

Weather Forecasting

Bill Kardas, WKTV meteorologist, will present a unique program showing the computer software and graphics used in weather forecasting and weather telecasting.

Bill grew up in the Capital Region and is used to New York's snowy winters. He worked over at WTEN in Albany for 2 years working on the forecast and producing weather graphics for the evening news. He also interned at the Albany Weather Service in 2005. Bill graduated SUNY Albany in May of 2006 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Atmospheric Science.



His most memorable weather events include the 2002 Christmas storm, and the May 31st, 1998 tornado outbreak in Eastern New York. He is looking forward to the challenges of forecasting in Central New York.

Bill is an avid runner, but also likes to hike, fish, play tennis, watch football, design websites, and spend time with his friends and family in his spare time. Bill welcomes emails, and you can send him your questions or comments to bkardas@wktv.com.

Dave Askew will be conducting our annual **Food & Toy Drive** at the December meeting.

Because there was no meeting in November we ask you to be extra generous.

Bring more than one toy to the meeting and you'll receive two extra door prize tickets.



Bring more than one non-perishable item of food to the meeting and you'll receive two extra door prize tickets.



Bring a computer related item for a door prize and receive an extra door prize ticket. You might be eligible for as many as six tickets.



Please be generous

Tuesday, December 4, 2007- 6PM at Whitesboro High School



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 . . .

This month we elect officers and approve the budget for the coming year.



Traditionally, we have always collected food and toys in November and December. This year we only get to donate at the upcoming meeting due to circumstances beyond our control. Please be extra charitable.



Plan to attend this very important meeting.

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

There are no minutes to report because we were unable to hold the meeting in November. The schools were closed and we were unaware of the fact until that evening. The scheduled speaker has agreed to do his presentation at a future meeting.

Each year the Board of Directors must propose a budget for the coming year and members vote upon this at the December meeting.

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.



Proposed 2008 Budget

Income	
Membership dues	\$2000
Interest	25
Fund balance	425
Total Income	\$2450

Expense	
Newsletter	\$1460
Insurance	450
Door prizes	250
ISP	120
Equipment/misc	100
Office supplies/postage	40
Charity/donations	30
Total Expense	\$2450

Election December 2007

Proposed slate of officers for 2008

- President Jerry Finkelstein
- Vice President Lisa Britt
- Secretary John Hunter
- Treasurer Bill Gorrell
- Director-at-large Lou Barile

Our January meeting would normally be held on January 1, but since this is a holiday the Board of Directors have rescheduled the meeting night. We will hold a regular general meeting on THURSDAY, January 3. The meeting will be held at the Whitesboro High School. Please mark your calendars! ❖

Book Reviews for Christmas — by John Hunter

At this time of year, we sometimes treat ourselves to presents we might otherwise pass by in, say, June. In just a year, 2009, Microsoft will end its support of Windows XP. If you are planning to purchase a new computer after Microsoft dumps XP, you will need to use Windows Vista. In addition to the new operating system, Microsoft has issued a new edition of Office - Office 2007. We will begin by looking at the two guides for Windows Vista.

Breakthrough! Windows Vista by Joli Ballew and S.E. Slack. Microsoft Press, Redmond, Washington. 2007. 207 pages. \$19.99 list or \$13.59 at Amazon. The authors present the material in a simple, casual style that readers will find easy to understand. The book includes colorful graphics, including printscreen examples, on nearly every page. As is the case with all modern software, VISTA offers more options than even the geekiest among us can use. For example, you can create monthly calendars in Office Powerpoint 2007, if you have a mind to. Why you would use powerpoint over Outlook is not explained. And why this feature is listed in a book about operating systems is similarly omitted. The authors provide a good index that complements a very extensive table of contents. Should you wish to find any particular topic, the helps should make short work of your quest. The explanations included are a bit limited, but for the person who just wants to get up and running, you may want to give this book a look. For \$13.59 it's a pretty good bet.

Another Windows Vista explanation comes from Peachpit Press authors Larry Magid and Dwight Silverman. ***Microsoft Windows Vista: A Quick Reference Guide to Mastering All That is Vista!*** Peachpit Press, Berkeley Ca, 2007. 403 pages. \$29.99 or \$19.79 at Amazon. Magid and Silverman offer a much more useful book to the novice than Ballew and S.E. Slack do. Instead of the valley girl cuteness, Magid and Silverman provide readers with a well organized, comprehensive introduction to Vista. The table of contents is very complete and users can also refer to a very good index should they wish to find specific items. As with the Ballew and Slack book, Magid and Silverman provide a plethora of color printscreens on virtually every page. And as is the case with every successful technical book, the percentage of white space to text is large. Thus, the technical data is gulped in small easily digested bits rather than a forbidding long text paragraph.

In sum, if you are considering a computer purchase or a VISTA upgrade, either book will help you understand the new operating system.

In addition to VISTA, Microsoft introduced Office 2007 which is the most widely used productivity suite available. Two recently published books provide upgraders and new users become familiar with the new bells and whistles Microsoft has included. The first is from the Visual Quickstart Guide series titled ***Microsoft OFFICE 2007*** by Steve Schwartz. Peach Pit Press, Berkeley CA, 2007. 434 pages. \$24.99 or \$16.49 at Amazon. As with other books in the series, Schwartz provides a reference for users who are already familiar with earlier Office versions and allows readers to quickly become productive with the new edition. The first chapter provides a quick survey of new features found in each component. Schwartz begins with the new user interface which uses a ribbon rather than menus to format documents. As a writer very comfortable with menus, I find that the new ribbon takes a bit of getting used to. In word, besides the new interface, users will find charting and diagraming features, a tool to compare document versions, and a separate file format.

In Excel, new tweaks include larger worksheets, longer formulas, calculated columns, centralized named ranges and shared charting with other Office programs. Powerpoint includes new themes, layouts and Quick Styles, custom layouts, and additional character and paragraph formatting options. Outlook includes instant search, color categories, a to-do bar and RSS feed support. While discussions of the various Office programs is not as complete as a discussion limited to a single program, the text will provide users with a convenient reference guide to handle specific questions.

A similar discussion of the Microsoft Office 2007 Outlook software program comes from Joan Preppernau and Joyce Cox, ***Step by Step: Microsoft Office Outlook 2007***. Microsoft Press. Redmond WA. 2009. 361 pages. \$24.99 or \$19.99 at Barnes and Noble. As one expects from the writers of the Step by Step series, the volume provides considerable depth to the treatment of all the elements of Microsoft Outlook 2007. Readers begin with a presentation of new features, information for readers using Microsoft XP, the Microsoft certification program and an extensive quick reference section, all in the introduction! The book also comes with a CD that provides additional help in mastering the software. Outlook 2007 users should purchase this manual when they upgrade the software. The book is very well written and reasonably priced. ❖

Is Cellular Broadband Safe?

— by Kim Komando

Q. I have Verizon RV720 EVDO Aircards for my laptops. I want to be sure I'm secure if I do Internet banking. How can I know, besides trusting the salesman?

A. I'm glad that you are worried about your Internet banking security. That information is some of the most important to keep safe.

First, let's talk about what kind of Internet access you're getting. It has many names: Wireless Broadband, Mobile Broadband, Mobile Data Service, and, in Verizon's case, BroadbandAccess. However you label it, it's Internet access through your cellular network.

This has some distinct advantages. You can access the Internet from almost anywhere. If cell service is available, you can get online.

Cellular service is often advertised as broadband. Does it deliver? Yes, but only with a strong signal. It's like the bars on your cell phone. Fewer bars equals poorer cell service and slower Internet speeds.

So, are you safe using cellular broadband? Yes. Banks provide secure access to their sites. They do it through SSL, or Secure Sockets Layer. When you log-in, SSL encrypts the connection between you and the bank. I have a tip that explains SSL.

SSL has never been broken. So your online banking information is safe. The same goes for stock brokerages and other firms.

You have other layers of protection.

The cell service is a wireless Internet connection, much like traditional Wi-Fi. Traditional Wi-Fi access, at hotspots or at home, should be encrypted for safety. Your cellular network is encrypted by Verizon.

It uses CDMA network technology—Code Division Multiple Access. That's the same technology that protects phone calls. It breaks your transmission up among multiple frequencies, then encodes it. It can only be reconstructed with the same code. With your transmission broken up, it's hard to hack.

Not all service providers use CDMA. T-Mobile and AT&T use the international standard GSM. GSM does not break up your connection. Rather, it assigns you to a single frequency. This doesn't mean it is less safe. GSM has strong encryption as well.

Being on an encrypted network offers a good level of safety. In fact, Verizon calls its method impenetrable. Regardless, you need to be careful.

There are precautions to take with any computer connected to the Internet. You need a reliable firewall, to keep hackers out. I use ZoneAlarm [www.zonelabs.com], which is free. I have links to others—Jetico [www.jetico.com] and Outpost [www.agnitum.com]. They do the job, too, and they're both free.

Antivirus and anti-spyware programs are also important. I have a number of free ones on my site [<http://www.komando.com/downloads/categories.aspx?cat=Security>]. Use just one antivirus program, to avoid conflicts. Use multiple anti-spyware programs; no one has a complete handle on spyware. Anti-spyware programs do not conflict.

Keep Windows updated. Over the years, Microsoft has issued many, many security updates.

And I recommend you use a browser other than Internet Explorer. Among your choices are Safari [www.apple.com/safari], Firefox [www.mozilla.com/firefox] and Opera [www.opera.com].

Internet Explorer is certainly a good browser. But it is a part of Windows. That could allow an intruder easier access to your files. The other browsers are just regular ol' programs. They don't get very far into Windows. ❖

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Don't forget to bring non-perishable food and new toys to the meeting. Help to make the less fortunate have a happy holiday and earn extra door prize tickets for yourself.

Because the November meeting was cancelled, we ask that you bring extra items. We'll double the extra door prize tickets to reward your generosity.

Happy Holidays!

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

Let It Snow

As I type this, the weatherman forecasts snow for later today. This does not particularly thrill me, but for those of you who love cold and snow, visit mountwashington.org. On my visit, the temperature was a balmy 39 degrees with a wind of 45 mph. The observatory boasts that it has the worst weather in the world, and that is probably not an exaggeration. There are half a dozen webcams that provide live shots from the top. At my visit, fog and mist obscured five of the six scenes. The site also offers visitors the opportunity to join the observation team, buy items at the weather station store and volunteer as weather observers. Good luck to those interested.

For Cat Lovers

Many cat lovers believe their beloved pets have extreme personalities. catsthatlooklikehitler.com provides an outlet for indulgent cat-parents to post images of pet that resemble old Adolph. If you are bored and have nothing better to do that surf, give this site a visit. It's pretty funny.

Another funny site is catsinsinks.com. This site presents photo after photo of cats reclining, sitting, pouting, lounging, drinking and so on. And I thought my cat was the only one who drank water directly out of the tap. This site is really cute.

Are You Hungry?

I seem to recall that gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins. But every summer the press report on various eating contests, the most famous being the Nathan's hotdog eating contest at Coney Island. For those of you who just can't get enough of seeing otherwise normal people stuffing themselves, consider a visit to www.competitiveeating.net.

The host for this site is the International Federation of Competitive Eating (Yup. It's a real organization.) On the day of my visit, the site offered the next big event: Spike's Mile Chowdown, on November 22nd at 7:00 p.m. Click on the ad and view a mini-video of eaters stuffing as much turkey as they can push into their mouths during the contest time limit. The voiceover opines that the event presents a triathlon of eating and offers viewers and contestants alike an example of "physical poetry." One contestant even lost a tooth and ate it while competing. Those who

say they have really stuffed themselves during the holidays can measure their efforts against the real pros. "BURP!"

Games, Games and More Games

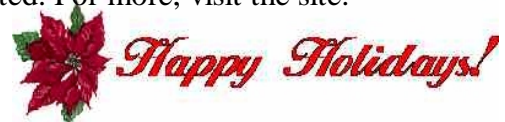
For the person who can't stand the thought of nothing to do, visit abccarcade.com. This site provides a veritable treasure chest of video games ranging from addicting games to dress up games, games for kids, and so on. Although it sounds a bit kinky, nothing I clicked on was objectionable or kid-unfriendly. For example, I clicked on Zanpo Virtual Cities and found myself ready to enter a virtual world where I could meet people from all over, design and build my own virtual home in my own virtual city and have strangers vote on how well my architectural creation turned out. So for the adventurous, have a look.

Reality Shows Trumped By Web

Survivor, American Idol, Man in the Wild and other reality shows seem to dominate the cable channels these days. Viewers identify with the show participants and vicariously experience the thrill of primitive politics, gross cuisine, public failure and humiliation and voluntary privation on every level. www.tribewanted.com takes this idea to a new level of viewer participation. With one click you can travel to Vorovoro and become a tribe member of a virtual tribe yourself. You can help real people build a real community on an island located in the Figi Islands Archepelego. This is MySpace on steroids. Anchors away!

Other Virtual Tours

Michigan State University provides a more respectable virtual foreign tour option with the site www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu. When you click on the link for teachers, up comes an explanation of the various teaching modules offered starting with a sensible "Why Study Africa?" This module provides thought provoking images that challenge widespread stereotypes of the continent. Students are first asked to compare map projections to facilitate a discussion of how importance is presented. For more, visit the site.



Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that Word has some interesting tricks up its sleeve? Jerry asked me to help him in using Word to put some text onto a photo or graphic image. I would normally use PaintShopPro to do any manipulation to graphics, but we decided to see if Word is capable of at least adding the text that Jerry wanted. You can not fix red eye or do some of the tricks that an image editing program such as PaintShopPro or Photoshop-Elements can accomplish, but Word does have some basic editing tools.

To add text to an image, open Word; then choose Insert | Picture | From file and then select a file from the dialog box that opens. Switch to the folder that contains the image you want, select the file you want and then click on Insert. The image should open into a document. Now, right click on a blank area of the Menu bar and choose “Drawing” from the list of toolbars. We were using Word 2000 and the Drawing toolbar opened just above the status bar at the bottom of the Word window.

To insert text, find the text icon—about mid-way on the drawing bar. Let the mouse hover over the icons for a description. Click on the icon to enable it and then click inside the image. Before you start typing the text you want, find the icon for Fill [it looks like a tipped up paint can]. Click on the arrow just to the right of it and choose the color you want the background to be, or choose NoFill to make the background transparent. Next go to the icon that looks like an “A” for Font color. Clicking on the arrow to its right will display the colors you might choose. If your image is light colored you might want to use a dark font color. If your image is dark, yellow or white font color will show up best. You can also choose the font style and size from the regular menu at the top of document window. Now you can type the text you want and when satisfied, click off onto an unused area outside of the image.

. . . that Adobe Reader version 8 has a neat feature that is not documented? By accident I discovered that moving the mouse scroll wheel will increase or decrease the size of the page. You don’t have to use the zoom tool, just move the mouse wheel forward or backward. So simple and easy. Wish all things were that simple! ❖



Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

Donna, in her column, Did You Know . . . , in this month’s issue of this newsletter, does a wonderful job detailing how to put text inside of a graphic image using Word. As she says, I did come to her for help to do this text insertion using Microsoft Word. I have my big manual books on Word but I couldn’t find anything in them to help me out. Donna, too, had her fat, heavy book on the program, no luck there either. But let’s be positive about this, just because something you want to know about the program is not in an authoritative book about the subject does not mean it can’t be done. It’s just not there for you to find out about it. So how do you find out? This is where Donna comes in. She has the patience of Job, she’s PC savvy, she’s very intuitive, and maybe her detective work in genealogy helped here too.

We both knew what we wanted, to place some text inside a graphic image. Inserting the image into the Word document was pretty straight forward (see her column). Initially Word seemed only to allow text in the blank spaces around the image, not in it. It was the Drawing Toolbar that set us on our way to solving our problem.

You might want to try Donna’s helpful tip, it’s easy, it’s fun. It’s a practical solution for original, personal holiday greeting cards. With just a few clicks you can send out pictures of your family, show off a picture of your new grandchild with text imbedded in the image. Text within image makes great business cards. You can create original-looking recipes. You can come up with interesting brochures for church functions.

Its use is limited only by your imagination. And the beauty of it is you don’t need a special graphic image editing program to do this simple function. All you need is Word.

Thanks Donna for showing us the way. ❖






*Happy
Holidays*

explorer

Weather Forecasting
Tuesday ★ Dec 4, 2007 ★ 6:00 PM ★ Whitesboro High School



Happy Holidays

what's.com/ing				December 2007		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS	5  Hanukkah	6 Q + A SIG 6:30 PM Whitesboro HS Room 522	7	8
9	10	11 Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 Winter begins
23	24	25 	26	27	28	29
30		31 