

## The Inside Track

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## Digital Animation

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Most individuals watching or interacting with many of today's films or games (Xbox, Playstation, Nintendo), have no idea how any of the imagery is accomplished.

Alexander Piejko, from MVCC, plans to speak about the field of Digital Animation as it pertains to both the film and game industries. He will treat us to a "behind the scenes" look at how the artwork is created.

Using state of the art animation software (3DS Max) and Photoshop, Alex will give us a quick overview of the processes involved from creating artwork, such as characters and environments to texturing the 3D models, and finally animating them.

Alex earned an MFA from Syracuse University in Illustration. He has worked as a free-lance illustrator and photographer, and taught Photography, Illustration, and Digital Illustration. He is the 2009 SUNY Chancellors Excellence Award recipient. Alex originated the Digital Animation degree program at Mohawk Valley Community College.

Joe Penabad has consented to be our Secretary. He is starting this position at the Board of Directors meeting on Jan. 11. Thanks to Joe we have a full complement of Officers.

**Tuesday, February 1 — 6 - 8:30PM**  
**New Hartford Library**



# 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.

Membership fee for an individual is \$25.

## OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

### President

Jerry Finkelstein..... 797-5296  
..... [president@mvpcug.com](mailto:president@mvpcug.com)

### Vice President

Lisa Britt..... [vicepresident@mvpcug.com](mailto:vicepresident@mvpcug.com)

### Treasurer

Bill Gorrell..... 853-3256  
..... [treasurer@mvpcug.com](mailto:treasurer@mvpcug.com)

### Secretary

Joe Penabad..... [secretary@mvpcug.com](mailto:secretary@mvpcug.com)

### Program Chair

open..... [director3@mvpcug.com](mailto:director3@mvpcug.com)

### Directors-at-Large

Helen Russell ['13]..... [director2@mvpcug.com](mailto:director2@mvpcug.com)  
open ['11]..... [director3@mvpcug.com](mailto:director3@mvpcug.com)  
Jim Pease ['12]..... [director1@mvpcug.com](mailto:director1@mvpcug.com)

Our internet presence is at

<http://www.mvpcug.com>

### Web Master

Lisa Britt..... [webmaster@mvpcug.com](mailto:webmaster@mvpcug.com)

## NEWSLETTER STAFF

Jerry Finkelstein..... [president@mvpcug.com](mailto:president@mvpcug.com)  
Donna Gorrell..... [editor@mvpcug.com](mailto:editor@mvpcug.com)  
John Hunter..... [johnhunter@mvpcug.com](mailto:johnhunter@mvpcug.com)

## Meeting Agenda

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

## Editorial notes . . .



I love to read. I love to read books; paper things of which I can turn pages. That being said, I just learned that North Country Library System is going to have e-books available [I am a patron of Clayton NY library]. I know that Mid-York also has e-books, but what I found out from the North Country info is that e-books are not compatible with Amazon's Kindle. It seems that you must buy the book from Amazon to be able to read it on Kindle.

Since I don't use MidYork's e-books I hadn't read the info on their site, but it does give a list of the compatible devices and Kindle is not on it.

Once again, it's Buyer Beware! Before you go out and buy that new gadget that is touted so highly, do some investigating; ask questions. Or you might be sorry.

I have used the audio books on my MP3 player, but I still like to hold a book in my hands and turn the pages. I also like that I can share. Several of my friends are also book readers and we pass our books around. That won't happen with an e-book.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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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 January 5, 2010

—, Secretary

The MVPCUG general meeting was held at the New Hartford Library. President **Jerry Finkelstein** called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. There were 23 persons in attendance.

### BUSINESS MEETING

Jerry opened the meeting by asking if anyone had a problem finding the library and a few people acknowledged that they did, but by next month we hope that everyone will be able to locate the library with ease.

Bill Gorrell gave the treasurer's report for the month of December and stated that there were 7 renewals since last month. Those that are interested in the full treasury report can check either with the secretary or Bill Gorrell [[treasurer@mvpcug.com](mailto:treasurer@mvpcug.com)].

Jerry then asked if anyone had anything to say or questions to ask. Donna Gorrell brought up the subject of Kindle and e-books. She stated that libraries are beginning to have e-books to download but they can't be used by Kindle as you must purchase e-books from Amazon to use with a Kindle. Gary Virkler added that he knows Kindle will handle pdf files. He also stated that some of the other readers do not rate as high as the Kindle. There was a bit of discussion on this and the end result is that one should ask questions before making a purchase and not always believe what a salesman tells you. Do your research!

### PROGRAM

Patrick Grimes, a friend of Ed Sajdzikowski, graciously consented to do a presentation on TaxACT. He did an excellent job of telling us all the facts about the program and how he compared his tax report with TurboTax and TaxACT and found the results were very similar, except for the cost of the programs. TaxACT is free to file the Federal tax and about \$14 to file the NY state tax. TurboTax is around \$70. Patrick was very informative and very enthusiastic about the program which he has used for several years.

### DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

4 GB Flash Drive. . . . . Jim Pease  
Ream Copy Paper, 8 ½ x 11. . . . . Don Jennings  
8 ½ x 11 photo paper. . . . . Nelson Robinson  
4x6 Photo Paper. . . . . Richard Eades

[Donated by Sam's Publishing]

Book - M/S Expression Web. . . . . Don Pianka

The meeting adjourned at 8:00PM.

Donna Gorrell, acting secretary



### How to Restore a Backed-up Outlook Express Folder

If you have backed up an Outlook Express folder to a flash drive and want to recover the messages inside here's how to do it:

What appears as a folder in Outlook Express isn't really a folder. As far as Windows is concerned, it's a single file with a .dbx extension. The email program has to know it's there to look for it and open it.

Outlook Express keeps all of its "folders" in a single location. To find that location, go to Outlook Express, select Tools, then Options. Click the Maintenance tab, then the Store Folder button. Here's how you read the contents of a backed-up .dbx file that's no longer in the proper location:

- 1) In Outlook Express, create a new folder, named, say, restored. You can do this by selecting File, New, then Folder.
- 2) In Windows Explorer, open your Outlook Express store folder as described above.
- 3) Exit Outlook Express.
- 4) In Windows Explorer, delete the newly-created restored.dbx file.
- 5) Plug in your flash drive, open another Windows Explorer window there, and Copy the folder you want to restore to the Outlook Express store folder.
- 6) Rename the copied file on your hard drive restored [or restored.dbx if Windows is set up so you can see your extensions].
- 7) Restart Outlook Express. The Restored folder should contain your old e-mails.

## Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

### Life in the 21<sup>ST</sup> Century?

**W**ant to know about the latest and greatest computer advances? With scientific advances occurring at warp speed, keeping up is an exhausting task. To make things easier, click on [www.TechEye.net](http://www.TechEye.net), a site that features scientific info “unfit for print.”

On my visit, the site featured stories such as “Toshiba plans 40 inch glasses-free 3D TV,” and “Reading your wife’s email can get you five years: even if she is having an affair,” and a story about a Cambridge University grad student whose thesis has been censored because the UK banking trade group argues that the study documents a flaw in the banking pin and chip system.

In an earlier post, the site logged a story about Carnegie Mellon researchers who are teaching a computer to learn. NELL, Never Ending Language Learner, learns by reading the Internet the same way humans learn language. So far, NELL’s efforts rate a “C” because the computer has trouble differentiating between facts and beliefs. [This is a problem with some people I know as well.]

### Life Imitating Art: Part Deux?

More technology advances are documented in [Singularityhub.com](http://Singularityhub.com), a site that serves as a news and blog network devoted to the latest in genetics, robots, longevity, artificial intelligence, aging and stem cells among other topics. At my visit, the site featured stories about a bionic dolphin with an artificial fin, a robot that uses air-powered muscles to run like a human, and a man cured of HIV by stem cells.

An earlier post featured research conducted at the University of Reading, UK, where brain cells from rats have been cultured and used as a guidance control system for simple wheeled robots. The researchers predict that “sooner rather than later [they’ll] have a cultured system that is the size of the simplest of mammalian brains.” Dr. Who was right. The Daleks **ARE** coming!

### Help is Near

Have you ever been in a city and found yourself unable to find a taxi? If you have an Iphone or an Ipod, a taxi is easy to find. Click on [www.edovia.com](http://www.edovia.com) for the \$1.99 smartphone app that uses GPS or WiFi to search any of 10,000 cities worldwide for the

nearest taxi company. The app called Rocket Taxi uses your current GPS location to locate transportation and the app will even provide a suggested route and estimate the cost of your trip in the local currency. No Internet connection is required and you can save a list of your favorite taxi companies. **Very Nice.**

### International Education Comparisons

Recent US education critics have focused on the achievement level posted by American students in Math and Science when compared to students in 30 or more countries worldwide. The critics bemoan the fact that today’s students score at a lower rate than students in other countries. Some have argued that this TIMSS comparison places American students at an unfair disadvantage because of the student populations measured.

If you wish to see how well you can score on this test, click on

[www.edinformatics.com/timss/timss\\_intro.htm](http://www.edinformatics.com/timss/timss_intro.htm).

The test for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders consists of 25 questions on the following topics: whole numbers, fractions and proportionality, measurement, estimation, number sense, data representation, analysis and probability, geometry, patterns, relations and functions. If you think you know as much math as a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader, click on the link. The sample test will also rate your performance against the tested performances of students from 30 countries.

For the more adventurous, try math and science tests for middle and high school students. The science test examines results for Earth Science, life science, physical science, environment issues and the nature of science.

### Eat Local All Year

Most people believe that Farmers Markets only operate in the Spring, Summer and Fall. Not so. For those of you who wish to buy locally grown produce, click on [www.agmkt.state.ny.us](http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us). This site provides a list of Farmers Markets open year round. The closest one to Utica is located in Syracuse near the baseball stadium and the transportation center at Exit 23 off I 81. Open Saturdays and Sundays 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Winter season vegetables include: beets, cabbage, garlic, leeks, onions and fennel to name a few. Winter meats include bacon, beef, duck, lamb, pork and venison. Vendors also may supply dried beans, herbs, fruits and preserved fruits and vegetables.

Until next time . . .



## Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that you need to Install and RUN antivirus and antispyware? Avast [[www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)] McAfee Total Protection 2010 at \$79.99 [[www.home.mcafee.com](http://www.home.mcafee.com)] and AVG [<http://free.avg.com/us-en/homepage>] are all antivirus software programs that can be downloaded. I use AVG free version and it does a good job of scanning email as well as my entire computer. It is important that you run only ONE antivirus program at a time. Choose one of the above or find one that you are comfortable with.

Of course you must RUN any of these programs for them to be of use. I schedule AVG to update every day at noon and scan of my system everyday at 2PM. These are the times that are convenient for me.

Malwarebytes [[www.malwarebytes.org](http://www.malwarebytes.org)] Ad-Aware [[www.lavasoft.com](http://www.lavasoft.com)] or Spybot-S&D [[www.safer-networking.org](http://www.safer-networking.org)] are all antispyware programs. Unlike antivirus you can run multiple programs at the same time. You must also update these programs on a regular basis.

Make 2011 the year that your computer is safe and protected.

. . . that Control Panel is far easier to navigate when you can see all the icons at a glance? Keep your Control Panel in Icon View. The Control Panel's Categories view can be useful if you're intimidated by the many different options available, but it can also make finding what you're looking for more difficult [especially if you're following detailed instructions that refer to the control panels by name]. Click Classic view on the left [in Vista] or choose Large Icons from the View by dropdown menu in the upper right [in Windows 7], and you'll have ready access to all of the control panels.

. . . that you could limit the clutter in your System Tray by paring down the list of icons that appear on it? Apps often park themselves there [the row of icons on the right side of your taskbar] and stay open without your realizing it. Clear it out occasionally. Open the Notification Area Icons control panel; check the box on the bottom that says Always show all icons and notifications on the taskbar to see how cluttered your system tray is; then right-click each one you don't need and choose Close. ♦

## Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

More about Facebook. Reports about it keep showing up everywhere. They occupy a lot of space in the



printed media, a lot of time on TV. And the highly acclaimed movie, *The Social Network*, just came out on DVD, sparking even more talk about Facebook and its owner, Mark Zuckerberg.

Since our last newsletter, Facebook went beyond Google to become the most popular website on the Internet; it's got well over 500 million members and it's growing about a million a week. A lot of those members, because of privacy and other issues with Facebook, give it up after awhile. Chances are, however, most of those who leave return to Big Brother. ♦

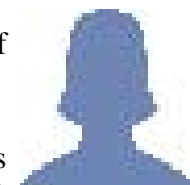


Experts on Zuckerberg and Facebook say Zuckerberg is not interested in the billions of dollars he's making off Facebook; they say he really wants to change the world by collecting as much information he can on everybody in the world, ordering the flow of that information, and how people use it. In this way Zuckerberg orders, controls, everybody's social network. There are at least two people in our PC club who think this is downright evil. Not that Zuckerberg is a force to be reckoned with; the thought is he is evil.

Cops across the country are catching the bad guys through the use of Facebook.

Grandchildren are sending hundreds of pictures of themselves to their grandparents by way of Facebook.

Long forgotten friends find themselves together again thanks to Facebook. All your 426 Facebook friends can, in an instant, see your closet full of pictures of Lollie, your cat. This is good stuff, right? Don't you just love it when advertisers present their products just for you? you've already given them information about your interests, your tastes, your wish list. You're happy, the advertisers are happy, Mark Zuckerberg is very happy. What could be bad? Right? Right. ♦






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## Digital Animation

Tuesday ♦ February 1 ♦ 6:00 PM ♦ New Hartford Library



what's.com/ing ~ American Heart Month ~ February 2011						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Monthly General Meeting 6 PM N Hartford Library	2 Groundhog Day	3 USO Day	4	5
6 Superbowl XLV	7	8 Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM	9	10	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday
13	14 Valentines's Day	15	16	17 Ash Wednesday	18	19
20 Love Your Pet Day	21 President's Day	22 George Washington's Birthday	23 Curling is Cool Day 	24	25	26
27	28 Purim		February 2 - Groundhog Day February 8 1910 - Boy Scouts of America founded February 14 - St. Valentine's Day February 17 - Ash Wednesday			