

The Inside Track

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Practical steps researching genealogy

Dick Williams, with extensive experience as an historian and family researcher, will be our presenter on Thursday, Jan. 3, at the Whitesboro Senior High School Cafeteria. This is familiar physical territory for Dick as he taught Social Studies from 1968-80 and then served as Vice-principal until he retired in 1995.

He has had a long and distinguished career with the Clinton Historical Society, serving two terms as its president. In 2000 he was appointed Town of Kirkland Historian and during the ensuing years many columns on local history have been published in the *Clinton Courier*. He is the author of a number of books and pamphlets on local history.

This past March he conducted a Genealogy Workshop for the Clinton Historical Society and he now brings his knowledge in this area to us.

GETTING STARTED IN GENEALOGY

Dick will deal with the following topics:

- * Local sources
- * Family worksheets
- * Records to check
- * Military Records
- * Health Department regulations
- * Caring for family records
- * Using Census records
- * Forms

Dick will accept questions at any time during his presentation, so come prepared to stimulate discussion and give direction to the program content.

Same time, same place,
but different day . . .

Please note that January's meeting will take place on **Thursday, January 3rd**. This is a one-time change due to the New Year's holiday occurring on our normal meeting night.

Dick Williams was originally scheduled to appear in November and he has graciously agreed to do his presentation on this special date.

There will be no Q&A SIG in January.

Once again winter is upon us and bad weather may force school closure.



If the school is closed, we cannot hold a meeting. Please check our website — mvpcug.com for notification of meeting cancellation, and/or listen to the radio for school closings.

Thursday, January 3, 2007- 6PM at Whitesboro High School



explorer

The MVPCUG *EXPLORER* is published monthly from September through June by the Mohawk Valley Personal Computer User Group, Inc.(MVPCUG), PO Box 586, Marcy NY 13403-0586.

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The MVPCUG was founded in 1981 by individuals interested in IBM compatible computers. This non-profit organization consists of volunteers whose expertise range from novice to professional.

Regular meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 6pm, usually at the Whitesboro High School, Route 291, Marcy NY. A typical agenda consists of discussion of business affairs and a demonstration of computer related products. Meetings are open to the public.

Initial membership fee for an individual is \$25. Annual renewal dues are \$20.

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Meeting Agenda

5:30	Meet and Greet
6:00	Business Meeting
6:30	Program, Part 1
7:10	Break
7:20	Program, Part 2
8:00	Drawing for Prizes
8:15	Adjournment

Editorial notes . . .

Congratulations to the officers elected: Jerry Finkelstein as President; Lisa Britt as VP; John Hunter as Secretary; Bill Gorrell as Treasurer; and Lou Barile as Director-at-Large.



To those of you who may think the club should be doing more—how about stepping up and helping out with some of the work?

We need a Program Chair. Board members have been filling in since that position was vacated by Bob Schaffer. Each board member contributes many hours working for the club, of which most members are unaware.

How about submitting an article to the newsletter? It takes time and effort to find the hints and tips that we provide—share some of your tips.

Help set up and pack up equipment.

Stay connected . . . to the MVPCUG
Mohawk Valley PC User Group, Inc.
\$25 for initial sign-up - \$20 for renewal

Name _____
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Minutes of December 4, 2007
 — John Hunter, Secretary

The MVPCUG general meeting was held at the Whitesboro HS cafeteria. President Jerry Finkelstein called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. There were 29 persons in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

President **Jerry Finkelstein** welcomed members and visitors. Jerry then informed those present that the January 2008 meeting will occur on **THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2008**. This meeting day change occurs because the first Tuesday is January 1, 2008 and the school will be closed.

Then Jerry asked Treasurer **Bill Gorrell** for a treasurer’s report. Bill reported that as of November 30th income from interest and dues totaled \$326.73. Expenses totaled \$385.85. Bill also transferred \$130 from the money market account to the checking account.

Ending account balances totaled: checking \$160.77; money market \$2863.14; and GPO credit union \$5.00 for an accounts total of \$3028.91.

After the treasurer’s report, Bill reviewed the proposed budget for 2008 that was printed in December newsletter. After no discussion, the members present passed the budget with one dissenting vote recorded.

Jerry asked Director **James Pease** to conduct the election of officers. Jim asked for nominations from the floor and member **Tim Clinehens** asked to speak. In a relatively short powerpoint presentation, Tim reviewed what he considered to be the shortcomings of the present club leadership. Tim argued that the club has reduced club activities to nothing but the monthly meeting. Tim cited the absence of SIGs, workshops and other club activities the club had previously had or had voted to begin.

On the subject of SIGs, Tim said that no SIGs were presently being held with the exception of the Q & A SIG which met occasionally. Bill Gorrell replied that he was conducting a Q & A SIG on Thursday in room 522 in the high school. Then Tim termed the board decision not to pursue a 50-50 drawing as an act of defying the membership which had voted to initiate a monthly drawing. John Hunter replied that according to NYS law, it is illegal for outside groups to conduct profit making activities in public buildings and that includes schools.

When the discussion about leadership weaknesses

ended, the voting began. Jerry Finkelstein was reelected president with 15 votes and 10 votes for Tim Clinehens; Lisa Britt was elected vice president with 16 votes and 9 votes for Dave Askew; John Hunter and Bill Gorrell were reelected with no opposition.

Dave Askew reported that 67 food items and 19 toys had been brought to the meeting by members.

PROGRAM

At 6:33 p.m. Jerry Finkelstein introduced Bill Kardas, a WKTV weather meteorologist who presented a program on the use of computers in forecasting the weather. The presentation also included mentioning computer graphics which the station uses to inform viewers during the weather reports. Kardas informed the group that on Monday, December 10th the station would debut a new type of weather software that will allow the station to significantly update the weather portions of the news.

At the conclusion of this very interesting and enthusiastically received presentation, Bill Kardas drew the first ticket of the door prize drawings.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

- 1 gig flash drive **Jerry Finkelstein**
- \$25 gift cards **Jim Pease and Dave Askew**
- 9 X 12 photo paper **Don Jennings**
- 4 X 6 photo paper **Jerry Finkelstein**
- 50 pack CD-R **Hart Anway**
- 15 DVD-R w/case **Don Jennings**
- 3 CDs for young children **Don Pianka**
 [Donated by Peachpit Press]
- Book “My Space” **Kay Janowsky**
 [Donated by Microsoft Press]
- “Breakthroughs: Windows Vista” **Nelson Robinson**
 [donated by Rod St.Clair]
- reams of paper . . **Helen Russell and Bob McMillan**
 [donated by Dave Askew]
- CD cases **Jim Schmandt**
 [donated by Jerry Finkelstein]
- post-it notes **Don Jennings**
 [donated by John Hunter]
- key chain lights **Howard Netzband**
- Pooh’s Print Studio **Don Jennings**
- World Atlas CD **Rod St.Clair**
- Switch box **Don Pianka**
- multi tool **Nelson Robinson**

*The meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.
 John Hunter, secretary*



Word Processing Tips

— by Bob Schaffer

Word — Using *Word* as your email editor

Microsoft Word is the default email message editor for Microsoft Outlook. You can choose which editor to use by clicking Tools, Options, and Mail Format in Outlook. There are three options here. You can deselect both boxes and use the Outlook editor. Or you can have Outlook use Word to edit email messages, read Rich Text emails, or both. Note that you can compose emails in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), rich text, or plain text format whether or not you use Word as the editor.

Word provides many benefits over the Outlook editor. It provides automatic spelling and grammar checking, lets you use tables, and converts email names and Internet addresses to hyperlinks. You may, of course, like the less-is-more simplicity of the Outlook editor or some other text editor.

The Smart Tags function in Word lets you send an email to a person whose name appears in the text.

There is no downside to using Word as the email editor when you create a new email within Outlook. Some users who favor plain text claim that Word adds too much overhead to email, making the files too large. This is only true when you send an email from within an existing document you created in Word. That's the only case when you can't jump in and convert to plain text before sending.

Email Written by Word. Open Word and click New and E-Mail Message. An email message exactly the same as one created with Outlook will appear. The message will have a Menu bar, Standard and Formatting toolbars, and an email toolbar that can't be moved or modified. The email toolbar is the same as the one in Outlook.

You can also create an email from a text document with which you are currently working. With the document open, click the E-mail button on the Standard toolbar. The resulting email is the same as those created earlier, with two exceptions. There is no drop-down list on the email toolbar that lets you choose among HTML, Rich Text, and Plain Text formats. In the Introduction section you can enter information about the document to be displayed at the top of the message. ❖

Excerpted courtesy of *SmartComputing Magazine*.

Book Review

— by Bob Schaffer

How Computers Work by Ron White.

Illustrated by Tim Downs. Indianapolis: Que. 2008

Some lucky person will be going home with a very special door prize from one of our upcoming meetings. It's the brand new ninth edition of the "national bestseller" (over 2,000,000 copies sold), *How Computers Work*, by Ron White. This profusely and gorgeously illustrated book, published by Que, will grab the eye and hold the interest of even a non-computer person with its bold, rich colors and handsomely drawn illustrations by Tim Downs. It is chock-full of information, both general and technical—425 pages, plus a 26-page index—and it covers a huge swath of computer-related information.

I would wager that even those of us who see ourselves as "advanced" in our knowledge of the computer, peripherals, etc. will be surprised and fascinated at some of the "facts" that are so cleverly presented and illustrated that they readily grab the reader's attention.

Thirty-three chapters are grouped into eight sections with these headings:

- ✓ Boot-Up Process
- ✓ How Microchips are the PC's brain
- ✓ How Software Works
- ✓ Data Storage
- ✓ Input/Output Devices
- ✓ Games and Multimedia
- ✓ How the Internet Works
- ✓ How Printers Work

All new content in the 2008 edition of *How Computers Work* includes:

- ✓ How tablet PCs put the power of a PC quite literally in your hands
- ✓ How Windows Vista makes your Windows desktop translucent and makes your PC more secure
- ✓ How advances in technology such as dual-layer DVD, HD-DVD, and Blu-Ray discs continue to push the envelope
- ✓ How Apple's new iPhone is revolutionizing what cell phones can do
- ✓ How BitTorrent technology enables anyone to share information with everyone

The author, Ron White, is a former executive editor and columnist for *PC Computing*. ❖

Downloading Photos From Cell Phones — by Kim Komando

Q. I'd like to download photos I've taken with my cell phone. I want to print them out. How do I go about doing this? Is there a Web site or something I can use?

A. There are many ways to get photos off a cell phone. But your options will vary, depending on your phone and service provider.

If your phone accepts a memory card, you can use it. There should be an option to move photos to the memory card. Then, insert the card into a reader and connect it to your computer. Moving the photos will be as simple as dragging and dropping.

Bluetooth may also do the trick. Your computer will need a Bluetooth adapter, if it doesn't have Bluetooth. Then, pair your phone with the computer. Select a photo and look for a Bluetooth option.

You'll also find cables to connect your phone to your computer. Check with your electronics store for one compatible with your phone model. Special software will help you move the photos off the phone.

I have a link on my site to a free program that might help. bitpim.org/ It works with many popular phone models. If your phone isn't supported, don't worry. You can purchase software that will do the trick. Often, software and cables can be purchased together. Data Pilot at: susteen.com/ ; SnapSync at: <http://tinyurl.com/2odkk7> ; Handset Manager at <http://tinyurl.com/33mfzp>.

You can also use the cable and software to back up your phone. I highly recommend that!

E-mail is another option for transferring photos. Attach a photo to the e-mail and send it to your account. When you open the e-mail, copy the picture to your hard drive.

You can also upload the photos to a Web site like photobucket. But this generally adds a few more steps to the process. The site will give you an e-mail address where you can send your photos. Once there, download the photos to your computer. I mentioned that your options may vary, depending on your cellular provider. Unfortunately, some providers block Bluetooth transfers. Others don't let you send pictures via text messaging. They want you to sign up for another service, instead. ❖

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Book Review — by Donna Gorrell

PowerPoint 2007 by Tom Negrino.
Peachpit Press. 2008



This is a visual quickstart guide, meaning it is meant to teach you how to use the program the “quick and easy way”.

The author jumps right in by explaining how to start the program in both Vista and WindowsXP. His use of screen captures makes it extremely easy to follow along with his written words as he guides you through the process of creating a presentation.

He first explains the workspace, toolbars, keyboard shortcuts, on-screen help, and the new Ribbon introduced in Microsoft Office products for 2007. He gives the explanation for the Ribbon. Apparently all the features of the software products are available but the average user has not been taking advantage of them, or has not known where to find the features. Microsoft decided to place program features on this Ribbon and eliminate the Menu and Toolbar. Good or bad, Negrino leaves that up to you to decide. He walks you through using the Ribbon and offers “Tips” along the way.

In chapter 2 you learn how to create a presentation and each chapter thereafter deals with specific features, such as slide layouts, use of fonts, graphics, tables, charts and transitions. The last chapter is probably the most important as Negrino guides you through giving the presentation. We've all been bored to tears by a presenter who merely reads each slide that is on the screen. And how often have we experienced a failure of equipment that completely unnerves the presenter because he has no notes or backup plan. Negrino address these issues and more. He also gives a list of keyboard controls, along with practical tips, such as: “I usually use the spacebar to advance slides or slide animations when I present, because it's the biggest and easiest to find by touch while I'm talking.” That may seem like a small thing, but tips like those are invaluable when you are a novice presenter.

This book lists for \$24.99 but Amazon.com has it for \$18.99 and at Barnes & Noble the online price is \$19.99; membership price is \$17.99. At any of the aforementioned prices this book, in my opinion, is a bargain if you are truly interested in making an effective PowerPoint presentation. ❖

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

Bored?

January blahs. If you're bored and want a quick laugh, click on www.bored.com. Click on the left column and view a music video titled "Harry Potter in the Hood." It's very funny. Other choices include a site that provides free e-books for you to download. Titles are arranged by topic such as children's books, cook books, travel books, science fiction and so on. With these choices, there is no need to sulk in silence as the cold imprisons us inside our homes waiting for spring.

More Humor for a Cold January

Click on www.uglychristmaslights.com and visit a web site that celebrates garishness and bad taste. The web makers say that this site exposes the taste challenged who decorate their homes for the holidays with no regard for the well being of their neighbors. See pictures of garish nee vulgar homes loaded with lights and holiday figures that attract the helplessly bored as candle light attracts bugs. If you wish to subject yourself to ridicule, you may submit a digital photo of your holiday lighting efforts and maybe win a prize. Certainly, the electric company loves this time of year.

Keep a Stiff Upper Lip and Soldier On!

If the holiday season has filled you with despair, here is a site that may appeal to your need for pain and suffering. www.despair.com/disservice1.html should envelope you in miserable feelings. Click on the Demotivator link and view a series of inspirational posters that try to "increase success by lowering expectations." Examples include exhortations such as "Attitudes are Contagious. Mine might kill you," or "Defeat: For every winner there are dozens of losers and chances are you're one of them." The masochists among us will love this site.

Help the Hopeless

The next site appeals to the altruistic tendencies the holiday season encourages. Click on www.outside.in and you will find a site that addresses the needs of homeless youths, low income and marginalized people trying to become self-sufficient.

This social service agency, started in 1968 targets homeless youth in Portland Oregon. They report that 90% of homeless youth come from violent homes; 36% have suffered sexual abuse of youths as young as seven years old; and 30% of these youth are gay, lesbian, transgendered or questioning their sexual identities.

If you wish to help, the site provides ways to donate your money.

Clothes Make the Man and the Woman

If Santa didn't bring you that hoped for shirt or neck tie, and you just can't bear the thought of going back to work wearing last year's wardrobe, visit www.splitreason.com. This site provides "gear for geeks and gamers" For example, a t-shirt picturing a telephone headset with the line "The voices in my head are idiots." These may also make good presents for the body-pierced, heavily tattooed someone in your life.

The Constitution

West Virginia Senator Harry Byrd feels strongly that Americans need to be more familiar with the U.S. Constitution. In fact Senator Byrd feels so strongly about informing students annually about the constitution that he sponsored federal legislation that requires all K-12 schools in the U.S. to discuss the constitution on September 17th every year. For those of you who are interested in the seminal document of the modern age, visit www.montpelier.org and find out what the Center for the Constitution is all about. This foundation-supported academy located at James Madison's Montpelier offers "teachers and others to read, think, and discuss ideas related to the theory and meaning of the American Constitution." The center, founded in 2003, hopes to become the nation's leading resource in Constitutional education. If you wish to participate and learn something you didn't know about our liberties and civic responsibilities, give this site a look.

Regional scholarships are available for teachers to attend most seminars. Although most participants in center programs are teachers and students from Virginia, North Carolina and Washington D.C., teachers from 42 states have participated in various seminars and programs. The center will sponsor a three-week seminar in Los Angeles in July.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that an “undocumented feature” in Adobe Reader 8 that I told you about last month isn’t undocumented at all? I use Adobe Acrobat Standard 6 to do the newsletter and it has version 6 Reader within the program. When I got my new laptop, I decided to install an add-in to Firefox and get the latest Reader version. With version 8 I can read newer files, but can’t do the editing that I can in the Standard version so it is all new to me. I didn’t take the time to look around or diddle with any settings, since all I wanted to do is view pdf documents that were online, etc. Well, after my amazement at finding that the scroll wheel didn’t scroll the document as I was used to, but zoomed in and out, I jumped at the chance to share this fact. Since that time, I have found that this is merely a feature that you can choose, among many others. Go to Edit on the menu, choose Preferences, then General. Check [or uncheck] “make Hand tool use mouse-wheel zooming”. It was apparently the default setting when I downloaded the program. There are lots of other things you can choose. One feature that I tried was Read Out Loud. To access this, choose View from the menu, then Read Out Loud, then Activate Read Out Loud [shift+ctrl+Y] and make a choice from the following: Read This Page Only [shift+ctrl+V]; Read to End of Document [shift+ctrl+B]; Pause [shift+ctrl+C]; Stop [shift+ctrl+E]. You can not change the voice and it does take some getting used to, but I used the voice feature for the front page of the newsletter and it did a pretty good job of “reading” what was there. This is a great feature if you are proofreading an article for a newsletter as you hear the words spoken, sometimes discovering errors in the written words which your eyes may overlook.

. . . that *Kim Komando* and *SmartComputing* magazine have given us permission to reprint their articles in this newsletter? Kim has a web site and offers email tips which she is allowing us to use. Representatives from *SmartComputing* have appeared at our meetings several times over the years. They do sell their magazine and online magazine at those meetings but they graciously allow use of those articles so that we may share them with our readers. This is a perk of belonging to the club that members are given, thanks to the efforts of your board members. ❖

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

I want to thank you for your support electing me to another term as president of your PC club. This past year saw some significant changes, some pointed out at our last general meeting, some not. Bob had to leave his post as Program Chair. We need one, any volunteers? Until we do get a Program Chair, Lisa and other Board members, always acting as a team, are providing the fine and most interesting speakers for our main meetings. We welcome ideas for programs. We also welcome your active participation in reaching out to the community at large for speakers with programs of interest to our members. You will get full support, loads of help from our Board. Again, we work as a team.

Another change is that the poor support for the SIGs by our members over the years weighed significantly in the Board’s decision to give up the Church as our club’s home base. Frequency of use was a major concern. SIGs, in any case, never did define our club as a PC group. In the earlier days of the club there were discussions about having or not having SIGs as part of the club’s activities. Still, for a while, we did get used to them and we learned from them. Through the years, our SIGs went the way of other club’s SIGs. Loss of attendance suggested to some that the usefulness of the formal SIG has had its day. You know that professing interest in a SIG is no assurance that you will show up at the meeting. As a very recent example, after all the discussion about SIGs at our last general meeting, there was only one person in attendance at Bill’s Q&A SIG. We’d like to keep the Q&A SIG going, but we will need more than one person at the meeting. Let’s get some feedback, any ideas why attendance isn’t better?

Maybe SIGs are dinosaurs, stuff of the past. Other clubs hold mini workshops just before their main meeting begins. It’s a good spot to inform members of items of special interest. We’ve tried the mini Q&A format, seeking your questions on digital photography and graphics. In all of this we need your support, your active participation.

As an active club member you might want to read the Bylaws. No kidding. It’s not the most interesting read but it will help you to understand the purpose of the club, how it is organized and how it plays out from Board to meetings. You might want to consult the few pages of our laws if you are considering questions relating to the formal aspects of our club. Our Board members are guided by them. You know exactly what they know. In fact, all of what is in this column has been brought to your attention before. Through the years we’ve shared with you our concerns, the SIGs, the church, the need for a Program Chair, the need for your active participation. It’s a new year. I have hope for a show of renewed interest. ❖

explorer

Genealogical Research
Thursday * Jan 3, 2008 * 6:00 PM * Whitesboro High School



what's.com/ing				January 2008		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
HAPPY NEW YEAR !		1 	2	3 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS	4	5
5	6	8 Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	Special monthly meeting night - this month only! Thursday, January 3	