

Digital TV

- ✓ What is Digital TV and why change from Analog?
- ✓ What's the difference between BlueRay and DVD?
- ✓ What's the difference between 1080i and 1080p?
- ✓ How do you connect a PC to a TV? And, what are the differences between LCD, Plasma, and RPTV?
- ✓ Do you know what S-Video, DVI, HDMI, and VGA mean?

Keith Vanderzell and **Joe Meher** from *Best Buy* will answer the above questions and any that you may have regarding HDTV.

Please cast your vote and then come to the meeting to learn about the change from analog to digital that will be coming in February and discover how those changes will affect you. ❖

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.

www.wktv.com also has a listing of school closings.



Our annual Food and Toy drive will be held at the November and December meetings. Please bring non-perishable food items or new toys to the meeting.



You will be given a raffle ticket for items of food and one for items of toys, plus your regular membership ticket for a possible total of 3 tickets.



Dave Askew will collect the items at the November meeting.



Tuesday, November 4, 2008 - 6PM
Whitesboro High School cafeteria



explorer

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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 . . .

'Tis the season for giving Thanks. We are all suffering from high gas prices, high taxes, etc., etc., etc. However, it is at times like this that we are asked to reach deep into our pockets to share with others.



We are collecting food and toys as we do each year. Please bring any items you can to help make someone else's holidays happy.

The Family Place is also asking the community for donations and as computer users we have unused old equipment and could share the items we no longer use with this worthwhile non-profit organization.

Give until it feels good! You'll make someone else happy and you'll feel the happy spirit of giving. Thanks!

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

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ NY
 Zip _____ Phone _____
 E-mail _____

Please mail this application with a check payable to MVPCUG to
M V P C U G
PO Box 586
Marcy NY 13403-0586

Minutes of October 7, 2008

— Helen Russell, acting sect.

*The MVPCUG general meeting was held at the Whitesboro HS cafeteria. President **Jerry Finkelstein** called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. There were 25 persons in attendance.*

BUSINESS MEETING

The first announcement concerned is on next month's meeting. The club usually meets on the first Tuesday of the month, but this time it falls on Nov.4, election day. The school may be closed so the meeting might have to be held on Thursday, Nov.6. Members will be notified of the exact date by newsletter and Email. Should the general meeting be held on Nov.6 then the Q&A session will be postponed to Dec. 4th.

Once again the Toys for Tots will be held at the Nov. and Dec. meetings. This involves bringing food that is not perishable and toys. Dave Askew will help in Nov. but a volunteer is needed for Dec. Check with Jerry if you can help.

Nominations of officers will take place at the Nov. meeting. A full slate will be presented for your consideration; President, Vice President, Treasurer Secretary and (1) Director-at-Large.

A treasury report was given by Bill Gorrell for the period of Sept. 1 to Sept.30, 2008. The club received \$100.79 in revenues and spent \$223.42 leaving a net expense for the month at \$122.42. Account balance as of Sept.30 includes \$22.75 in the checking account and \$2,746.33 in the money market for a total of \$2,769.08.

Next Patty Bruno gave an interesting talk and demo on a website named www.Stumbleupon.com.

PROGRAM

Jeanee Mooney, a Customer Relations Coordinator, from the Utica Post Office, gave a splendid demo. She passed out folders to each member showing all the guide lines of basic fees from eBay, PayPal, US Postal rates. She gave a careful detailed description on how to buy, sell, make payments to PayPal, how to package a sold item and how to make labels. She answered many questions from the members. At the end of her presentation she gave out boxes of stackable shipping scales. Also, many of the members received a package of Click-N-Ship, self-adhesive labels.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

- Flash Drive..... Gary Virkler
- Photo Paper 4X6..... Jerry Finkelstein
- Photo Paper 8-1/2X11..... Jim Pease
- DVD-R, 25 Pk..... Jim Schmandt

[Donated by Microsoft]

- Book, M/S outlook 2007..... Patty Bruno

[Donated by Que Publishing]

- Book, Guide to eBay..... Nick Dudish

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Helen Russell, acting secretary



The Family Place at 309 Genesee St, Utica is seeking donations for their resource center. They are in need of: computers + accessories; office equipment; children's clothing; furniture. If you have anything you'd like to donate or can help in any way, please call MaryAnn Stockton at 798-9164 or email her at mstockton@fnccny.org.

Are you up in the Clouds? On Cloud 9?
Just what is a Cloud?

Cloud computing is the wave of the future. You might be a part of it right now if you use Flickr [a photo-sharing site]. Facebook, MySpace, blogs and wikis are all part of Cloud computing. Michael Miller, in his book Cloud Computing [Que Publishing] states the good points as well as the bad side of Cloud computing. He gives an overview; then covers the various applications that are available now. This book will be available as a door prize and can be purchased for \$24.99.

PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS 2009

- President. Jerry Finkelstein
- Vice President. Lisa Britt
- Treasurer. Bill Gorrell
- Secretary. Helen Russell
- Director-at-large..... Patty Bruno

Microsoft Office 2007 Tips

Minimize the Ribbon

The Ribbon helps you access more of the commands you need, when you need them. But if you want to see the Ribbon only when you need it, you can minimize it so that only the tab names appear all the time. To minimize the Ribbon in any program, double-click any tab name, or press CTRL+F1. You can also right-click any tab name for the option to minimize the Ribbon.

Customizing the Quick Access Toolbar

In Excel, Word, and PowerPoint, the title bar contains a set of icons known as the Quick Access Toolbar. If unchanged, it will have four default icons: Save, Undo, Repeat, and Quick Print. All of these will be displayed, as long as they are active. To customize the Quick Access Toolbar: Click the small arrow to the right of the toolbar, and then click More Commands to view a configuration form. Click the action icon that you want to see on the toolbar, click Add, and then click OK. Notice that the icon is now part of the Quick Access Toolbar.

EXCEL

Change the Default File Location

Many users find that they tend to open workbooks from the same folder on their computer. If that Vista folder isn't Documents [My Documents in Windows XP], you can change the folder that Excel 2007 displays when you want to open or save a workbook. Here's how: Click the Office button, then click Excel Options. In the left column, click Save. Type the desired location in the Default file location box.

To Change the Color of a Sheet Tab

Right-click the sheet tab. Click Tab Color. Click the color from the palette that appears.

Previewing Charts in Grayscale

You can preview your charts in Excel before you print. Open the file that you want to print, click the Office button, point to Print, and then click Print Preview. On the Print Preview ribbon, click Page Setup, click Sheet, and then click Black and white. The preview will be in grayscale so that you can evaluate whether the contrast is good enough to distinguish the lines, bars, and columns.

OUTLOOK

Color-Code a Sender's Email Message

You can color-code your incoming e-mail to spot quickly what's important. Click an e-mail message, and then click Tools. Click Organize. Click Using Colors, and then select your color of choice. All future e-mail from that sender will appear in that color.

How to Use the Bcc Field in Outlook 2007

In Outlook 2007, click New to open a new e-mail message, and then click Show Bcc on the Options tab.

WORD

Change Default Document Formatting

When you created your first new document in Word 2007, you may have noticed that default text formatting [the formatting of the Normal paragraph style] had changed from the previous version. For example, the new default font is Calibri, line spacing is a bit expanded, and space is automatically added after each paragraph. To change font and paragraph formatting defaults for the active document or all new documents based on the active template, do the following: Press CTRL+SHIFT+ALT+S to open the Styles pane [or click the dialog box launch icon in the Styles section on the Home tab]. Click the Manage Styles icon at the bottom of the pane to open the Manage Styles dialog box. On the Set Defaults tab of the dialog box, change font and paragraph formatting as needed. Then, at the bottom of the dialog box, click the option to apply settings either only to this document or to new documents based on the active template.

Counting Words

You can find the number of words in your Word document by selecting only the text that you want to count. Look at the status bar displayed on the bottom of the screen. It shows you the number of words in the selected text first, and then the count for the entire document.

POWERPOINT

Enter the PowerPoint Slide Show Mode Beginning at Any Point You Want

Pressing F5 in PowerPoint starts the slide show, but by default, it will open with the first slide in the deck. To start your slide show with the current or selected slide, press SHIFT+F5 instead. ❖

What's Happening !!!

—by Patricia Bruno

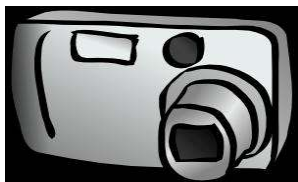
Are you analog or digital ?

Congress passed legislation, beginning in 1996, mandating the change from analog to digital TV broadcasts.

As of February 17, 2009, all full powered television stations will stop broadcasting in analog format.

Why does this information concern us? Let's see if we can make some sense of analog and digital technology. If you use a computer, telephone, cell phone or digital camera, you are using digital technology.

The analog photographs that we are viewing on a daily basis get converted to digital, with a scanner.



Photos taken with the digital cameras are automatically converted to digital. These digital images are what we view on our computers everyday.

Telephones are analog unless you are using the DSL carriers who convert it for you. And cell phones are digital allowing more users in a smaller area to get a signal. Although cell phones at one time were analog, and if you had poor reception, you received static and distortion.



Every thing you hear is analog . . . Records and cassettes . . . CDs, and when you convert to digital you actually play it back to analog much cleaner and clearer. The quality of analog is higher when stored as digital.

As of March 1, 2007 all television receivers shipped or imported to the United States must contain a digital tuner. If you purchased a television after May 25, 2007 without a digital tuner, the Commission requires all sellers to disclose at point of sale that a digital tuner would be required for this analog tuner.

Why Change?

1. Improvements to the picture and sound quality.
2. Digital transmissions make more efficient use of the airwaves , leaving more room for additional channels or data.

In order to change your analog television over to receive this new signal you must get yourself a converter box. And how do you do that? If you do a search for digital converter box, you will get hundreds of web sites. How do you know if you are at the right place? The Federal Communication Commission, better known as the FCC, has a wonderful site called "The Digital TV Transition". The site www.dtv.gov will explain the basics of switching to digital via converter box. Everything you need to know about DTV.

Where to buy one and how to sign up for a converter box coupon is found at www.dtv2009.gov. If you want a coupon, you have to fill out a form first and when you are approved for a coupon, they take about 2 weeks to arrive. Do it Early!

Coupons do expire, and they are only good for converter



boxes listed with www.ntiadtv.gov/cecb_list.cfm Every thing you need to know about Digital TV can be found on these sites. **Check it Out!!!**

What a Find!!!

StumbleUpon is an internet community that allows users to discover web pages, photos and videos.



StumbleUpon selects the web page according to your selected topic(s). And when you download the toolbar, all you have to do is click STUMBLE.

You can also click the "I like it" button and that website will be book marked in your browser. Or click the thumbs down icon and

web sites similar will not appear.

The StumbleUpon toolbar allows you to meet fellow surfers or select videos only, surf through selected web sites such as CNN, My Space, or You Tube. If you are a web surfer, then this is the site for you. Instead of searching for a topic and hoping it appears in the search, StumbleUpon sends them to you automatically. You can also add a site to the StumbleUpon listings, if they don't have it already. I find myself saying one more and then I'll log out . . .

Check it out!!!



Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

Craigslist to the Rescue

An enterprising crook recently used www.Craigslist.com to commit a crime. www.arstechnica.com/news recently reported that a tech savvy criminal used Craigslist to commit a bank robbery. It seems the purloiner placed an ad on craigslist.com offering road construction work at \$28.50 per hour in Monroe, WA, a small city north of Seattle. According to the arstechnica web site, about a dozen men replied to the ad and received instructions to show up outside a Bank of America branch wearing a yellow vest, safety goggles, a respirator mask and a blue shirt.

As the men gathered outside the bank wearing the required clothing, another man wearing the same outfit used pepper spray on a guard carrying cash from an armored truck into the bank. The thief grabbed the cash-filled duffel bag, ran 100 yds to Wood Creek, and made his getaway by inner tube. FBI officials remarked this was the first time they knew of where an inner tube had been used as a getaway vehicle. Now that is American ingenuity at its finest! No word on whether the job applicants received paychecks for their trouble.

A New Twist on Open Government

New York State Comptroller Thomas Di Napoli has announced that financial data for 3,100 counties, cities, towns, villages, schools and fire districts are now part of the openbooknewyork.com web site. The site launched in June as part of an effort to give NY taxpayers access to local government finance records.

According to Di Napoli, the web site makes it easy for taxpayers to compare year-to-year revenue and spending trends. The homepage notes data are uploaded quarterly. When I visited the site, I clicked on the City of Utica data for the years 2006 and 2005.

Under expenditures I found that Utica spent a total of \$74,631,546 in 2006 and \$74,684,441 in 2005. Specifically, Utica spent \$744,986 in 2006 and \$565,511 in 2005 for disability insurance. Additional expenditures included \$2,802,795 and \$2,676,211 for governmental administration, while \$3,616,181 and \$3,536,496 went for housing assistance.

These data will not indicate the salary your uncle Harry received as a city cop or how much is spent on computer paper. These figures are category totals.

The comptroller says that, "Democracy is a participation sport, and Open Book lets every citizen participate." New Yorkers, "have access to the information they need to hold government accountable and make sure their tax dollars are not being wasted." This laudable initiative may be wishful thinking since line item info is lacking. Nevertheless, it's a start. Now, if only I can tear myself away from reruns of *The Beverly Hillbillies*, I might just look for answers.

2008 Ignoble Awards

Recently, Harvard University served as the site of the 18th Annual Ig Nobel Awards. These awards are given to research that "makes people laugh and then think." This year the Ig Nobel peace award went to the Swiss Federal Ethics Committee on Non-Human Biotechnology for passing a law that recognizes, "that plants have dignity too." The Biology prize went to researchers who found that fleas that live on dogs are better high jumpers than fleas that live on cats.

Deborah Anderson of Harvard University Medical School won the award for Chemistry for research confirming that Coca Cola is an effective spermicide douche. The award was shared by researchers at Taipei Univ Medical School who proved that neither Coke nor Pepsi provide effective spermicide douches.

The complete list of winners can be viewed at www.arstechnica.com/news.

Live Your History

How do you convince a class of students that history is more than just a bunch of boring facts? One interesting attempt comes from the Living History Education Foundation, livinghistoryed.org. This organization provides a program that allows history teachers to experience what it was like to be a soldier in the French and Indian War, or to participate in an archeological dig at the War of 1812 site in Sackets Harbor.

Teachers dress in period costumes and study with practicing professionals who use history, literature, music, art, library science, technology and home and careers [home economics for us older folks] to make history come alive. The training qualifies for graduate credit or for in-service credit at the participant's choice. The foundation provides room and board and all materials for this "you are there" experience. Curricula meet state social studies standards. Sound interesting? Pass it on.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that you could download old versions of programs? I especially liked the older version of PaintShopPro [version 7] and I use that most of the time. Check it out: oldapps.com/Paint_Shop_Pro.php

. . . that you can find boot disks and dll files at: <http://bootdisk.com/>? Check out the files available and make sure you read the *read 1st* information.

. . . that *PCWorld* recommends *Photoscape* as a free digital manipulation software program? Reviewer Preston Gralla states that it is a remarkable program with a wide range of tools and features—everything from a file viewer to a photo editor, slide show creator, batch editor, screen capture program and more. There are some quite original and innovative tools here, such as combining multiple photos in a single frame. It can even convert photos in the RAW format used by many digital cameras to the more useful JPEG format. Download it at: <http://tinyurl.com/38jr8u>.

. . . that you could make the names on your desktop icons transparent? Go to Control Panel | System | Advanced | Performance area | Settings button Visual Effects tab “Use drop shadows for icon labels on the Desktop”. Click Apply and OK. The names will now have a drop shadow instead of appearing in a box.

. . . that you could rename the desktop icons? Right click on the icon and select Rename from the drop down menu. Enter a new name for the program [the shortcut icon] and press Enter. This doesn't work for the Recycle Bin. In order to change the name you must edit the registry. To do this, open Regedit and go to:
HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\CLSID/{645FF040-5081-101B-9F08-00AA002F954E}
and change the name “Recycle Bin” to whatever you want [don't type any quotes]. Remember to backup the registry before making any changes.

. . . that the easiest way to change the look of the Vista desktop is through personalization? Here's how: Right-click the desktop; click Personalize, and then begin customizing to fit your style. ❖

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

I'm looking forward to Best Buy's presentation on the new TVs at our next general meeting. A few of my friends have already bought the really big ones, turned walls into huge TV screens, rearranged furniture, redid their living rooms/dens into little theaters. The sitting is fine, you're on couches. The viewing, for me,



is a mixed bag. On one large screen the image is sharp, the colors are vibrant, but I see those tiny boxes that make up the image all across the screen. It's distracting. On another screen the colors look smudged, faces are pasty-looking and large patches of green pass for grass. I want to see sharpness. I want to see the

pores. I want the picture to be at least as sharp as on my 8 year old Zenith.

I know that at the time of purchase the set is serviced to produce a picture-perfect image. I know that my friends' sets were all looked at and adjusted. I'm thinking though that these sets are in need of further tweaking. The owners of these sets, however, are happy with their big screens. Big time happy. They're all very eager to show them off even if you're sitting low and the screen is up high hugging the ceiling. And they don't “see,” or they don't mind, the pasty look of the image, an image similar to the image of tape on very slow speed. Depending on the screen, the image sometimes disappears altogether if you're sitting off on the side of the TV set. That's it. It's not that you are not seeing a great image. Sitting on the side means you won't see any image at all.

I feel confident that the Best Buy presentation will be a good one. The digital transition is a subject we're all interested in, the talk will be filled with useful information. I'm sure that both technical and non-technical matters will be covered along with personal concerns like placement of screen, seating arrangements and general home decoration. ❖



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Digital TV
 Tuesday ♦ November 4, 2008 ♦ 6:00 PM ♦ Whitesboro High School



| what's.com/ing | | | | November 2008 | | |
|---|--------|---|-----------|--|--------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| Vote on Election Day, November 4 US Marine Corps established November 10, 1775 Signing of WWI Armistice November 11, 1918 [now Veteran's Day] | | | | | | |
| 2 CHANGE YOUR CLOCK CHANGE YOUR BATTERY | | 4 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS | | 6 Q & A SIG 6:30 PM Whitesboro HS room 522 | | |
| 9 | 10 | 11 Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | | | | | | |