/tips/index.aspx?id=7385>. Kim also has many more tips on Win 7 on her site.

Amazon’s price for Win 7 home premium upgrade was \$115 as of November 1. So, should we rush out buy win 7? Probably not unless we can’t tolerate XP or Vista, or really want the latest OS. If what we have works and does all that we need, we’d be better off using our older Windows until it is time to replace our computers.

*Editor’s notes, by Sandy: My Vista-to-7 upgrade (\$50 pre-release sale) is now up and running. The installation took a long time – I had to let it run all night. 7 seemed to be working well. It cut the boot up time almost in half. And I like the new features that I’ve tried. Was it worth the \$50? Yes. Would it have been worth more? Probably not. Later I discovered that the upgrade caused my Microsoft Publisher program to vanish along with the draft of this newsletter. I’m glad I made backups. I love my computer – I spend many happy hours cursing at it.*

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## Connecting a Projector To A PC

By Bob Johnson

At the October meeting, I was demonstrating photo editing software using an HP laptop PC with Vista. The computer disconnected itself from the projector several times. This was annoying to the presenter and to the presentees. Manipulating the settings available in Vista did not cure the problem. Searching the Internet later that day, I wasn’t able to find a solution.

Win 7 has now replaced Vista on the HP laptop. I found a Win 7 setting that might help with the projector problem. The setting is Control Panel > Hardware and Sound > Display > Connect To A Projector. The three useful choices are Computer only, Projector Only, and Duplicate. The purpose of the fourth choice, Extend, is not clear.

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Meeting space provided by  
Roanoke County Schools

## Simplifying XP → 7

Upgrading Windows XP to Windows 7 isn't the easiest job around. Without some simplification, it might be worth staying with XP.

First you must make sure your XP machine will run Windows 7. You could read all of 7's specs and poke around your machine to see what you have, but there is a simpler way. Just run the "Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor," free from Microsoft.

Go to [www.microsoft.com/downloads](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads) and search for "advisor" (without the quotes), then click on the Advisor in the list of results. Running the Advisor will check on your computer's hardware and software and make recommendations on needed improvements.

If the Advisor hasn't scared you off, and you still want to buy and install a copy of Win 7, remember that Microsoft does not offer an XP-to-7 upgrade; they want you to do a "clean install." This requires saving your data, reformatting your hard drive, installing Win 7, reinstalling/updating all your programs, and reloading your data. That is enough to scare off a lot of folks!

But, there is a simpler way, according to Katherine Boechret in the October 14<sup>th</sup> Wall Street Journal. She used Laplink's "Windows 7 Upgrade Assistant" to upgrade her XP laptop. This program saved programs, files, and setting on the computer in a place that was not affected by the installation of Win 7. After Win 7 was installed, the Assistant replaced all of her information. Her job was completed in two hours. She did have to do a little digging to make a few minor adjustments. She pointed out in her article that some McAfee and Symantec security programs may not transfer over to 7.

Laplink's program is available as a \$19.95 download from [www.laplink.com](http://www.laplink.com). Look for "PCmover Upgrade Assistant" on the Laplink home page. The program will assist the upgrade of Windows 2000 and later to Win 7.

Laplink's technical support site was asked if a user had to buy the upgrade version of Win 7 or the more expensive stand-alone version. The answer was: "Any version of 7 will work as long as you can do a

clean install and choose not to format the drive."

The link to Katherine Boehret's article in the Wall Street Journal is <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704107204574471214064210176.html>. Or, go to [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com) and enter "windows 7 upgrade" (with the quotes) into the search box. Click on the 10/14/2009 article "Windows 7 Upgrade Made Easy."

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## Give Secunia PSI a Try

It is difficult to keep all of your applications up to date. An old version of a program may have uncorrected errors, might be missing some new features, or may be susceptible to hackers. A typical computer has 80 programs installed. Many of these are regularly updated, but you may never learn that an update is available.

The Secunia **P**ersonal **S**oftware **I**nspector is a good answer to this problem. It scans your computer for programs that have not been updated. Secunia does not update the programs. Rather, it gives you links to the update sites.

Secunia also lists "end of life" programs that are no longer supported by the manufacturer. It will suggest that you either remove or replace these old programs.

It will find multiple copies and versions of programs. Neither Adobe nor Sun reliably remove old versions of their programs when they install new versions. Secunia will list all the versions it finds so you can easily see which older versions to delete.

The "Personal" version of Secunia is free. It runs on Windows 2000, XP, Vista, and 7. The Secunia Corporate office is located in Copenhagen, Denmark. All their website and programming is in English.

The link for the download is [http://secunia.com/vulnerability\\_scanning/personal/](http://secunia.com/vulnerability_scanning/personal/). Or, go to [www.secunia.com](http://www.secunia.com) and find the download for the "PSI" version.

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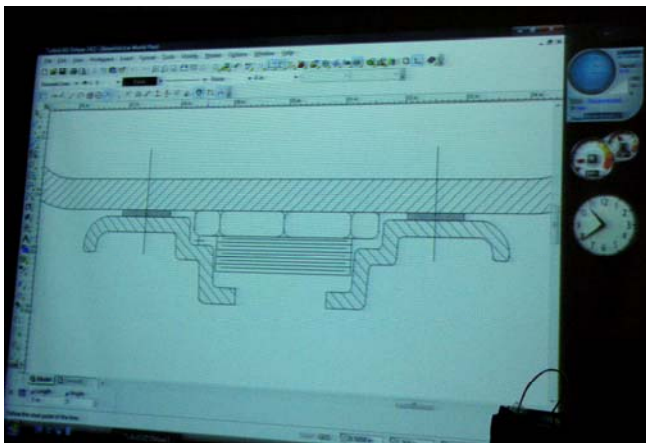
Pictures from October meeting



Bob Johnson demonstrating picture editing software



RVPCC celebrated its 25th anniversary in October.



A drawing made using TurboCad 14



Helen Trenor enjoying a piece of the anniversary cake



Kay Viskup with her new great granddaughter, Madeline—the reason Kay missed the October meeting.

RVPCC  
P.O. Box 322  
Salem, Va. 24153  
Web: <http://rvpcc.org>

Meeting space provided by  
Roanoke County Schools



### Christmas Dinner:

We must select one entrée only! Here is the list of available selections. We will vote for the single selection at the November meeting. Be there to have a voice in the menu selection.

#### At \$10.95 per person

Each entrée is served with salad and dessert

##### **Manicotti**

Served with green peas and garlic bread

##### **Baked Honey Ham**

Served with sweet potato casserole and country green beans

##### **Grilled Herb Chicken Breast**

Served with wild rice and sautéed broccoli

##### **Chicken Stir Fry**

Served with white rice

#### At \$12.95 per person

Each entrée is served with salad and dessert

##### **Orange Ginger Chicken Breast**

Served with rice and asparagus

##### **Sliced Steak with Burgundy**

##### **Sauce**

Served with baked potato and sautéed squash

##### **Bourbon Pork Loin**

Served with rice and sautéed broccoli

##### **Chicken Cordon Blue**

Served with white rice and broccoli

#### At \$14.95 per person

Each entrée is served with salad and dessert

##### **Crab Cakes**

Served with grits cakes and snap peas

##### **Roasted NY Strip**

Served with baked potato and broccoli

##### **Lamb Chops**

Served with sweet potatoes and green beans

##### **Baked Flounder**

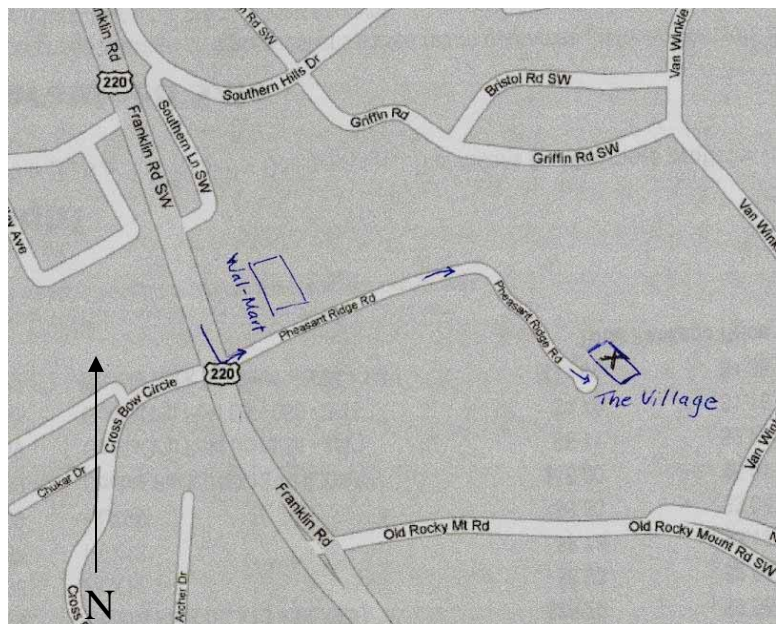
Served with white rice and honey carrots

#### RVPCC Meetings

**When:** 2nd Saturday of every month

**Where:** Arnold R. Burton Tech Center  
Room 105  
1760 Roanoke Blvd.  
Salem, VA 24153

**What time:** 9:15 am until noon



Directions to Pheasant Ridge