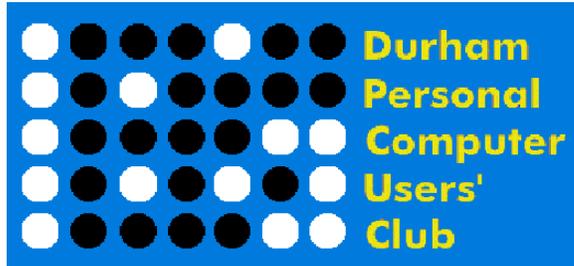JAN 2017

PC MONITOR

Durham Personal Computer Users' Club Newsletter

December Prize List

John McRae	$19.00	Dan Delong	Flashlight
Alan Oliver	$11.00	Hugh Crawford	HDMI Cable
Mike Weaver	USB Charger	Ed Goudge	Mobile 1 Bag
Eric White	Camera Bag		

Please visit the Club Web Page for all the latest links and information

http://www.durhampc-usersclub.on.ca/

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Next Meeting

Open Data

by Jonathan Brown

Faith United Church at 1778 Nash Road, Courtice

Thursday, Jan 12 2017   7:00PM

FYI
- By Dan Delong

Formcard – fix-it plastic

Although not distributed in Canada, as yet, **Formcard** is the name given to wallet-sized slabs of low temperature plastic. When heated (in boiling water, or with a hair dryer), this material softens so as to become mouldable into any shape. Upon cooling, it hardens, with strength similar to solid nylon. Being a starch based polymer, this material is biodegradable, infinitely reusable (by re-heating), and durable. Formcard will stick to many types of plastic when hot, and will form closely to wood or cloth, holding fast through mechanical bonding. Many customers, who have used this product in a variety of ingenious ways, have sent photos to the Formcard gallery page.
[$13.00 for 3pac and $22.00 for 9pac in USD– varying colours] http://formcard.com/

Mevo Live Streaming Camera

Finding an old camcorder, still with a Firewire port, or a new camera, with direct USB streaming capability, is getting harder. **Mevo** is a small, single-purpose, high resolution, streaming, camera, with stereo microphones built in. Unfortunately, it is an Apple only appliance… currently. An Ethernet cable connection is best for providing reliable streaming; or, Mevo can connect to a 4G LTE modem, for cellular transmission. Battery charges lasts about an hour, but it is still okay to leave the USB charge cable attached for continuous use. During streaming, a copy can be recorded on the internal SD card, or on an iPhone's internal memory. While Facebook Live accepts streaming to only Facebook users, a subscription service, like Livestream, will let anyone watch the video. When Mevo is under the control of its iPhone app, real time editing is possible (zoom, pan, cut). The camera's lens covers a span (field of view) of 150 degrees. Recording resolution can be as high as 4K. The Mevo App controls auto panning (in order to follow a person who is moving, and cut to close ups).
[$440.00 camera only, and $600.00 for a complete kit - USDs] https://getmevo.com/
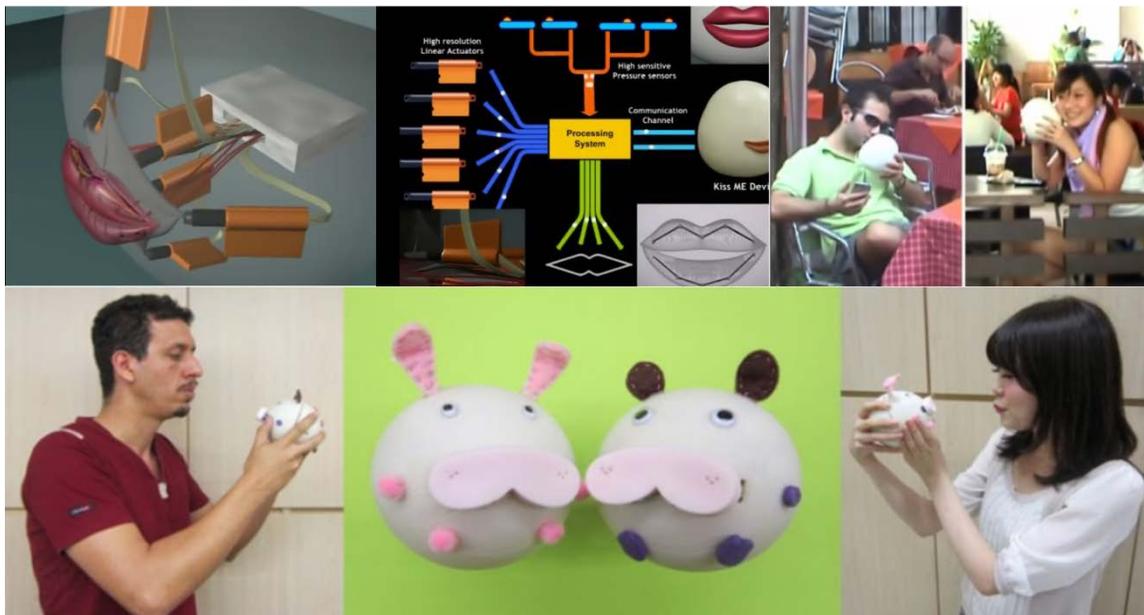
Epson Fastfoto FF-640 – fastest scanner

If 600 dpi, and a speed of 33 photos per minute, is good enough for digitizing your printed photo collection, this is the scanner for you. It's expensive - $900 CDN, but the FF-640 is also a real time saver (for those with a lot of digitizing to do). Furthermore, the software handles fade correction and colour balance for you. This scanner can process fragile media (in a carrier sheet), as well as long panoramic prints. The scan results can then be sent to Cloud storage. When scanning documents, rather than photos, the accompanying software saves directly into Office apps, or as searchable PDFs. Double sided documents must be flipped for a second scan, unlike the Fujitsu, duplex, document scanner.
https://epson.ca/For-Home/Scanners/Photo/FastFoto-FF-640-High-speed-Photo-Scanning-System/p/B11B246201

Kissenger – remote kissing device

Since the 'kisser' and the intended 'kissee' are here separated by huge distances – (the ultimate 'air-kiss', you might say) – the Kissenger's job is to make the kiss as real as possible, despite the device consisting of just a bunch of actuators behind a soft plastic pad. The "pig-nose' model is one of many styles, including a model that appears to be for "Frenchies". Kisses on the cheek, are the most common Kissenger kisses. To be sure, the Kissenger (kiss messenger) can deliver the goods. If, and when, this Kickstarter device goes into large scale production, it will cost close to $100 CDN per pair.
http://kissenger.lovotics.com/, and http://www.kissengers.com/, and https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/kiss-transfer-device-the-kissenger-kiss-messenger#/.

EmDrive – faster space travel

Despite sceptics and debunkers, the electromagnetic drive (**EmDrive**) will finally be accepted as a valid form of propulsion, as soon as it proves itself in space. Propulsive force – force that does not require sending very high velocity particles from a rocket nozzle – has finally been invented. But, physicists are still not sure how it works. The inventor, Roger Shawyer, came up with this enclosed "engine" many years ago. Microwaves, generated by electricity, are blasted toward a metal plate at the large end of a cone shaped vacuum. Somehow, propulsive force is generated in the opposite direction to the waves – away from the large plate. An American researcher, working on a similar **Cannae** engine, theorizes that this force is pushing on "a quantum vacuum virtual plasma". So far, the Chinese claim to have created a few ounces of thrust, using powerful emitters. Carried into the far future, EmDrive may shorten trips to Mars to only ten weeks. http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/energy/a22678/em-drive-cannae-cubesat-reactionless/

USB Drive Password with Encryption

Bitlocker is built into Windows 7 Pro and higher versions of Windows. For those interested in password protecting the contents of a USB key, the link below provides detailed instructions. The encryption key (recovery key) can be saved in three ways: - 1) to OneDrive, in Win10 2) to a file 3) to a printer. http://www.toptrix.net/2016/11/password-protect-usb-drive.html

RokBlok Vinyl Record Player

Over Christmas, many portable turntables were sold, for about the same price as this non-spinning player. Like a scurrying mouse, the light-weight **RokBlok** moves itself around an LP (45 or 33⅓), at the right speed to both, play the tunes, and to send audio directly to Bluetooth devices. It's good for 4 hours of play and weighs only 3.2 ounces. RokBlok will not reproduce sound as well as a high end turntable with pre-amp, but the only requirement is a flat surface on which to place the vinyl record. [$100 USD] https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/pinkdonut/rokblok-a-new-spin-on-vinyl

Dell XPS15 Laptop

This Dell (Four models share the XPS15 moniker.) is a Windows10 competitors to the MacBook Pro. Common to all is a thin screen bezel, a weight of about 4 pounds, an HDMI port, a SD card reader, a 720p camera, Thunderbolt ports (8xfaster than USB 3.0), and at least some SSD storage space. The least expensive model ($1300 CDN) has a 6th Gen Intel i3 Dual Core processor, and less powerful Intel HD Graphics. All higher end models get the NVIDIA GeForce GTX 960M GPU. The most expensive of the four models (at $2100 CDN) jumps by an additional $1000, if adding a 1TB solid state drive. All of the top three models are Intel quad cores (i5 or i7) with RAM of 8 GB to 32 GB. The two most expensive models have 4K touch screens and solid state, low power, drives, allowing batteries to last for up to 17 hours. Coming soon is a Dell USB-C hub/adapter for plugging in legacy devices.
http://www.dell.com/ca/p/xps-15-9550-laptop/pd

WhatsApp on a PC in Firefox
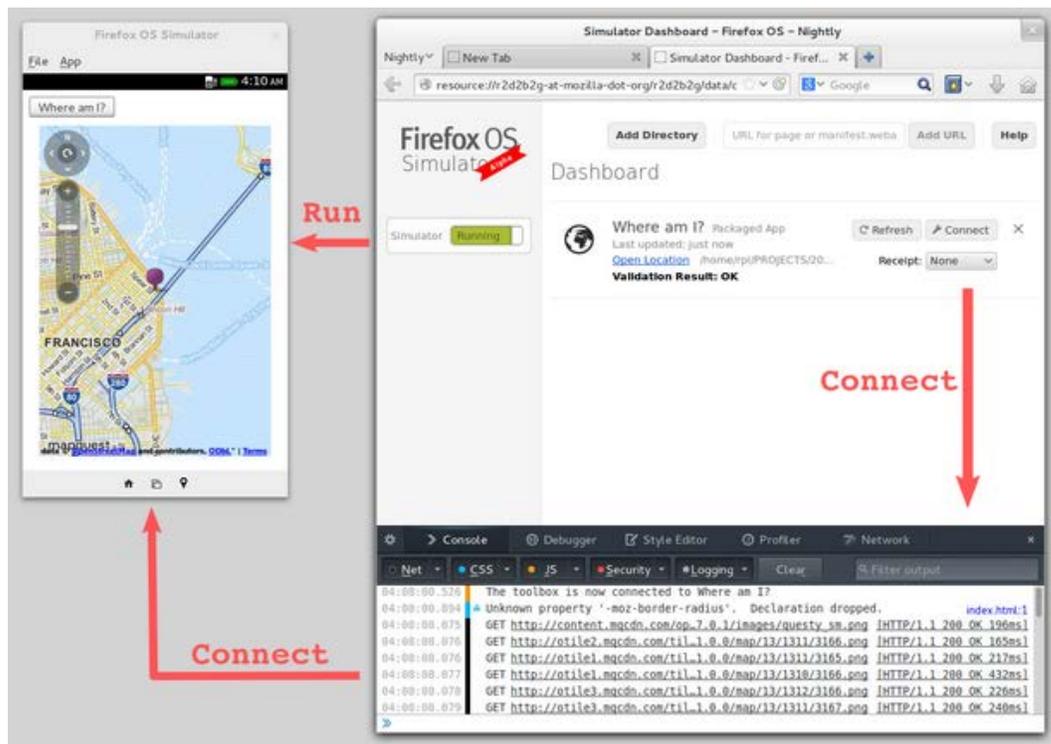
Although not a user of **WhatsApp** myself, at this time, I am intrigued to discover that this secure messaging system no longer requires a smart phone, or a newer version of Windows. It can run on PCs - Windows, Linux, or MacOSX - with the Firefox OS Simulator. TopTrix posted a two year-old 'how-to' article on the topic.
http://www.toptrix.net/2014/09/run-whatsapp-on-computer.html

> "*WhatsApp* is a messaging app that lets users text, chat, and share media, including voice messages and video, with individuals or groups. …it doesn't cut into your monthly text allotment." *[from Pc Magazine]*

Furthermore, voice calls to other WhatsApp users are free, everywhere. And, the data is encrypted. Various document formats can also be sent between users (up to 100 MB per file). Firefox is still developing their OS Simulator. So, try this link, if the TopTrix link above does not work: - https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/firefox-os-simulator/

Gigabyte BRIX series Gaming PC

Gamers like to be noticed for the look of their 'units', and they sometimes pick up and carry their heavy rigs to competitions. This new form factor, from **Gigabyte** – model GB-GZ1DTi7-1070-NK-GW - is small (276x384x128 mm), yet stylish. Cooling intakes in the bottom exit through the top grill work. Onboard M2 memory is 240 GB, with RAM of 16 GB. All other components are top tier – NVIDIA GTX 1070 G1 and Skylake Core i7. North American pricing is not yet available.

http://www.theverge.com/circuitbreaker/2016/12/27/14092678/gigabyte-brix-compact-gaming-pc-strange-design

Chrome Browser – Canary Version

Some of our DPCUC members may enjoy experimenting with developer versions of software, just to try some of the new features to be added in the near future. Google offers **Canary,** the developer version of its Chrome browser.
[*Caution: Like a canary in a coal mine, Canary Chrome may crash at any time, and may take a few other software systems down with it.*]
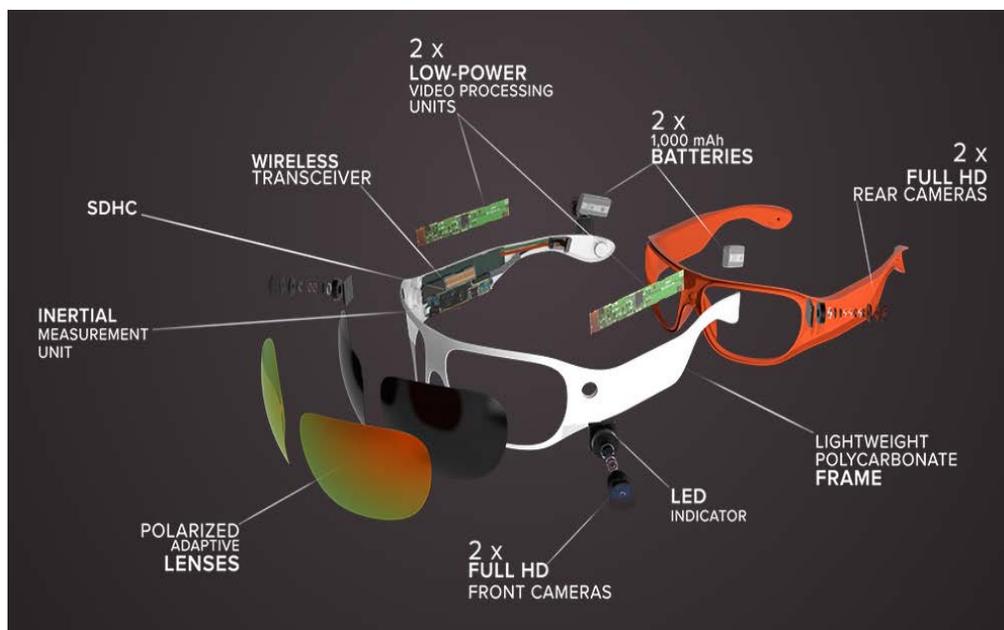Google claims Canary can be installed alongside the stable version, but still...?
Maybe try it on an alternate computer.
Apparently, you can access hidden features by typing ***chrome:// flags*** into the address bar, whether it be the stable version or the developer version.

https://www.google.com/chrome/browser/canary.html

ORBI Prime – 360 Video Glasses

According to the hype, these glasses are the first to record video over 360 degrees, although I could, at first, see no difference over GoPro, except for the elimination of mounting hardware. The resolution (4K) is also impressive, as is the fact that adaptive polarized lenses make for effective, glare-reducing, sunglasses. Paired with a smart phone, up to 90 minutes of recording can be transferred to the phone, edited and transmitted to others over 4G. And, the view really is a complete 360, although the stitching software will handle only 15 minutes of video at a time. Therefore, anyone viewing such a recorder, let's say with a set of VR goggles, can turn their head to view all angles – from the two back cameras and the two front cameras, seamlessly stitched together. The current price is $330 USD.

http://orbiprime.com/

Linux in the News

By Alex Morrison

From: http://lxer.com/ & http://www.linuxtoday.com/ & http://www.linuxinsider.com/
         http://www.topix.com/tech/linux

Top 7 Linux games of 2016
(Dec 30, 2016, 18:00) (0 talkbacks)

What were the hot Linux games of the year? We pick a few favorites.

2016 was the Best Year for Linux
(Dec 30, 2016, 14:00) (0 talkbacks)

FreedomPenguin: Was 2016 the best year for Linux? All signs point to yes.

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6 of the Best LibreOffice Extensions You Should Use
(Dec 30, 2016, 10:00) (0 talkbacks)

LibreOffice is already packed with features, and if that is not enough for you, here are some of the best LibreOffice extensions you can use to extend its functionality.

Torvalds Releases Hefty Linux Kernel Update
December 13, 2016

Linus Torvalds this weekend announced Linux 4.9, which offers a number of significant upgrades to the kernel. "I'm pretty sure this is the biggest release we've ever had, at least in terms of commits," Torvalds wrote. "If you look at the number of lines changed, we've had bigger releases in the past but they've tended to be due to specific issues." [More...]

Refracta 8.0 Is a Pint-Sized Powerhouse
December 2, 2016

Refracta is a somewhat obscure Linux distribution that offers exceptional functionality and stability. Obscurity is not always a bad thing when it comes to Linux distros. You can find some very worthwhile alternatives to your current operating system. Refracta is a big surprise in a small package. Many look-alike desktop distros are difficult to distinguish from run-of-the-mill garden varieties. [More...]

Sudoku   for January 2017   by Alex Morrison

A Challenging Puzzle this month!

7		6		1				
			7		4			5
					2	8		
	6					1		
3	2						5	7
		4					3	
	7	3						
9			6		1			
			8		2		9	

Sudoku

The game board on the left was produced using **K**sudoku on PCLinuxOS 64 Bit running KDE.

The objective is to fill in the missing numbers ensuring that every 3 X 3 grid has the numbers 1 through 9 with no repeats and every full column or row has the numbers 1 through 9 again with no repeats.

 If you have trouble solving the puzzle just send an email to me and I will send you the solution.

Have fun! Alex

Linux Software   Play Blu-ray on Linux by Alex Morrison

Blu-ray players are not as expensive as they once were and blu-ray drives are more common for PC's and Laptops.

This topic is for people who wish to play a blu-ray on their PC or Laptop. Weather it is for travel purposes or to plug the PC Laptop in to their TV.

Most software for playing blu-ray is commercial and not everyone wants to buy software for infrequent use.

So these are the steps to take to play a blu-ray movie on your PC for free.

Step 1 is to download MakeMKV from here   ---   http://www.makemkv.com/. Linux users can install it from their package manager or download the Linux version from the website listed above.

Step 2 is to download VLC from here ---- https://www.videolan.org/vlc/. Linux users can install it from their package manager if they don't already have it included on their system.
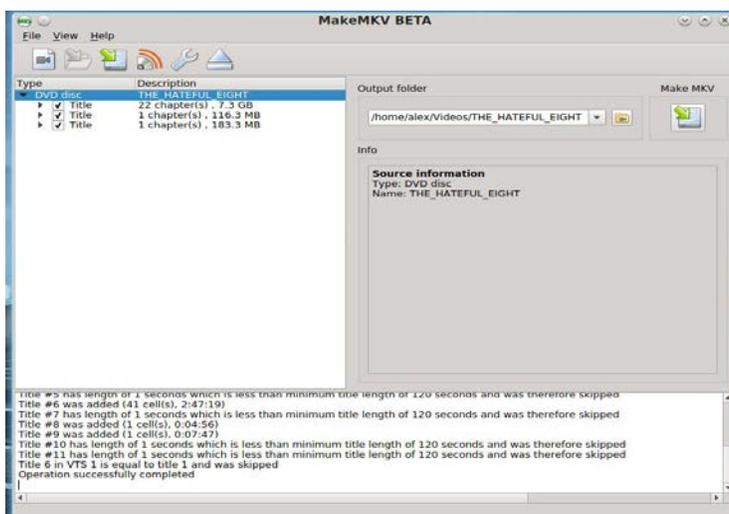
Now I will show a series of screen captures showing the steps to take and use MakeMKV and VLC to play blu-ray.

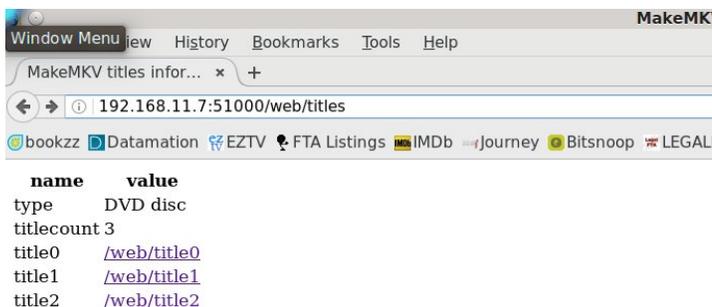Of course these steps work on any OS --- Windows or Linux or Mac.

The first step is to open MakeMKV and select file and open a blu-ray or DVD
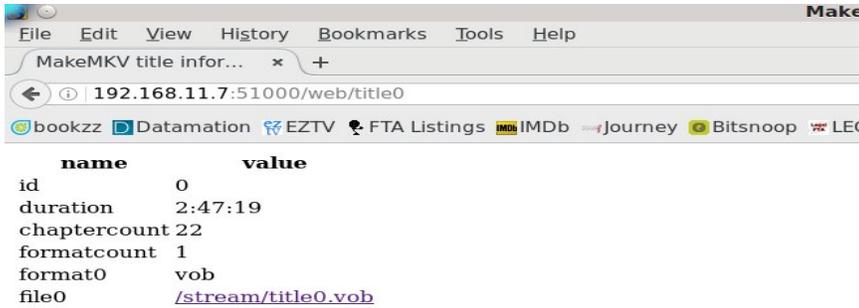
.
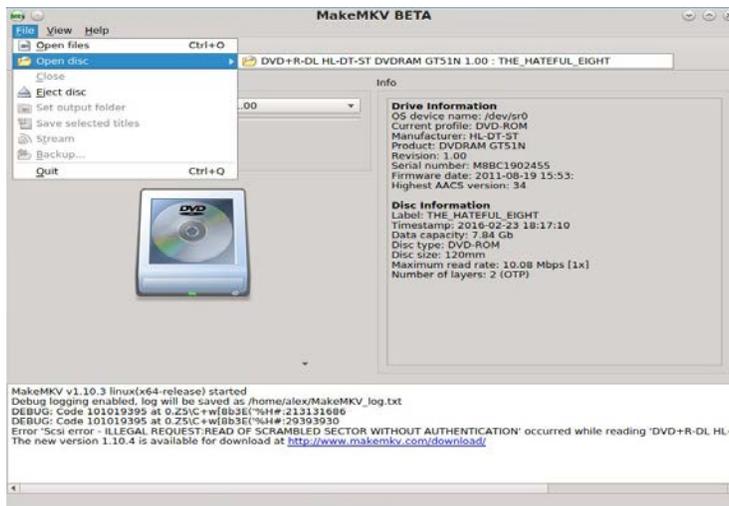
In the second image see the titles included on the disc used.

Click the fourth button on the top of the MakeMKV menu to select the streaming option and we see hyperlink titles.

Click on a title to see a stream link appear as in the picture below.

When we click the link from the previous window we see a browser [Firefox for me] open and play in a small window. Copy the address bar in Firefox and open VLC and from the file menu select Stream from Network and paste the link. VLC can play the movie as shown or full screen if wished. Who needs commercial software!
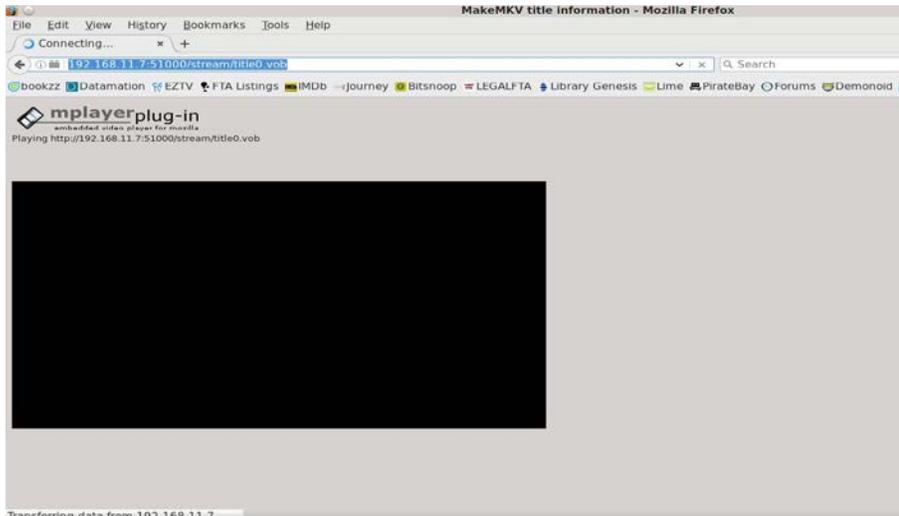
VLC can play the movie as shown below or full screen if wished. Who needs commercial software!
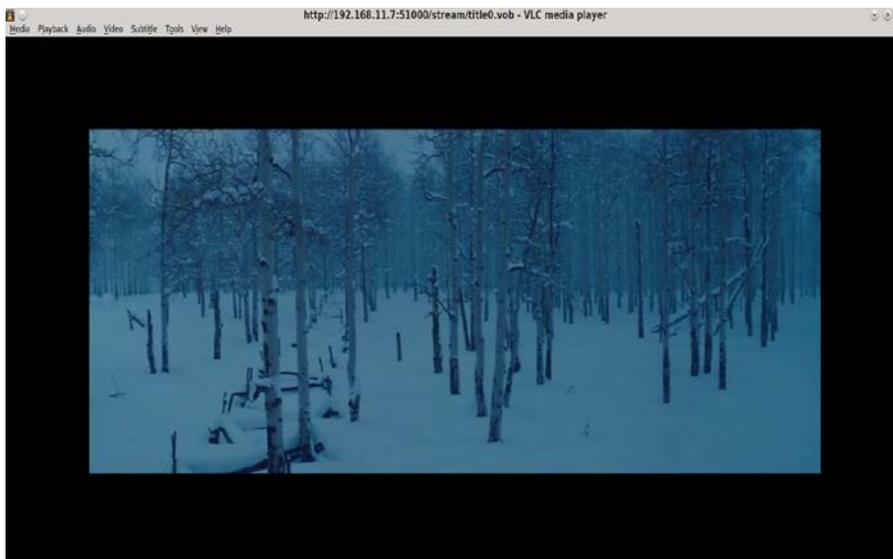
We will look at this at the Linux meeting so drop over to visit if you need help replicating the steps.

Presentation Images [from December]
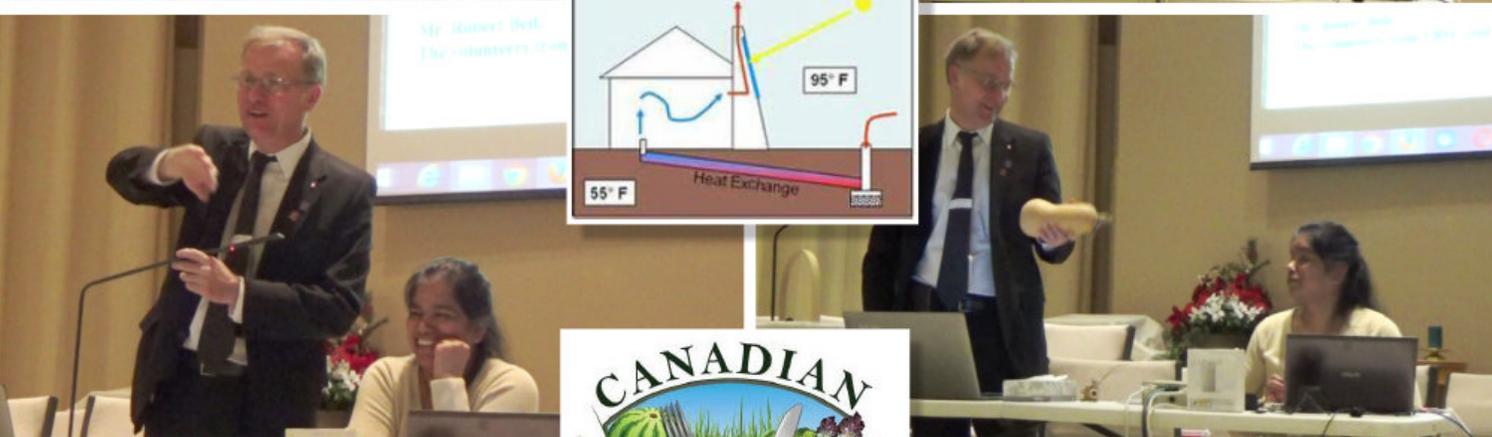
Bob Bell and Joan Kerr, on the successes and failures of this pioneering project in creating an inexpensive, year-round, fresh food source for a variety of climates.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS {SIG's}

Special Interest Groups are for members only.

SIG's are really free monthly seminars with question and answer sessions following the presentation(s)

Members of SIG's enjoy a feeling of community and share common goals and interests.

Most SIG's are informal and members who attend them set the agenda for the meeting based on their own needs.

New ideas for SIG groups are welcome.

Special Interest Groups

Details

BEGINNER
Co-ordinator: Ed Goudge
Location: Call for Location
Telephone: 905-926-9003
Date: 3rd Thursday of month 7:00 PM

LINUX
Durham Linux User Group
Co-ordinator: Ed Goudge
Location: Call for Location
Telephone: 905-926-9003
Date: 1st Thursday of month 7:30 PM

Digital Camera Group
Location: Call forLocation
Telephone: 905-926-9003
Date: 4th Thursday of each month at 7:30PM

HOME PAGE   --- http://www.durhampc-usersclub.on.ca/

Newsletter Information