

Help with your computer “handicap”

- * **Did you get a new computer and find that the fonts and icons on your new large screen are so small that they’re hard to read and see?**
- * **Do your eyes water after several hours in front of your monitor?**

These and other “handicaps” can be solved through the exciting world of adaptive technology and with the help of our February 7th presenter, Sharon Giovinazzo, Public Policy and Consumer Relations Associate at Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Sharon, blind for five years, will demonstrate technology that includes screen magnification software and text to speech engines. Also, come and see the cell phone that TALKS. There are many surprises in store for us, including information on free software and other resources that can help us if we cannot see those little icons on our desktop as well as we once could.

Technology has revolutionized daily life for all of us, but it has had particularly dramatic benefits for people who are blind or visually impaired. Computer technology, including specialized hardware or software that simulates the human voice reading the computer screen now provides benefits to not only the blind and visually handicapped but to those of us in the aging public who walk around with a magnifying glass in our purse or pocket.

Assistive or adaptive technology, as it is called, has exploded many barriers to education and employment . . . as well as having provided aid and comfort to many others forced to glue their eyes on tiny pixels on the screen. Among persons age 65 and older, 21% report some form of vision impairment.

Based on population estimates for 2000, this represents 7.3 million persons. It is possible that someone you know could be suffering from a vision loss.

On our website
— *Links of Interest* —
Go to:
mvpcug.com/index1.htm
* makoa.org/computer.htm
* [//abilitymagazine.com/ada.html](http://abilitymagazine.com/ada.html)

Click on the links to find out more about these subjects.

Come and find out how to help others—as well as yourself—with this exciting presentation.



For more than seventy five years, the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been enabling people to live full and independent lives here in Central New York . . . people who otherwise would never have enjoyed the opportunities they now have. ❖

Tuesday, February 7, 2006 - 6PM at Whitesboro HS 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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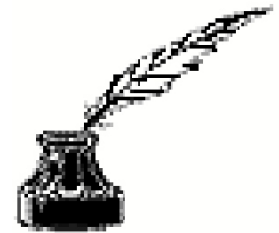
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Meeting Agenda	
5:30	Meet and Greet
6:00	Business Meeting
6:30	Program, Part 1
7:00	Break
7:15	Program, Part 2
8:15	Drawing for Prizes
8:30	Adjournment

Editorial Notes . . .

Jim Pease, newly appointed Director-at-large has agreed to take on the job of Publicity Chair. He will be sending out notices to area papers, TV and radio stations.



If you attended the December meeting you'll be pleased to learn that Beverly Choltco-Devlin will be making a return visit next month. In December she told us about the services available through the Mid-York Library System. In February we hope to learn how to use search engines and gain some help in our genealogical queries.

With winter upon us, we must remember that if the school closes we cannot meet. Check the morning notices to see if Whitesboro school is closed. If our meeting is canceled, there will also be a notice on our website at www.mvpcug.com.

Stay connected . . . to the MVPCUG
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Minutes of January 3, 2006
 — John Hunter, Secretary

*The MVPCUG general meeting was held at the Whitesboro HS cafeteria. President **Jerry Finkelstein** called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. There were 44 persons in attendance.*

BUSINESS MEETING

Treasurer **Bill Gorrell** reported that income was \$191.60, expenses were \$199.95, and there is a balance of \$3729.90 as of December 31, 2005.

Jerry greeted the group with a “Happy New Year!”

Bill Gorrell then gave the treasurer’s report after which **Jerry** noted that **Jim Pease** had been appointed director at large to complete the remaining term of **Marsha Thayer** who resigned in December.

Jerry also noted that Tim Paquette brought in coffee and donuts for tonight’s meeting. Jerry thanked Tim for his generosity.

Lisa Britt told members that she had links on the web site for information for computer users on surge protectors. State Farm Insurance has consumer information regarding surge protectors. A general discussion followed as members shared information on surge protectors.

Jerry then turned the discussion to online versions of various magazines that provide streaming video and streaming audio. He noted also that NPR provides free audio feeds for many programs, and Google is trying to provide free copies of all books if copyright restrictions can be overcome.

Lisa Britt also suggested that club members using such sites as wikipedia should remember that no one checks the accuracy of data, so be wary.

PROGRAM

At 6:31 PM, **Jerry** introduced the program which concluded at 8:05 PM. The program featured a presentation of a video made-for-tv movie titled **Pirates of Silicon Valley**. This movie featured the rivalry between Bill Gates of Microsoft and Steve Jobs of Apple Computers. At the end of the movie, **Jerry** observed that neither rival could be considered a “good guy.”

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

- Optical Mouse **Gary Virkler**
- McAfee Internet Security **Rod St. Clair**
- Photo paper **Vincent Coyne**

[donated by Jerry Finkelstein]

- Post It Notes **Marina O’Grady**
- Post It Notes **Don Jennings**

[donated by Peachpit Press]

- Making a Movie **Bo Wozniak**
- PC Tools **Doug Walsh**

[donated by Mindshare]

- T-shirt **Lisa Britt**
- Digital Image Suite 10 **Helen Russell**

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

John Hunter, secretary



**Think
spring!**

Word Processing Tips — by Bob Schaffer

Word — Quickly toggle between upper and lower case for selected text (2002/2003)

You can quickly toggle the case of selected text by pressing **[Shift][F3]**. Each time you press **[Shift][F3]**, the selected text's case cycles from lower case to title case to upper case.

A lesser known case-toggling keyboard shortcut is the **[Ctrl][Shift]A** shortcut. When you select text that contains both upper and lower-case characters and then press **[Ctrl][Shift]A**, Word toggles the case of the lower-case characters to upper case.

For example, if you select the text "I want to be a Rock Star" and press **[Ctrl][Shift]A**, the text becomes "I WANT TO BE A ROCK STAR." If you press it again, the text returns to its original state.

A word of warning: the **[Ctrl][Shift]A** shortcut works just like the Caps Lock key. If you don't select any text before pressing **[Ctrl][Shift]A** and then begin typing, your text will all be upper case. To turn the feature off, press **[Ctrl][Shift]A** again.

WordPerfect — Emphasize your underlines

You probably know that **CTRL-U** starts and stops underlining. But why quit there? Customize your underline by selecting the text, then right-clicking and choosing **Font**. Click the **Underline** tab, and choose the underline you like best. You can also decide if you want to underline spaces and tabs along with the text.

— Make your case

There is no need to retype text to make it all uppercase or lowercase. Select the text and click the **Edit** menu. Choose **Convert Case** and select the appropriate option. If you switch uppercase sentences to lowercase, WordPerfect will automatically capitalize the first word of each sentence.

— Save templates, save time

Save templates in the **PerfectExpert**. For example, you can save a blank copy of your letterhead to pull up again and again. First, create and save the template.

Click **File**, then **New** from **Project**, and click the **Options** button. Choose **Add Project**. Follow the instructions and browse for your letterhead.

In the future, you can start with a blank letterhead by going back to **New** from **Project** ❖

Book Review — by Bob Schaffer

This book will be a door prize at an upcoming meeting.

Bargain Hunter's Secrets to Online Shopping by Michael Miller ! Que Publishing, 2004

"Save big money online" screams a heading on the back cover of BHSTOS. (Did you think I'd type out this extensive title?)

This 320 page guidebook, with an extensive index, consists of three major sections:

- * Online Shopping Secrets
- * Money Saving Secrets
- * The Bargain Hunter's Online Shopping Directory
Individual chapters, of which there 14, include:
 - * Researching Your Purchases Before You Buy
 - * Hunting for the Lowest Price
 - * Hunting for Rebates, Coupons, and Promotions
 - * Hunting for Bargains at eBay and Other Online Auctions.
 - * Hunting for Bargains at Amazon.com

You'll want to take advantage of the Shopping Directory, which lists more than 1,000 online merchants that offer the lowest prices on the web. Just skimming will introduce you to bundles of Bargain Hunter Secrets scattered throughout the book. The book is profusely illustrated, mostly with screen shots.

The author, Michael Miller, has published more than 50 how-to books, including *Absolute Beginner's Guide to eBay*. He's earned a reputation for practical advice, readability, and technical accuracy.

Here are samples of Miller's sensible advice:

- * Don't obsess over pricing. The lowest price isn't always the best deal. It's okay to pay a little more for the peace of mind that comes from buying from a dealer you know and trust.
- * You might be tempted to enter a phony email address so that you won't be added to anybody's spam list. That's actually a bad idea. You need to enter your real email address so that the site can contact you if there are any problems or delays with your order.
- * Here's the #1 rule for shopping online. Trust your instincts. If something smells fishy, avoid it. If you're not comfortable shopping at a specific site, then don't. Determine your own level of risk for shopping online, and be your own best guide. ❖

Receive a Word and a WordPerfect tip every other week by email from Bob Schaffer. Send your request to rschaffer@adelphia.net.

Extensions make *Firefox* better

— by Kim Komando

With its use of tabs and the ability to change its appearance, the Firefox Web browser has taken a bite out of Microsoft's Internet Explorer's market share. But what really sets it apart is a collection of unique and useful extensions.

Extensions are programs that add features and functions to the original browser. Once installed, some extensions appear in your toolbar. Others are hidden until you right-click in the browser. This allows you to have dozens of extensions installed without cluttering up your browser.

To find extensions, open Firefox and click Tools | Extensions. Click Get More Extensions at the bottom of the dialog box. This opens up a new browser window.

You can search for an extension by category, highest-rated or most popular. Each listing provides a brief description, ratings and comments by users and a link to download the extension. To install, click the download link. A dialog box will appear prompting you to install the extension. In most cases, you must close Firefox and reopen it to make the extension active.

There are over 800 extensions available. Here are six of the best. Their links are awkward, so you'll find them on my Web site at:

<http://www.komando.com/firefox.html>

1. Quickly finding the definition of a word or phrase is a snap with Answers. Left-click your mouse and depress the Alt key (Option key on a Mac) over any word. Facts and definitions aggregated from several sources, including dictionaries and encyclopedias, will appear. If you want to open an answer in a new tab, left-click your mouse while simultaneously depressing the Ctrl and Alt keys. You can also highlight a phrase with your mouse, right-click and select "Look up on [Answers.com](http://www.answers.com)."
2. Forecastfox displays current and future weather conditions. Once installed, click Tools | Extensions and double-click Forecastfox. This opens the options dialog box. Here you set the forecast location and where and how you want the forecast

displayed. Forecastfox allows you to create and switch between different international locations. That's very useful for travelers with laptops.

3. Gmail Manager and Yahoo! Mail Notifier monitor your Gmail or Yahoo e-mail accounts and notify you whenever a new message arrives in your inbox. Both extensions give you a variety of ways to notify you of new mail. You can set them to display an icon on the status bar or alert you through a pop-up window. They will also play a sound alert.
4. Not all Web sites will display properly in Firefox. When that happens, use IE Tab to launch Internet Explorer within Firefox. Just right-click on a page and select "View this page in IE Tab." Or, click on the Firefox icon in the status bar. The extension was intended for Web developers. But it's very useful for when a Web site doesn't look quite right.
5. Viewing small pictures on a Web page can be hard on the eyes. Image Zoom adds a zoom feature. Simply right-click on an image to access the zoom menu and choose from preset zoom sizes. If you zoom in too much, the image will be distorted. But zoom can be very useful at times.
6. If you're looking to kill some time, download and install Cards. It provides access to over 30 solitaire games, such as Canfield, Klondike and TriPeaks. To access the games, click Tools | Cards. The games open in a pop-up window.

If you no longer find an extension useful, it can be easily uninstalled. Click Tools | Extensions. Click on the extension you no longer want, then click Uninstall. Restart Firefox to finish the removal ❖

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www.komando.com

JAPANESE COMPUTER MESSAGE

Screen.

Mind.

Both are blank

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

Worrisome News

Regular readers of this column know I have frequently mentioned web sites operated by the United States Government. The firstgov.gov URL is the main portal for those wishing to access information provided by the government and its various agencies.

The Associated Press reported on December 30, 2005 that visitors to the White House web site, WhiteHouse.gov as well as several other federal agencies, received tracking cookies placed on their hard drives that can track the web-browsing history of site visitors. According to White House internet director, David Almay, no one in the administration knew this practice existed since it contravened an order by the Clinton administration in 2000 to end tracking of computer users.

Although administration officials promised an investigation into this practice, they indicated that no personal information had been collected on individual visitors to the White House site. Nevertheless, even this inadvertent practice appears to be against the law.

On its face appears this spying incident seems innocent enough. But when this is coupled with the disclosure that the National Security Agency has used unauthorized wiretaps on Americans, the specter of big brother arises whether we like it or not. The only advice I can give is to be careful where you surf, you never know who may be looking over your shoulder.

Happier Suggestions

Several years ago, *Smithsonian* magazine featured an article about Julia Solis, a fearless explorer who finds ruins of abandoned buildings and other vacant man-made structures attractive. Apparently, Ms Solis and other like-minded individuals explore abandoned subway tunnels, factories or other architecturally interesting buildings and photograph said structures in an attempt to share the inherent beauty of these ruins and to preserve the lost history of the sites.

[By the way; the purple prose above merely introduces a very unusual but worthwhile site.] The organization Ms Solis founded is called Ars Subtterania: The Society for Creative Preservation.

Both the Solis' web sites at darkpassage.com and creativepreservation.org provide many photographs of forgotten spaces.

One of the many engaging anecdotes in the article concerned a side trip the author and Ms Solis took to Utica, NY on the way to explore a subway tunnel in Rochester, NY. Solis' directive of "Head toward the courthouse," suggests the party patronized a well-known eatery on Genesee Street. After a meal, the group continued on as news of the Northeast Blackout came over the car radio.

Without inviting the attention of the Rochester constabulary who were otherwise occupied with the blackout, the group managed to explore the abandoned Court Street station of the Rochester subway. [I didn't know Rochester had a subway. Did you?]

This mission fulfilled the overriding purpose of the group to "instigate unique perceptions of New York's history by constructing narratives around forgotten relics." The web site also says that representatives from the group attended the First Underworld Congress that met in Austria in November 2005. [Words and pictures to follow]. And, the group has been featured in an article appearing in the New York Times on efforts to preserve the abandoned Paleozoic Museum in Central Park.

Other links provided by the Ars Subtterania include: Dark Passage, a site with many excellent photos and other activities; Handcranked Film, a site featuring avant garde filmmakers; New York Underground, a striking collection of photographs of subway tunnels; Ruins in ASCII, a "somewhat absurd video sculpture made of computer hardware so old it is incapable of displaying anything but text, which makes the video interesting playing on a 9 inch paper-white phosphor POS terminal display. [It is] an infinite loop of 180 seven second long video clips of abandoned, ruined or vacant buildings and infrastructure..."

In spite of the description, this work was an official video art selection of the 2004 Atlanta Underground Film Festival. These sites and a number of other site links are worth visiting. The subject, while unusual, really captures the interest of people who are drawn to modern art and offbeat humor.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that all inks are not created equal? There are dyes and pigments. Documents and photos printed on Inkjet printers that use dyes will fade more quickly than those printed with pigmented inks. Hewlett-Packard's black inks are always pigmented.

. . . that you could find info on printer inks at wilhelm-research.com/? The Wilhelm Imaging Research, Inc. site contains many articles from various magazines, all related to the longevity of digital prints. Light, humidity, the type of ink used, and type of paper all affect the prints. You can download and read the articles, which will give you all the information you need. They conduct accelerated light exposure and dark aging tests to determine the comparative life expectancy of inkjet and other digitally printed photographs, as well as that of traditional black-and-white and color photographs. Also available on this site is wide-ranging information on the permanence and care of photographs in general.

. . . that you can check what fonts are on your computer? Press a Windows key+R or go to Start | Run and typing Fonts in the dialog box. In Windows Explorer select C:\windows\fonts.

. . . that Windows XP is on its way out? As of Dec 31, 2006 Microsoft will no longer offer free support for XP home. XP Pro will go into "extended" support phase until Dec 31, 2011. During that time, MS will continue to offer security updates; and will keep self-help resources available for free via the Knowledgebase and other Microsoft.Com sites; but you'll pay for tech support. XP Pro will go into a stable maintenance period, with little or no new features added. If you have questions about MS's product lifecycles check the following pages: MS Support Lifecycle Policy FAQ: <http://support.microsoft.com/gp/lifepolicy> Support Lifecycle Index (all MS products): <http://support.microsoft.com/gp/lifeselectindex> XP Pro: tinyurl.com/dau6o

. . . that XP is already 5 years old? It would be wise to check any new PCs you buy now so they'll be able to work with XP's successors or alternatives. ❖

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

New year, new toys. Lots of new PC stuff still being peddled for the new year: updated desktops, cheaper laptops, ultracompact digital cameras, incredible high-quality printers, iPods. Lots of iPods.

I wonder how many of our members own, or are eager to acquire, an iPod. Is it one of those wonderful mobile devices that only a younger generation appreciates? Well, it's not just for youngsters. And it's for much more than listening to music. It's fast become the favorite device to gain all sorts of audio and/or video information.



Podcast, it seems, is the Word of the Year, literally. The editors of the New Oxford American Dictionary chose Podcast as the word of the year. Podcasts have been around for at least a couple of years and now it's become quite profitable; the selling of the iPods has been wildly successful. Instead of reading content on a computer screen you listen to the content on an iPod, or an iPod-like device. NPR.gov and Slate.com are popular sites, and so are their podcasts. Radio shows like *All Things Considered* and *Rush Limbaugh* will be available in this manner.

There will always be bloggers. Now there are also podcasts, audio and video files placed on the internet for anyone to subscribe to. You can find out all about it by going to Google. Search for Podcasts. Trust me, you'll be hearing much more about it as the new year settles in. ❖

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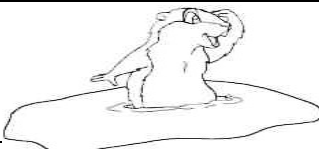



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“View” Adaptive Technology with Sharon Giovinazzo
Tuesday ★ February 7, 2006 ★ 6:00 PM ★ Whitesboro High School

Winter Olympics
 Feb 10-26



what's.com/ing			February 2006			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 Shadow ?			1	2 Q & A SIG 6:30 PM St. John's	3	4
5	6	7 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Board of Director's Mtg 6:30 PM	15	16	17	18
19	20 	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY !			