Q BITS

www.qcs.org

Wednesday February 10, 2010 7:00 PM

Computers in the Doctor's Office!

presented by Dr. Ilesh Kurani

From John Deere Medical Group

The QCS thanks NBS ,
the host of the qcs.org site
Network Business Systems NBS
www.nbson.com

This Month in Q BITS ..

Views and opinions expressed
by presenters
do not necessarily reflect those
of the Quad Cities Computer Society

Monthly meetings are open to the general public.

QCS Review
Holiday Get-Together
HOLIDAY PARTY IS A BIG SUCCESS-
By Judi McDowell

Approximately 40 loyal QCS members and guests attended the Holiday Party held on January 13th. The weather was much better in January than December when the meeting was originally scheduled. Although computers were used in preparation for the Holiday Party and in promoting it, there was not a computer in sight at this party.

We tested our skills of computer terms in a word scramble game and our brains in another logic game-all on paper (though probably printed with a computer and printer). We also had a 20 questions game that allowed people to mingle and get to know others in attendance. Did you know Harry Galley had an 8088 computer and that Max Davis still has his FIRST computer (an Apple IIGS)? Did you know Karen Reynolds has over 20 grandchildren? These are a few of the things we learned from our game of 20 questions, so you see it does pay to ask questions.

We enjoyed good food from crackers and cheese to veggies and sweet treats and thank all those who provided them for our enjoyment. We drew tickets for the White Elephant and though I did not see what everyone got, a couple people said they actually got something they could use.

The night ended with drawings for door prizes and raffle prizes. Two lucky people got gift certificates towards ice cream purchases at Whitey's, compliments of Lee Wassenhove. Lee also made available to the first person who acknowledged that they feed squirrels a big bag of ear corn-Melinda Missman was the first one to raise her hand and took home the bounty. Jim Kristan and Sam Smith won one year subscriptions to Smart Computing magazine and Larry Carson and Judi McDowell took home the raffle drawings of Vista Ultimate operating system software. Congratulations to all who won and thanks to all for attending and for all those that helped make this get together a fun time. I hope we can do it again sometime.

The *QCS* is a member of **apcug**

Would You Like to receive your *QBITS* via email?

The *QBITS* can now be produced in Acrobat PDF format and sent to your email box. If you desire to have the newsletter sent to you electronically instead of by US Mail, notify:

Patty Lowry,
QBITS co-editor
(563-332-8679)
heidiho@soloconnect.com

The QCS will then arrange to email your next issue to you.

Moving? Send an address change to:
felspaw@sbcglobal.net

The Quad-Cities Computer Society or QCS is an Iowa nonprofit organization for charitable, scientific, and educational purposes primarily to educate the public concerning the advantages and disadvantages of microcomputers and to publish a newsletter for distribution to members, area libraries and educational institutions. The QCS is recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable and educational organization by the IRS.

Digital SIG Notice!

Shari Baker who described the world of Digital Scrapbooking for our QCS members in September last year, has graciously consented to return and lead our DIgital SIG on 7:00 PM on Wednesday February 17, 2010 at the Tri-City Jewish Center. This area of computing gains a wider acceptance and joy each day.

If you are interested in preserving and sharing your family traditions, make a note to drop by, join the crowd and get some more helpful tips!

Download Full Length E-Books for Free or Inexpensively
By Ira Wilsker

About a year ago, I wrote about some of the excellent resources available that provide a wide selection of full-length books as free downloads. Since writing that column I have become aware of some other websites that also offer a wide selection of free and inexpensive e-books. For those who may not be aware, e-books are books of all genres that are available for download. A large assortment of titles, are available for a fee that can be downloaded to Amazon's proprietary Kindle; Amazon claims that over 360,000 titles, including many current best sellers, are available for download. Barnes and Noble recently announced its own proprietary e-book reader, the Nook, which will be released in early 2010. Barnes and Noble has stated that it will have over a million titles available for download to the Nook. While many new releases and bestsellers will be priced at about $10 at both Amazon and Barnes and Noble,

there is also a massive library of titles that can be downloaded for free from a variety of sources. The Kindle and Nook are relatively expensive, retailing for $259 each. For those not willing to spend that amount, there are thousands of titles that can be freely downloaded and displayed on computer in the universal PDF format.

In the minutes before typing this column, I downloaded a few titles from two sources that I have not used in the past. Both required free registration, and both offer a selection of both free and paid content. The paid content is usually reasonable in price, with one website offering unlimited downloads of paid content for about $5 per month (**free-ebooks.net**, discounts available), and another offering unlimited downloads for $9 per year (**worldlibrary.net**). The first "new" website for me was **downloadfreepdf.com**, where I found a book for one of my daughters who recently had her first child. I downloaded for free "Baby's First Year - What Every New Parent Needs to Know!" as a PDF file for my daughter. I also found and downloaded two free e-books for my wife, "10 Strategies to Improve Your Nursing Care," and "Student Nurse's Bible." Even though they were all free, I had to go through a checkout process as if I was paying for them, being sure to check the button that indicated that they were free. As soon as I completed the checkout process, the books were instantly available for download as PDF files. The default is to display the files in a browser window; in order to save the e-books on the computer, be sure to click on the "save" icon in the browser window (often a floppy-disk icon), and not the File-Save command on the browser toolbar.

The website **ebooknetworking.com** has an impressive menu of topics, but many of the topics only offer a small selection of e-books. I like interesting cookbooks, and this

website has four titles available as free downloads, "300 Chicken Recipes," "Delicious Diabetic Recipes," "Great Sandwiches," and the "Big Book of Cookies."

The website **free-ebooks.net** offers a limited number of free e-books for download in PDF format (5 per month free), or unlimited downloads for $5 per month or $20 per year. There is no limit on the number of titles that can be viewed for free online in HTML (webpage) format. The first category I looked at was "Business" which contained 166 titles available in PDF format, or viewable online in HTML format, which can be viewed in any browser. **Free-ebooks.net** also makes most of its titles available in the Mobipocket format which may be downloaded and read on Amazon's Kindle, mobile phones, Blackberry, Palm, and several other reader formats. Another interesting category was the "Food and Recipes" section, which offered 66 cookbooks. One that attracted my attention was "Cajun Clark's Cookbook," which contains a free selection of about 80 Cajun recipes, and a link to purchase the entire cookbook of over 1000 recipes. In the Humor category was a very cute (and clean) "Knock Knock. Who's Joking?" a collection of hundreds of short jokes and one-liners. Being a history buff, I found a very interesting e-book in the History category on a subject that I had not seen before, "The Big Guns of the Boer War," by W. J. Havenga. Considering that thousands of people are paying $259 for a Kindle or a Nook, a $20 annual subscription to **free-ebooks.net**, which provides unlimited downloads, is a relative bargain. For computer users, finding just one good title a year justifies the expense.

Another interesting website is **e-booksdirectory.com**, which lists 2807 free e-books in 399 categories. The actual e-books are hosted on a variety of websites, including Project Gutenberg, and available in a variety of formats, including PDF, plain text, and a variety of formats compatible with the various e-book readers. I found the listings comprehensive, and downloaded (for free) several titles on military history, religion, health, law, hunting & fishing, science, and travel. I found especially interesting "Mom's Home Cooking" volumes one and two, which had about 250 recipes each. There is something here for everyone at a price that can not be beat.

For those looking for free e-books that are generally highly technical, **ebooksdownloadfree.com** has a wide assortment available. The major categories of books at **ebooksdownloadfree.com** include medical, computer, sciences, history, and management. These books are mostly recent publications and require a few mouse clicks to reach the download page, but the results are well worth it. I downloaded several of the books and while the files were large, often over 10MB, they were the complete books in PDF format, including all of the pictures. Some of the downloads were in the RAR compression format, but there are several freeware utilities available that can uncompress the RAR format. Some of the downloads had an attached password text file which included a key to uncompress the files. A few of the download links opened up popup ads, which I quickly closed. This site, **ebooksdownloadfree.com** had some of the best current titles available.

I like to read and have reference books available. Free or inexpensive e-books may be the way to go.
WEBSITES
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Kindle>.
<http://www.downloadfreepdf.com>.
<http://www.ebooknetworking.com>.
<http://www.free-ebooks.net>.
<http://worldlibrary.net>.
<http://www.e-booksdirectory.com>.
<http://www.ebooksdownloadfree.com>.

Ira Wilsker is an APCUG director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; Program Director of Management Development at the Lamar Institute of Technology, Beaumont TX; and a radio and TV show host. Contact him at <**iwilsker@apcug.net**>.

Cyber News!

It's a brand new year! Maybe the biggest gift we have in this life is time. The thing about time is that we can't stop it; the clock just keeps ticking away. You and I don't know how much of this precious commodity we have on this earth so maybe a great new year's resolution would be to think about how we can make better use of it. Time is equated as the past, present and future. "Heal the Past, Live the Present, and Dream the Future. "In living the present, don't take each day for granted, live it! In 2010 let's watch what we eat, exercise, take time to relax, and think of ways to **tinyurl. com/26wx28** make a difference in someone else's life.

When Windows 7 was released in late October I purchased a new desktop with the new operating system. Now after two months of constant use, I am pleased to say that I have yet to have the slightest problem. Here are some of the things that I like about Windows 7.
•Windows 7 has faster start-up and faster response.
•All your favorite applications located on the task bar.
•With a 64bit system, the ability to have lots of memory.
•Gadgets can be placed anywhere on the desktop.
•Sticky notes for the desktop.
•Global search.
•Snap feature.

•Snipping tool.

Let me give you a short synopsis on the above in the order that they are listed.

Windows 7 boots up faster than Vista or XP and applications open quicker. Example: My XP machine takes over 4 minutes to boot up, and 35 seconds to open Paint Shop Pro which is the slowest program I have to load up. The new Windows 7 machine boots up in a little over one minute and Paint Shop Pro opens in 14 seconds. Quite a difference.

The taskbar in Windows 7 is now more functional and some say resembles the Apple computer. **tinyurl. com/yg7mdbk** Simply drag your most used applications from the program menu to the taskbar for easy access.

When purchasing a new computer you should make sure you're buying a 64 bit system so as to take advantage of increased memory. **tinyurl. com/yj2nazv** The average computer now comes with 8GB which is twice as much than was allowed in 32 bit systems.

Gadgets are new if you didn't use Vista. Vista gadgets were kept in the side bar and quite frankly I didn't like that feature.**tinyurl.com/ yzquj5p** With Windows 7 gadgets can be moved any place you want them on your desktop.

I love "sticky notes." **tinyurl. com/yegtzsq**You can place these little notes anywhere on your desktop to keep track of things you have to do. You can even right click and change the color. I find I use them daily, and it saves lots of paper.

The features in Windows 7 are phenomenal.**tinyurl. com/yk5w2n7 search** Click the start button and type whatever you're looking for in the search box and instantly it will find any document, music file, photo, or even an email message that contains that word or words.

The "snap feature" is a new and quick way to maximize and minimize windows. **tinyurl.com/ ylqgvst** You don't have to bother

with the little square boxes at the top right of every program anymore. Just grab the window and move it to the top of your screen, and it's maximized! Grab it again and move it down for a smaller window. Great new feature.

I also love the snipping tool. **.tinyurl. com/yhvb2sw** It can easily be used to take a picture of anything, anywhere on your computer. I also use that feature often.

The only concern you'll have with Windows 7 is what to use for an email client as the operating system no longer includes one. I liked Outlook Express, that we used since Windows 95, but it's gone now. Vista used Windows Mail and that has now been replaced by **tinyurl. com/yz86gjk** Windows Live Mail which you can download from Microsoft and is free. That's the one I am using and am quite happy with it. This program also includes a calendar comparable to the one used in Outlook. There are other free email clients such as Thunderbird, which is very similar to Outlook Express, and Web Mail accounts like Yahoo and Gmail. **tinyurl.com/2mq5fl**

That's it in a nutshell. I won't spend a lot of time in the next few months talking about Windows 7 until more people jump on the band wagon. Windows XP is still a solid reliable system and Microsoft will continue to support it for quite some time. There is already talk that Microsoft could release the next operating system, Windows 8, as early as 2012 but at this time that's only a rumor.

Here's a reminder that my System Maintenance page has been completely revised. Many detailed steps have been included which should eliminate any confusion as to how to install and run the suggested programs. **tinyurl. com/5bs7zz** System Maintenance.

"The Greatest Windows Tips of All Time." tinyurl. com/ yebl8vk PC World has listed tips for XP, Vista and Windows 7. You might want to browse through them to see if you can pick up a few to

make your computing easier.

Photo Tip of the Month: Now that you have all those holiday digital photos, you may want to have them printed. Of course you can accomplish that on your own color printer, but if you don't want to use that expensive ink and special paper, there's another handy way to get your prints. You can upload the photos you want printed to Costco, Sam's Club, Walgreen's, and most Camera stores. State what size and the number you want, then pick them up at your convenience. Another way is to copy the photos you want printed on to a pocket drive and take that to the store. Most stores have computers where you plug your flash drive into a USB slot, place your order and then wait for them to be printed while you shop.

Nominating Committee Request

At the opening of the program meeting March 10th, a report of the nominating committee will be presented. After presenting this slate, the President will open the meeting for nominations from the floor. Floor nominations require that:

1) Nominees must be members in good standing.
2) Nominees must be present and express their willingness to serve.
3) Any nominee not present must have submitted to the Board prior to the meeting by mail to Diana Wolf, Secretary, Quad-Cities Computer Society, Tri-City Jewish Center 2715 30th, Rock Island, IL 61201 a written statement expressing their willingness to serve if elected.

If you are interested or know of someone interested in being a director-at-large, contact Jerry Heimburger at **jheim6407@gmail.com.**

Black and white photography is sometimes very dramatic and you might like to try it. Most digital cameras will shoot in B&W or you can change a color image in a photo editing program. Here are some secrets for shooting black and white from Digital Photo Magazine. **tinyurl. com/ydce84m**

You might enjoy browsing my personal Photo Site. You'll see over 1,100 pictures in 38 galleries I've taken from around the world. **tinyurl.com/3arve6** We have had thousands of views on our Photo Site, thanks in part to Cyber News readers!

Check out my Blog. There you will find thoughts on many subjects and occasionally find supplements to Cyber News such as Virus alerts or other computer information that I think might be important to you. **tinyurl. com/n3t8r2** Blog

Windows 7 is Here! Part III

Written by Robert Nisbet, a member of the Asbury Computer Club, MD
www.amvresidents.org/computerclub
halmarilyn@hotmail.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

So far in this series we have covered some general questions about Windows 7 (May) and obtaining and installing Windows 7 (September.) This month I will start to cover some of the new features of Windows 7.

Caveat for upgrading from Vista

Something I forgot to address in the last issue is for Vista users upgrading to Windows 7. In your upgrade box you will find two DVDs. One is for 32 bit Windows and one is for 64 bit Windows. Choose the 32 bit disc for your upgrade. Don't worry about the difference for basic computing. Now, one of the two choices you have when you start the upgrade disc is the option called Upgrade. This is called an "in place" upgrade where the new operating system replaces the old operating system, but (hopefully) leaves everything else in place - your data files, settings, etc. NEVER, ever, ever start this process without first backing up all your data files to an external medium. Nine hundred ninety eight times out of a thousand everything will go fine, but you don't want to end up among those few where it does not and lose all your data. The Windows 7 DVD contains a Windows Easy Transfer Wizard tool that will backup all your files and settings for you and put them back on the Windows 7 computer. If you are not computer savvy, you may need technical assistance to accomplish all this. Just to reiterate for XP users, Windows 7 ONLY comes on DVD, so if your XP computer only has a CD drive, forget about investing in the upgrade.

What's New in Windows 7?

There is no way in a few short paragraphs to describe in-depth all the new or improved features in Windows 7. For these articles I will just give you a basic overview of several of the most obvious so you better know what to expect when you see your own desktop and start using your new (or upgraded) computer.

While Windows 7 initially looks and acts a lot like Windows Vista from the user standpoint, there are a number of new and improved features designed to make using the computer easier and to improve productivity. I will cover some in this article and more in the next edition. Some are things you will not use every day, but it is good to know they exist - and understanding them will help you use Windows 7 more effectively.

Windows Aero

Aero is the "glassy" transparent look of windows that was introduced in Windows Vista. Things look even glassier in Windows 7. The idea is to deemphasize the windows itself and bring the focus onto the contents of the windows. The Aero effect also is seen on the taskbar and in several neat window management features carry the Aero label.

Windows 7 Taskbar

One of the first things you notice on the Windows 7 desktop is that the taskbar along the bottom of the screen still is there, but looks different. The icons on it are bigger and there are three icons already on it. Normally, the taskbar has only displayed icons for applications, folders, and files you had "opened." Also, just to the right of the Start button (or orb) there was a small area with a few icons on it. This was called the "Quick Launch Toolbar." Now, those two areas have been more or less combined. You can have both "shortcuts" to frequently used things on the taskbar (which you can "pin" there) as well as having it reflect the things you have opened. How do you tell one from the other? It can be confusing at first until you note that the "open" items each have a "glassy" box around them whereas the shortcuts do not.

You also notice a new button on the far right end of the toolbar. This is the Aero Peek button. Say you have several open windows covering the desktop and want to see your analog clock or weather bug gadget (described below) on the desktop. Just rest you mouse cursor on the Aero Peek button and the open windows become transparent allowing you to see the desktop.

Move away and the windows return. Not the greatest advancement since sliced bread, but pretty neat nonetheless.

You also notice that if you open multiple files using the same application - say, Microsoft Word - there is only one Word icon on the taskbar, not one for each document. Hover your mouse over the Word button and you see live thumbnails of each document over the button, similar to what you see in Windows Vista. However, move the cursor up to one of the thumbnails and a full screen live preview appears. Once you find the file you want to work on, click that thumbnail and the document is on the screen.

Desktop Gadgets

What are gadgets anyway? They are handy little utilities that do something (hopefully) useful for you. There are analog clocks, weather bugs, slide shows, stock monitors, and literally hundreds of others to choose from in all types of categories. Gadgets were introduced in Windows Vista and resided in a reserved area along the right side of the screen called the Sidebar. Users complained that the sidebar ate up too much screen, so in Windows 7 gadgets have been moved to the desktop. You can place them anywhere you want or not have any at all. It's up to you. Since they are on the desktop, they often are hidden behind windows, hence Aero Peek described above.

Libraries

I am going to end this edition with another significant change in Windows 7. That is the introduction of the library concept for file management. You will see them, but may never fully use them. Still you need to understand what they are. Since the earliest days of Windows, we have had folders to keep our files in, the Documents folder being a prime example. All these folders resided on our computer. Well, the concept of personal computing has drastically changed over the last

few years. Many homes have networks of several computers; some homes have home servers - essentially a basic computer with a huge hard drive to store files you want on it. In business, the file a person may need to use daily could be located on a far distant computer.*

This is where libraries come in. Not to get too technical, but libraries do not exist physically. They are just a way to aggregate the folders and files you use and need to access in one handy place. You still have a Documents link on your Start menu just as you did in Vista. Now when you open it you see "Document Library" and the folders and files you have created. You also still have a default folder on your computer where Windows can store the things you create. This is called "My Documents." (Sound familiar? Déjà vu all over again.) However, you also can "store" - and access in your Documents library - files which exist on another computer on your home network or even in another location over a network or the Web.

Many of you may never find the need to take full advantage of the library concept. However, it is a significant step forward in file access and management that does not tie the user to just one computer any more. Good job Microsoft, for a change.

From The DealsGuy
by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

Time To Help Pay Back The Stimulus Loans

I'm sure there will be several articles soon about doing your income tax return free, but I'll add my two cents worth on that topic now. There are several ways to do your income tax at no cost, but my favorite is "Tax Act," **www.taxact.com** which has a free version and a pay version. The free version does your tax return just fine, except that it

pesters you frequently about the advantages of their pay version. I used the free version the first year I tried it and it did what I needed just fine. I had already taken my data to a free preparation service and just wanted to compare the results. Tax Act actually found a mistake in the one I just had done for free.

The following year I decided to use the deluxe version (right now they are offering it to me for $12.95) because that one brings forward all of the information from your previous year's return, saving a lot of typing and possible errors. I also called their tech support a couple years ago for help with my "green" credits and had good response with it.

Also, don't forget AARP's free tax help for seniors. We really need to pay our taxes so we can repay the Chinese and keep them from repossessing the USA for nonpayment of our loan. I doubt I could learn to speak Chinese.

This One Can Improve Your Photos

AMS Software announced the release of Home Photo Studio, a new program for photo editing, creating original greeting cards, and decorating ordinary pictures. It offers plenty of frames, tools, masks, filters, and effects (such as 3D and plastic effects). The number of effects may be confusing at first, but it offers opportunities for making every photo special. Greeting card templates can be colorful, darkish, funny, or romantic, and will help the user create a proper greeting card for any occasion. Home Photo Studio offers all necessary functions for uncomplicated photo editing.

The most popular feature, besides greeting card templates, is probably Effects&Filters that allows adding natural phenomena (such as stars, clouds, rain, snow and lightning). You can also add noise and blur, stylize a picture (ancient photo effect, pencil drawing, lithograph, etc.), adjust brightness and saturation; and make complex

combinations. The user can adjust the transparency of the effects and set the area to be processed (the top, bottom, center, borders, etc.). There are a variety of picture frames.

Home Photo Studio Deluxe edition costs a bit more than Standard Edition, but is rich with extra features. It is the right variant for those who want to create 3D compositions, get automatically created collages, use plastic effects, and import PNG/Photoshop™ templates. Deluxe edition is also remarkable for it's over 100 professionally designed frames and greeting card templates.

Working with Home Photo Studio is usually trouble-free thanks to the intuitive interface. But if the user still faces a problem while mastering the program, the detailed Help system is ready to explain how to deal with it.

Features: (Some features are only in the Deluxe Edition)

- Support of more than 20 graphics formats;
- Convenient image explorer;
- Hundreds of filters, effects and masks;
- Fast photo enhancement and retouch;
- Creation of slideshows with smooth transition effects;
- Greeting card templates and picture frames;
- Automatic creation of collages and 3D compositions;
- Auto enhancement and red eye removal.

Home Photo Studio runs under Windows 2000/XP/Vista and 7. The Standard edition costs $39.00 USD and the Deluxe edition costs $59.00 USD. Further product information, as well as its free trial version, is available at
home-photo-studio.com/.

Download link:
home-photo-studio.com/ PhotoStudio.zip

Company website: **ams-soft.com/**

Some Popular Sites With Low Prices

Some of you probably know about these, but some may not. Here are some URLs for great deals that are popular with the local user group members, and something I check frequently. One is
www.1saleaday.com/ where the sale is good for 24 hours only. The price might even be FREE with the only cost being the shipping. I've bought a few items there and some were fantastic deals while others were good, but the item wasn't quite as I expected.

Another very popular one is **www.giveawayoftheday.com/** where the item is absolutely free by download for just 24 hours. Some of these free items are reputable ones that normally have a retail price and are rated good software. When it's free, I sometimes download it even though I have no use for it at the time, but I take the attitude that "you never know." I think that men can change their minds too.

www.software-dod.com

www.software-dod.com is another interesting site where you might find a bargain, but I've only found one I wanted so far, and I'm not sure I really needed it.

If you find something that interests you, I suggest you read it thoroughly because I had something I thought I wanted on 1saleaday, but ended up not getting what I thought I was ordering. Read the description over thoroughly to avoid that.

That's it for this month. I'll soon have more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click
bobclick@ellsouth.net. Visit my Web site at **www.dealsguy.com**.

CrimeReorts.com – The National Crime Map
By Ira Wilsker

At present, over 600 law enforcement agencies are participating in an online service, **CrimeReports.com**. Claiming to be the largest crime mapping network in North America, **CrimeReports.com** gives people the information that they need to help protect them from crime, and also offers crime prevetion information. Seamlessly integrated with Google Maps, **CrimeReports.com** displays up-to-date crime information from any of the 600 participating jurisdictions located in 44 states and the District of Columbia. In addition to crime information, this service also displays the locations of registered sex offenders in all 50 states. Being internet based, the service can be accessed by anyone for free, and does not display any advertising banners or other commercial information. While viewing the service is available to anyone at no charge, **CrimeReports.com** is funded on a subscription basis by the participating law enforcement agencies with monthly rates of $49 for college and university police departments, $99 for small towns (under 50 thousand population), and $199 for larger towns and cities.

Upon accessing the website, the user is greeted with a clean interface displaying a U.S. map, and a Google search bar. Clicking on an active state will display a scrolling list of the participating jurisdictions. Clicking on a jurisdiction will display a Google street map. The user can select a time period to display (3, 7, 14, 30 days, a specific date, or range of dates), types of crime, or distance from a specific address. The display of registered sex offender residences can be turned on or off as desired. Alternatively, a street address, city and

state, or zip code can be entered in the Google search bar, and the map will be centered on that location. If the location selected is not in a jurisdiction that subscribes to **CrimeReports.com**, then only registered sex offenders will be displayed; but if the location is in a participating jurisdiction, then a detailed crime map will be displayed. As with all Google Maps, the user may choose to display a conventional street map (the default display), a high resolution satellite image, a hybrid map (satellite image with street names overlaid), or a terrain map. The Google Maps display can also be zoomed in or out by manipulating the slider bar in the top-left corner of the map, while options are displayed on the bottom-right margin of the map to show a "printer friendly" display, a "distance guide" that displays distances as a series of concentric circles from the given address, and a "legend" which defines the types of crimes based on the icons shown.

From the **CrimeReports.com** front page, I clicked on Texas on the national map, and a listing of 37 Texas subscribing cities was displayed. Scrolling through the list, I found that my home city was not listed, but does display local registered sex offenders. The closest participating city to my home is Jasper, Texas, so I clicked on the Jasper link on the pull down menu. I zoomed in centering on the center of town, and the crime map was very easy to read. I selected the most recent 14 day period, and the incidents were clearly displayed. On the left margin of the map was a listing of offenses, which I sorted by date. Alternatively, clicking on one of the displayed icons displayed the type of crime, the date, the address, time, and reporting agency.

There is much more information available then just displaying a crime map. Clicking on the "Analytics" tab on the top of the web page opens up a detailed crime analysis graphing utility. On the top

of the display the user first clicks on a state from the pull down menu, and then in the adjacent column clicks on a participating jurisdiction. As with the maps, specific time periods can be easily selected. The first graph displays the type and number of crimes as a bar graph. The second chart shows a pie chart showing types of crimes as a percentage of total crime. The bottom of the web page shows crime trends, color coded by type of crime, and charted by date and number. With the maps and analytical information, residents and businesses can be better aware of the criminal risks throughout an area.

While all of the information on **CrimeReports.com** is freely available for anyone to access and use, it also offers several advantages to those law enforcement agencies that subscribe to the service. The analytics can be used by neighborhood watch and community oriented policing activities to identify problem areas, allocate resources, set goals, and measure progress. City councils may find the information very useful in terms of ordinances and budgetary planning. The law enforcement agencies themselves may make use of the service with several non-public analysis tools called "Command Central". This service integrates with any existing CAD or RMS systems, and supports CompStat-style analysis. While secured, authorized users can access the information online using any web browser. The integral "Roll Call" feature can display crime maps and statistics on a precinct or district basis, alerting officers to potential crime patterns. In researching this column, I found several complementary reviews by law enforcement personnel that explained how the system is used to maintain and disseminate crime reporting information. A "Trend-Caster" function "… can be used to evaluate policy changes, beat assignments, and overall crime trends with a heat map that highlights ar-

eas where crime is on the rise and decline."

Agencies can also use **CrimeReports.com** as a public information tool alerting residents of potential situations. The website offers free email alerts which will deliver contemporary crime maps directly to the subscribers' inbox.

"Residents can sign up for automated emails that let them know where crime has happened near their home or place of work. All alerts are customizable by location and area. In addition, citizens can choose to receive daily, weekly, or monthly alerts, and they have the freedom to choose which crime types they want to track." There is also a free iPhone application available for download that offers great functionality. The iPhone app will display crimes by location or address, crime type, and customizable date range; display data on the crime map or in a list view; show national sex offender data alongside crime in your neighborhood; and provide free, automated, email crime alerts. **CrimeReports.com** also disseminates information in real-time on social networking services such as Twitter and Facebook. There is also a free widget which can be installed on the agency website to give residents access to a local crime map without having to leave the agency website.

Crime is something we all must be aware of and deal with. By using the capabilities of **CrimeReports.com** residents and law enforcement alike may benefit through increased information about local threats and trends. It is a very worthwhile service.

WEBSITES:
www.crimereports.com
www.crimereports.com/ files/CommandCentralBrochure.pdf

www.crimereports.com/ files/CrimeReportsBrochure.pdf

www.youtube.com/ watch?v=hNX1YTOeU8U   iPhone demo

FastStone Image Viewer 3.9

Written by Charlotte Brown, President of the Canton/Alliance/Massillon Users Group, Ohio, **www.camug.com**, **cbrown (at) my stepco.com**

If you want a really simple but powerful basic photo program, look no farther than FastStone Image Viewer 3.9. This is the program that I encourage my students to use in the beginning of their picture enhancing journey. When you want to do more things than Image Viewer offers, you can add another program. Many of the programs that help you through the next steps are also free. Working through the basics into more advanced techniques is not as overwhelming as jumping into the middle of a professional program and wondering how to do simple things such as cropping, adjusting light, changing to sepia or grayscale, or even converting to other file formats. FastStone Image Viewer has powerful capabilities of batch converting images from one format to another, for example, from jpg to png. It also allows for batch renaming & resizing, batch watermarking and dpi adjustments and more. To keep things simple, let me walk you through the process of taking only 1 picture at a time through a series of adjustments to make the final print.

I always use 3 windows when working with FastStone Image Viewer. This is the default setting.

The upper left window allows you to browse through Windows Explorer to the folder containing your photos. Double clicking the folder opens thumbnails of the files in a large window on the right. When you click on a picture to select it, you see a large thumbnail in the lower left-hand window. Look over my shoulder as I browse to Pictures and double click the folder inside that I have named Christmas 08. Large thumbnails of all the picture files in that folder now appear in the large window. I will select a file titled Jayden. Now Jayden's picture appears not only in the window on the right but also as a large thumbnail in the lower left hand corner.

The first thing I do is click File > Save As. I rename the file as JaydenP and use the drop-down menu by File Type to select png. Then I click Save. The new file appears in the large window with all the other thumbnails. It is much bigger than the original jpg. It is now in a lossless format, allowing me to make all kinds of changes without losing any of the information originally captured by the camera. I could choose to work with tiff to accomplish the same capabilities. Png files allow me to cut out transparent areas if I wish and the file size is smaller.

Let me insert something that will interest those of you who are doing more advanced work. The rest of you can skip to the next paragraph! When I double click the picture, it fills my entire window. Moving the mouse to the right side of the screen brings up information about the picture. One of the tab choices is Histogram. That provides me with information about the lighting. Here is a little tip. If you double click the original jpg or you decide to save as tiff instead of png, the tab titled EXIF will give you all the camera information captured when you snapped the picture: date and time, make and model of camera, ISO setting (much the same as film speed in the olden days), the aper-

ture setting, shutter speed, focal length, and whether or not the flash fired.

Now let me return to the really simple process of working with JaydenP, my png file. I click on Edit on the menu bar, and then click on Resize / Resample. Now I can choose to size my picture by number of pixels, percentage or print size. In this case I want to make a color print so I will click on the radio button titled Print size. Next I will select 300 dpi by using the drop down menu or hand entering the numbers. Remember that digital cameras were developed for digital viewing. Most digital camera settings take pictures at 72 dpi. When you resize to 300 dpi, you have a much clearer picture that has a slimming effect on your subject that is much more flattering!

In this case my picture is portrait, not landscape, so I will choose 5 x 7. I put a check mark in the selection box titled Preserve Aspect Ratio so I don't create distortion effects similar to those created by convex or concave mirrors! I notice that the photo will not be exactly 5 x 7. One thing to remember is that digital pictures are not the same scale as film pictures. In this example, my picture turns out to be 5.25 x 7. I click OK. Now I am back to the 3 pane original window and my picture is still selected (blue frame around it). Now I click on the cropping tool. I check the Paper Ratio to make sure it says 7 x 5 and has a check mark by Flip Ratio so that I get a 5 x 7. A dotted line around the picture shows that the program is suggesting an even crop from both sides. After looking at the picture carefully, I decide I want the entire crop to come from the left side. When I move the mouse onto the picture, it becomes a 4-sided arrow. I click and drag the dotted outline to the right as far as I can and click Crop followed by Close. The picture is still selected in the main work area.

Now I click on the Red Eye control on the toolbars below the menu

bars. The picture pops open in a new screen. I like to use a zoom Ratio of 200%. Then I click in the middle of the eye and draw a circle that covers the entire eye. I can click in the middle of the circle I have drawn, hold down the mouse, and move the circle to fine-tune its location. Then I click Remove Red Eye. Whoosh! It is gone. The program takes me back to the main work area with the three windows.

I click once more on Edit. This time I chose Enhance Colors. The picture opens in a full screen with controls at the bottom for adjusting brightness, contrast, gamma, red, green and blue levels, hue and saturation. You can create some wild looks here. I brighten the picture slightly and make a small color shift to enhance the reds. I click on ?Hold Down to See Original Image? to make sure I like the adjustments I have made. When I am satisfied, I click OK. Once again I click on File > Save As. This time I rename the file Jayden 5x7 and select the type as jpg. All my changes hold. The picture is still 300 dpi. The size will be perfect with no surprise cropping by the photo lab.

The program allows for so much more: adding text, straightening a picture before cropping, creating slide shows, and things I haven't yet explored. I downloaded the newest version this week. There is now an 83-page manual you can download to learn from clear directions and screen shots how to take advantage of this marvelous program. The manual was written by Bill Westerhoff who has written tutorials on other free photo products as well as Photoshop Elements 3-7.

I suppose you now are wondering about the price. First of all you need to know where to get the program. Go to **www.faststone.org**. There is no charge to download this program. You will be encouraged to give a donation to keep the developers encouraged to work on future enhancements. If you decide you like the program as well as I do,

you will want to help them. There is no set fee, so whatever you choose to give is up to you.

Nibblers
by Jeannine Sloan

Free Faxing
Here is a big list of sites that offer free Internet faxing services. Some of them are completely free, while others offer free or limited trials.
http://askbobrankin.com/free_int ernet_faxing.html

PHR
Maintain your Personal Health Record and emergency information online and print a report whenever you need it.
https://myportal.medicare.gov/

QCS Meeting Dates

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri	Sat
	1 Feb 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	2 Feb February 2010	3 Feb 6:30 PM QCS BoardMeeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	4 Feb	5 Feb	6 Feb
7 Feb	8 Feb 7:00 PM Internet SIG Ted Huberts 309-792-9470 slowhand54@sbcglobal.net	9 Feb	10 Feb 5:45 PM Beginners SIG 7:00 PM Computers in Dr.'s Office	11 Feb	12 Feb	13 Feb
14 Feb	15 Feb 7:00 PM Genealogy SIG Len Stevens 563-359-9672 judylenstevens@msn.com	16 Feb	17 Feb 7:00 PM Digital Media SIG Sheri Baker 309-787-2239 vwazz@hotmail.com	18 Feb	19 Feb	20 Feb
21 Feb	22 Feb 7:00 PM Windows SIG Larry Stone 309 787-5574 lstone521@mchsi.com	23 Feb	24 Feb	25 Feb	26 Feb	27 Feb
28 Feb	1 Mar 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	2 Mar March 2010	3 Mar 6:30 PM QCS BoardMeeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	4 Mar	5 Mar	6 Mar
7 Jan	8 Mar 7:00 PM Internet SIG Ted Huberts 309-792-9470 slowhand54@sbcglobal.net	9 Mar	10 Mar 5:45 PM Beginners SIG 7:00 PM Moving to Windows 7 Gene Barlow	11 Mar	12 Mar	13 Mar

*Beginner's SIG meets at Tri-City
Jewish Center
before the QCS program
Jim Kristan
309-755-8277
jmkris@gmail.com

ALL QCS MEETINGS NOW HELD AT
TRI-CITY JEWISH CENTER
2715 30TH
ROCK ISLAND, IL 61201
ALWAYS CALL AS INDICATED ON THE
CALENDAR
TO VERIFY MEETING TIME, LOCATION, AND
TOPIC INFORMATION
ALL QCS MEETING FACILITIES ARE
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE.

Be sure to check you
mailing label for
your member
expiretion date.

QCS officers

President:
Judi McDowell
309-314-1780
jmcdowell@mchsi.com

Vice-President
Patty Lowry
543-332-8679
heidiho@soloconnect.com

Secretary
Diana Wolf
309-797-5413
theqcs.sec@mchsi.com

Treasurer
Cheryl Heimburger
309-496-9435
cheimbur@hotmail.com

Quad Cities Computer Society
Tri-City Jewish Center
2715 30th Street
Rock Island IL 61201

M
E
M
B
E
R
S **QCS**

HELPING

M
E
M
B
E
R
S

Moving? Send an
address change to:
felspaw@sbcglobal.net

**QCS Home Page URL
http://www.qcs.org**

Name:

Company:

Address:

City:

State, ZIP+4:

Home Phone:

Work Phone:

E-mail:

Referred by:

Membership Level

		New	Renewal
Full Time Student	$20	☐	☐
Individual	$30	☐	☐
Family	$40	☐	☐

QCS Main Meeting
Wednesday
February 10, 2010
7:00 PM

**Computers in
the Doctor's
Office**
presented by
Dr. Ilesh Kurani
from John Deere
Medical Group