

Beverly Choltco-Devlin, Reference Specialist for the Mid-York Library System, along with her able assistant, **Ruth Cosgrove**, Reference Services & Volunteer Coordinator at the Kirkland Town Library, are both presenters that we have enjoyed in the past. They bring a vast sphere of knowledge to share with us each time.



In this presentation, Beverly will discuss and demonstrate the many features that Google has to offer aside from its premier search engine. We will learn how to use Advanced Search and other tools such as BlogSearch, Chrome, Google Health, Google Docs, Google Notebook and many others. We will also learn all the cool things one can do after setting up a free Google Account where we can create an online calendar, create a blog (Blogger), set up a wiki (Google Sites) and create 3D models (Google Sketch Up).

Finally, we will learn what is on the horizon in Google Labs where users are encouraged to participate and provide feedback on Google initiatives that are not quite ready for prime time.

As always, questions and sharing are welcome.

Winter is still here 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.



Tuesday, March 3, 2009- 6PM
Whitesboro High School cafeteria



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 . . .

The club email has changed to mvpcug@gmail.com.



Google Earth is great and maps on Google are very good, but I've discovered another source of excellent maps for certain areas. [Http://maps.live.com](http://maps.live.com) will bring you to a page where you can enter an address or just a city. I located our home, but there is no close up or "birdseye view". However, I entered Fineview NY and found that there are closeups that were fantastic. I could see the gator parked in our yard and more than that, it gave a good view of the shoreline and all the rocks that threaten our boat's prop. There are arrows that allow you to turn the view so you can see all around. The only drawback is that the zoom in or out is limited. If you are familiar with the area it should pose no problem. Also, trees have a way of blocking the views. I entered the address of my family home in Chicago and was amazed at how the neighborhood has changed . Try it out!

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
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Minutes of February 3, 2009
 — HRussell, 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 34 persons in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

Jerry started the meeting by requesting a treasury report from Bill Gorrell for the period of Jan. 1, to Jan 31, 2009. The club received \$120.58 in revenues and spent \$205.93 leaving a net expense for the month at \$85.35. Account balances as of Jan. 31.'09 includes \$7.84 in the checking account and \$2,529.20 in the money market for a total of \$2,537.04.

Bill also mentioned that he has been able to secure a new laptop computer for the club. Dell Corp. had a two-day sale priced at \$734.23. This laptop has many features with a screen size of 15.4 inches. The above price also includes a carrying case, with a one year warranty.

Jerry announced that when the new laptop is received and running, the club will be selling the old equipment more on this at a later date.

Jerry gave two announcements. First, that there will be no reduction of dues for those that do not want the newsletter to be mailed to their home. Secondly, a person has been secured to do an audit on the club's books for the year of 2008.

Jerry also mentioned that many of the public libraries are giving free instructions on many computer programs to the public, and it's worth checking out.

PROGRAM

We had a delightful presentation from Chris Urban on how to download Open-source software for free. Navigating to the website

www.opensourcewindows.org/ will provide a list of free open source software available for download. These programs will perform as well as, if not better than, Microsoft or Corel products. He compared the proprietary software that had a lot of restrictions like no copying, limited use to either one or two computers, and a hefty purchase price. Open-source software has no payment fee, you can see its source codes and can be modified by the user with no restrictions.

Mr. Urban gave out sheets to the members listing many links to free software. There are numerous free

good software available without paying big bucks for. Chris answered many questions from the members plus his Powerpoint presentation was clear and precise. Thoroughly an enjoyable and informative session.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

Flash Drive-1g. Howard Estey
 Photo Paper, 8-1/2X11. Jerry Finkelstein
 McAfee Anti Theft Software. Bill Gorrell

[Donated by Sam's Publishing]

Creating Vista Gadgets. Bo Wozniak

[Donated by Pearson Education Books]

Email Marketing. Brian Getbehead
 Geeknomics. Joe Madeira

[Donated by Jerry Finkelstein]

Post-it Notes. Bill Brunnett

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.
 Helen Russell, secretary

Editor's Note

Chris Urban's Links:

- www.mozilla.com Firefox/Mozilla/Thunderbird
- www.gimp.org . graphic program similar to Photoshop
- www.tuxpaint.org paint program for children
- www.openoffice.org OpenOffice suite
- www.oswd.org web design
- www.osalt.com links to open source software
- www.opensource.org info - open source movement
- www.refdesk.com great reference page
- www.malwarebytes.com . . great anti-malware program

In the January 2009 issue of ComputerShopper there is an article on free software. The article can be accessed at <http://tinyurl.com/9alhvo>. You will find reviews of all the software. In the office productivity category they offer OpenOffice, GoogleDocs, and Lotus Symphony 1.1. All are compared to MS Office. Non of the freebies offer any comparison to WordPerfect.

In the photo editing department, there are three choices, non of which is GIMP. ComputerShopper likes Picasa the best. GIMP is most like Photoshop.

Microsoft Office 2007 Tips

OFFICE 2007

Avoid the Unnecessary Use of Menus in Excel and Word

In your Excel and Word programs, place the mouse over the status bar at the foot of the program window. Right-click to reveal the Customize Status Bar menu, and then select which options you want to appear on the bar.

POWERPOINT

Convert a Bulleted List to a SmartArt Diagram

Right-click anywhere in the bulleted list, point to Convert to SmartArt, and then click the diagram layout that you want to use. If you don't see your preferred diagram layout, click More SmartArt Graphics to choose a layout from the Choose a SmartArt Graphic dialog box. After your list converts to a diagram, the SmartArt Tools Design and Format tabs appear when the diagram is active. Use those tabs to apply formatting or even change the diagram layout.

EXCEL

Paste into Non-sequential Cells in Excel

You can use the CTRL key for multiple selections. Sometimes, you want to copy a formula or piece of data into a series of non-sequential cells in Excel. You can do this quickly without having to paste into each cell individually.

1. Copy the data from the source cell.
2. Hold down the CTRL key as you click to select each destination cell.
3. After all the cells are highlighted, paste the data by pressing CTRL+V. You have to paste only once.

Similarly, you can type data into a series of cells simultaneously.

1. While holding down the CTRL key, click all the cells that you want to type the same text [or value] into.
2. Type the entry, and then press CTRL+ENTER. The text will be added to all the selected cells.

Zooming to Fit a Selection

Select the range of cells that you want to focus on. Click the View tab, and then click Zoom to Selection.

WORD

Customize the Default Word Document Template

If you want to customize the default template that Word uses to create a new document, here's how: Make a copy of the default template in Word. You'll find the default template here: C:\Documents and Settings*yourname*\Application Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dotm [where *yourname* is the name you use to log on to your computer]. Store the copy of the template in a safe place. Create the document that you want to use as a new template, and then save it on the desktop as a macro-enabled template. Close all instances of Word. Replace the default template in the location given in Documents and Settings. Your new template will now be the default.

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:

1. 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].
2. Click the Manage Styles icon at the bottom of the pane to open the Manage Styles dialog box.
3. 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.

VISTA

Add a gadget to your desktop

That new strip on the side of your desktop is more useful than you might think: Click the plus symbol at the top, then click Get more gadgets online to view the 370+ [and counting] free downloads that add instant new features to your desktop – everything from BBC radio to currency conversion. You can drag and drop them on to the desktop, too – the Weather gadget, for example, is actually more useful when used like this because it gives you a three-day forecast. ♦

What's Happening!!!

— Patty Bruno

Are you looking to go back to school? Or are you thinking of taking a class online? January's presentation given by Colleen Kehoe - Robinson from MVCC was all about just that. MV Online offers classes online for non-matriculated students as well as matriculated students.



As we learned there are a multitude of reasons why people decide to take classes online, most being the availability of time.

If you are interested in browsing for online courses, checkout ~ <http://www.mvcc.edu/online/>

Blackboard is a free service that allows instructors and teachers to add online components to their class, or even teach the entire course online. The Blackboard LMS is also used for corporations to host classes online.

This is only one online tool for you to use for the connection between you and your instructor. The college or instructors designates what learning management system you will be using once you are enrolled. Angel and WebCT are some others.



SUNY IT offers online classes, SUNY Online Learning Network. They use two systems, the Angel and SLN software system to connect with students. The catalog offers courses from Accounting to Web Designs Internet Studies.

If you would like to check out SUNY IT, and the courses it offers online ~ <http://www.sunyit.edu/online/>



USC Online offers credit and non-credit classes online, along with personal enrichment courses. One thing I noticed is that the some of the classes online start at different intervals throughout the spring. You can be in Utica, New York or Ocala, Florida and take the same class.

I was glad see classes for computer generated art that were at a reasonable cost. If you are looking to be educated in smaller doses, USC online has classes for you.

USC Online uses the Blackboard learning management system to connect with their students. If you are interested ~ check out <http://www.uscny.edu/usconline.html>



Utica Online offers a few select programs for their online curriculum. UC uses the Angel learning platform also.

You can check out the programs offered at <http://www.utica.edu/academic/uticaonline>

There are demos of the Blackboard and Angel Learning platforms on the World Wide Web. You will have an easier time finding a demo for the Blackboard, but from what I have read, it seems that more colleges are switching to Angel Learning.

We are lucky to have many opportunities in our local area to be educated on several different levels.

But then again ~ You can be almost anywhere to take an online course. ♦

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

Saving Money With Convenience

Some of us subscribe to Netflix [netflix.com] and receive movies on DVDs sent by snail mail or we download movies directly on a PC from the Netflix site.

An alternative to Netflix is www.Jaman.com. You pay to rent a movie or documentary for “a dollar or more” or you can download a long list of free movies or documentaries directly to your PC. When I visited the site, the staff listed the following free movies as staff picks: *Nosferatu*, *Slammed*, *Superman: The Complete Collection*, *Vanishing Cultures*, and *Born To Win*.

A second alternative to Netflix is Babelgum.com. My visit included an offer to view the second Babelgum Film Festival which featured more than 600 films in four categories: animation, documentary, short film or mini masterpiece. View some or all the films and “help Spike Lee pick the next big talent.” The mini masterpiece films are all one to five minutes in length so an afternoon spent watching all category entries will be shorter than you imagine. These films fall under the Indie Films category. The hook here is that you can attend this festival for free and help pick the winners.

A third alternative to Netflix is Snagfilms.com. All the films on this site are documentaries and since I visited the site in February, black history topics predominated such as *A Century of Black Cinema*, *Louis Armstrong: 100th Anniversary*, and *Muhammad Ali: The Greatest*. These films are all free to download. The Scotsman in me rejoices.

Finally, for you traditionalists, Blockbuster.com features a list of online downloads as well as DVDs mailed to your home. With all these choices, all I can say is happy viewing to all of you.

More Free Stuff

The National Environmental Education Foundation partnered with The Weather Channel to offer a free website for teachers www.Classroomearth.org. This site provides a one-stop resource and networking tool for high school teachers lacking in resources to enhance environmental education. Resources include: In the News, which provides news articles for inclusion in lesson plans; Where in the World, a

collection of geography based environmental topics; and under resources, teachers will find a collection of videos, web sites and lesson plans on topics such as: GIS, agriculture, energy, climate and so on. Send your favorite science teacher to this site.

Surviving the Recession

In a recent issue of *AARP Magazine*, Jeff Yeager listed a number of ways consumers can save money in this dismal economy. Jeff wrote *The Ultimate Cheapskate's Road Map to True Riches*, available at www.ultimatecheapskate.com. There are links on the web site which list free software, among other things. The usual suspects include OpenOffice, Linux, Mozilla Thunderbird email and the Mozilla Firefox browser, as well as Grisoft Antivirus, and free substitutes for Adobe Photoshop (sorry Donna) which include GIMP and Paint, available at www.gimp.org and www.getpaint.net respectively.

None of these free software products should seem new to MVPCUG members. All of these products have been around awhile. What is interesting, however, is that mainstream press not connected to computers are now touting this software.

Personal Health Web Sites

All of us are familiar with www.WebMD.com. Here are a number of medical web sites to add to the services already available at WebMD. Click on www.Google.com/health and connect to a site that allows you and your family to create your own free, online medical records. The site organizes your health records, keeps you informed and allows you to keep your doctors up-to-date. The only fly in the ointment is that your records are on line and privacy may present an issue.

WWW.Healthvault.com is Microsoft's version of the medical records service. Microsoft promises that you control your information and determine who gets to see it. The company also says that it will not use your information to target ads to your inbox. But remember, the same fly that buzzes Google buzzes Microsoft—privacy.

If you want to research your symptoms, any of the above sites will work. Another site along this line is healthcentral.com. Dr. Dean Nadel will help you deal with your diabetes or other medical conditions. Streaming video works well with broadband service.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that you can increase [or decrease] the size of the font in your browser? Hold the Ctrl key while moving the scroll wheel on your mouse. No wheel? Use the + [plus] and - [minus] keys while holding the Ctrl key. Works in both Firefox and Internet Explorer.

. . . that you could add a symbol for cents? There is a dollar sign [\$] on the keyboard, but no cents [¢]. Well, you can insert ¢ into any document using the Character Map available in Windows. In XP, go to Start | Programs | Accessories | System Tools | Character Map. Here you will find a dialog box with all sorts of characters listed, along with fonts. I chose the cent sign from the list and clicked on Select, then Copy. When I got to the part in this paragraph where I wanted the cent symbol to appear, I merely clicked paste [or Ctrl+V]. You could also hold down the ALT key and using the numerical keypad, type 0162 [make sure to hold down the ALT key while doing so]. If you are using WordPerfect, like I am, simply bring up its character map by holding Ctrl+W. In this case, the cents sign is #19 in character set #4. By typing 4,19 in the box at the right of the character dialog box, you will get the ¢. To access Character Map in Vista, click Start, type char in the Search field and click Character Map to start the program.



. . . that you could turn off Windows Splash Screens? That's the thing you see when Windows boots up. In XP, go to Start | Run, then type MSCONFIG. Click on the Boot.ini tab, select /NOGUIBOOT option. In Vista, Run msconfig, click on Boot Tab, select the NOGUIBOOT option.

. . . that there are Community Forums for Open Office? If you need help with Open Office go to <http://support.openoffice.org/index.html#fcs> to see the list of "free community support" sites, then to tinyurl.com/cmjqy8 to select the one that's most recommended. You have to register, but only if you want to post a query, not to read what's already there. If you want to run the free alternative to Microsoft's Office, these pages will give you the answers you might need in order to run Open Office. It's another "members helping members" sort of thing. ♦

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

In the middle of the movie, Benjamin Button is once again confronting death and dying. It is a World War II sequence. In the midst of the squalor there appears a hummingbird. It's a stunning shot. Everyone is impressed. But what does it mean? At the end of the movie, sixty years later, Hurricane Katrina is moving in fast and one of our protagonists is dying. And there, outside the hospital window, the wind is howling and the rain is coming down in buckets, the hummingbird appears again. I figured, if it is important for the film makers to put in hummingbirds in two critical parts of the movie, it is important for me to know what it all means. So I looked it up. I *Googled* it. I typed in "myths of the hummingbird," and there they were, and they all fit in with the themes of the movie.



I am looking forward to learning a lot about *Google* at our next meeting. I use it often but I know I'm not accessing most of what it has to offer. *Google*, the giant search engine, organizes information and makes it useful and accessible. All writings lately on *Google* suggest that it wants to be the most important gatherer of information, the most powerful harvester of the world's knowledge. And they will be handing it all over to you. Not all of it will be free.

Right now *Google* is digitizing millions of books from the collections of major research libraries. A recent settlement on those still under copyright puts a powerful feather in *Google's* cap as it navigates the information landscape and decides how (formats, for instance) it will reach its public (all public? institutions only?).

Google is not only interested in digitizing every single word on the world's information highway. We already have *Google Earth*. Now we have *Google* mapping out the underwater landscape of the oceans. I was surprised to learn that not much of the ocean floor has been mapped, as if mountains ended at the ocean. Thanks to *Google*, we're filling in the gaps.

But back to *Google* Book Search. We'll have to ask Beverly how she feels about *Google* becoming "the largest library and the largest book business that has ever existed". ♦




explorer

Google Apps

Tuesday ♦ March 3, 2009 ♦ 6:00 PM ♦ Whitesboro High School

Happy St. Patrick's Day



what's.com/ing				March 2009		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS	4	5 Q & A SIG 6:30 PM Whitesboro HS Room 527	6	7
8 	9	10 Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 	18	19	20 	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	Star Spangled Banner was made US National Anthem - March 3 1931 Girl Scouts of the USA founded - March 12 1912 Spring begins - March 20			