

The Inside Track

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Excel - the Basics

Spreadsheets enable you to organize data, sort data and utilize data in other programs.

If you have questions about Excel, bring them to the meeting and Ed Sajdzikowski will provide the answers, as well as showing us the basics of Excel.

Edward Sajdzikowski is an adjunct instructor for The Center for Corporate and Community Education for Mohawk Valley Community College. Ed has instructed classes for the adult community for six years. He has recently taught New Skills for Writing Effective E-Mails and Computer Basics for Baby Boomers, as well as Intro to Microsoft Access, Word and Excel. He also tutors computer applications for MVCC.

Ed also happens to be a member of Mohawk Valley PC User Group, Inc. He is proving our motto of "Members Helping Members" by making this presentation. Thanks Ed.

Winter is still with 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.

To access our new Forum, go to <http://mvpcug.com/phpbb2/>

You have to register by entering a name and password. You will then be able to post a question.

Tuesday, March 2 ♦ 6 - 8:30PM
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
8:15.	Drawing for Prizes
8:30.	Adjournment

Editorial notes . . .

Some little known facts about March . . .



March is named for the Roman god "Mars".

On March 7, 2006 Apple was granted a patent for iPod. On that same date in 1876 Alexander Graham Bell was granted a patent for the telephone.

In 130 years we have made many advancements. I'll bet Mr. Bell would be awed if he could see what his invention has evolved into today. We no longer have to crank a handle to put our calls through to an operator or listen for the certain number of rings that means the call is meant for us. We can speak into a small microphone and tell our phone to dial the person we want, then chat away without standing against a wall, holding a heavy ear piece.

Ah, progress!

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

Name_____

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Please mail this application with a check payable to MVPCUG to
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Minutes of February 2, 2010
 — HRussell, Secretary

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 30 persons in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

Jerry started the meeting by asking Bill to give a treasury report covering the month of 1/1/10 to 1/31/10, to the attending members. Those that are interested in the full treasury report can check either with the secretary or Bill Gorrell.

Next Jerry advised the members that Bill Wilson has volunteered to do the club's audit of the 2009 year.

Donna Gorrell told those who are interested in genealogy that on Google's search engine a good one to open up is Google news. It has a wealth of information. Another good website is the www.Fultonhistory.com. This one will show you all old newspaper clippings of New York State plus many other items that can be helpful in finding long past relatives.

Patty Bruno advised the members that for next month's meeting there will be a speaker to give a talk and demo on M/S-Excel. She then proceeded to show us a cute trick on how to fold a plastic shopping bag so that it takes up less space.

Jerry mentioned that the club is selling for one dollar where a member can purchase an extra door prize ticket to be considered in the raffle drawing.

The last item of the business meeting consisted of a question & answer session.

PROGRAM

If you're a traveler and short on time or house bound but still want to check out audio books then just log onto the Mid-York library, www.midYork.org. Tonight we are fortunate to have two knowledgeable gals in our locality, Beverly Choltco-Devlin and Ruth Cosgrove. They showed us how to navigate MY System's new website. Then Bev showed the members step by step how to search for audio books on the Myaudio2go. Bev and Ruth showed us how to browse for audio books that can be downloaded by using your library card plus your pin number. Beverly

and Ruth answered many questions from the members. They also brought along handouts to pass around to the members showing the ease of how to log onto Myaudio2go. This was quite an interesting program and well worth looking into.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

Flash Drive 4gb. Richard Lapera
 Photo Paper 4X6. Bill Gorrell
 Printer Paper.. . . . Howard Netzband

[Donated by Smart Computing]

Subscription, 1 year. Donna Gorrell

[Donated by Peachpit Press]

Book on Power Point. Ben Dreidel

[Donated by Jim Schmandt]

Subscription, 1 yr *Smart Computing*. . . Rod St. Clair

[Donated by Steve Gorrell]

15' Network Cable. Helen Russell
 15' Network Cable. Jerry Finkelstein
 6' Network Cable. Vivian Burth
 6' Network Cable. Rod St. Clair

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.

Helen Russell, secretary



On page 5 you will find instructions for sending an email to your legislators requesting they vote against cutting the library funding from the budget.

One other thing to consider is making a donation to the library of your choice. Considering all the services that the libraries provide, it wouldn't hurt to donate some money to help them continue to furnish us with a myriad of goodies.

Read Jerry's *Byting Remarks* and you'll see just a few of the things that our libraries are doing. Beverly told me that she could send copies of obits from various papers if requested. I utilize a library in Ohio that will copy and send up to 10 requests per session. To copy in house it costs 15¢ per sheet, not to mention postage. These are all sent to me FREE. I am not a member of that library, nor do I have a card. However, I do feel that my donating to them helps maintain these services. Maybe a donation to your local library may offset some of the cuts. Can't hurt! Contact your local library for information.

All About Windows7

THEMES

It is easy to customize Windows 7. Windows 7 features a lot of different themes. Each theme includes a desktop background, screen saver, window border color, and various sounds, icons, and mouse pointers. To change the desktop theme:

1. Right-click on the desktop and select Personalize OR—Go to the Control Panel; click Personalization.
2. A variety of themes appears—just click one and see everything change instantly.
3. Click Get more themes online to get different themes. For instance, did you know that different themes are shipped on the PCs that go to other countries? You can download them for free. Or choose photos from Bing and other companies. Also check out the Windows Personalization Gallery at: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/personalize>.

In Windows 7 you can use an entire theme or just part of it. At the bottom of the Personalization dialog box are additional buttons for your desktop background, window color, sounds, and screen saver.

You can change each aspect of your theme until it's exactly to your liking then click Save changes. If you want to save the theme for later use, click Save theme.

To change parts of a theme

1. Open Personalization by clicking the Start button; then click Control Panel. In the search box, type personalization; then click Personalization.
2. Click the theme that you want to change to apply it to your desktop.
3. Do one or more of the following:
 - * To change the background, click Desktop Background, select the check box for the image that you want to use, then click Save changes.
 - * To change the color of window borders, click Window Color, click the color that you want to use, adjust the intensity, then click Save changes.
 - * To change the sounds for the theme, click Sounds, click an item in the Sound Schemes list, then click OK.
 - * To add or change a screen saver, click Screen Saver, click an item in the Screen saver list,

change any settings that you want to change, then click OK.

Your revised theme will appear under My Themes as an unsaved theme. If you want to come back to your unsaved theme later, make sure you save it.

To save your revised theme to use on your computer, follow these steps:

1. Open Personalization by clicking the Start button, then click Control Panel. In the search box, type personalization, then click Personalization.
2. Click the revised theme to apply it to the desktop.
3. Click Save theme.
4. Type a name for your theme, and then click Save. The theme will appear under My Themes. Themes saved this way can't be shared with other people.

If you want to share a revised theme with friends and family, follow the steps below. You can share using e-mail, a network, or an external hard disk.

1. Open Personalization by clicking the Start button, then click Control Panel. In the search box, type personalization, then click Personalization.
2. Click the revised theme to apply it to the desktop.
3. Right-click the theme, then click Save theme for sharing.
4. In the File name box, type a name for your theme, then click Save.

By default, Windows saves the theme in your My Documents folder.

Double-click a shareable theme to add it to your collection of themes.

DESKTOP

If you want to play a slideshow of pictures as your desktop background, click Desktop Background on the Personalization dialog box. You'll see a group of pictures with check marks above them. This is how you choose what pictures to see.

Don't like one picture? Deselect it and it won't show up. Want to see only one picture? Deselect everything but the picture you want. Want pictures of your grandchild romping on the beach? Click Browse, navigate to My Pictures, and select one file for a static image or the whole folder for a slideshow. Then, choose how often you want the picture to change; anywhere from every 10 seconds to once a day.

More to come next month . . .



MUSINGS

—by Kay Janowsky

When I last wrote an article for the Explorer I expressed frustration over the slowness of my computer, despite a lot of memory, it being fairly new, and no known viruses, etc. Things went from bad to worse after that, and for over a month I didn't shut it down at all for fear that it would not boot up again. It had been hit or miss as far as freezing up during the boot up process. At our January meeting, Bill Gorrell nicely agreed to come over and see if he could find the problem and resolve it for me. When he arrived a few days later, he spent an hour or more checking all sorts of things. He did stop a few programs from running in the background, and checked a few things through misconfig and some other places beyond my comprehension. The long and short of it all is that he couldn't find anything really wrong and had no answer for why it was freezing up and working so slowly. I limped along a few more days, and suddenly realized that my computer seemed like the old reliable, fast, friend it used to be. I have decided that Bill must have worked some hocus pocus abracadabra magic on it. So now my recommendation is, if you have trouble with your computer, ask Bill to come over and breathe on it, and maybe it will be fine. In response to my amazement, his wife Donna wrote, and I quote, "I think Bill probably scared it. Whenever anything [washer, dryer, refrig, etc] would start giving me grief I'd tell Bill about it. No matter what I did, nothing would get it working BUT as soon as he went to do something the darn machine would be sweet as pie and work fine. Even when he didn't do anything! Go figure. I think machines are afraid of him . . ." So there you have it. You can call Bill for help with other appliances along with your computer. [Get an unlisted number, quick, Bill.]

During all my troubles, the icon in the systray for sound/volume disappeared. I have tried everything I can to retrieve it, and have met with no success. Bill did show me how to adjust the sound, but it takes about 10 steps, and that is tough to do when I have started a film from YouTube and it is blasting throughout the house.

On the day I am writing this article, the newspapers are touting a new gadget developed by Steve Jobs called the iPad. It looks pretty cool, if one can figure out how to use it, and I understand it starts at only

about \$500. But I ask myself, do I really want another electronic gadget, especially one that has a monthly fee for Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity? Probably in a couple years we will all have them or something similar, and wonder how we existed without them.

Two newsflashes!!! First, it is now the day after our February meeting. Donna Gorrell just sent me a couple links telling how to bring the volume icon back into the systray, and it worked. That's an advantage of submitting an article to the newsletter. Because she read of my troubles, she researched and found info on the problem on the web. Maybe Mid York should sign her onto their 24/7 Ask a Librarian staff. The second newsflash is that the NYC Library has relented and is now allowing NYS residents to again register via email for their library card, in order to download audio books. On February 2, the day of our meeting, I called the NYC telephone reference desk (917 275 6975) and asked how to renew. The woman told me to email a scanned copy of my driver's license, proving age and NYS residency, to opanora@nypl.org. I did just that, and voila!, the next morning I downloaded an audio book. So I now have my library card back. Bob May mentioned at our meeting that he also was able to get a card, so they must have changed their policy. Hurray! ♦



Editor's Note—

As you may, or may not, know, library funding is due for a cut and this will affect some of the services our local libraries offer. If you care enough about the libraries in NYS, it is time to do something about it. The NYCity library may be willing to let us sign up for cards to download audio books, but this could change again if funding is cut.

It is easy to send a plea to your legislator by going to: <http://capwiz.com/ala/ny/home/> and following the directions. If you have a problem connecting to that URL, go to: <http://www.nyla.org/>, then choose the Advocacy tab as that will take you to the same form to fill out.

I followed the directions on the website and received an email showing me a copy of what was sent to the following recipients: Assembly member Townsend and Senator Griffo. It might help to also send a similar email to Governor Patterson at <http://161.11.121.121/govemail>. ♦

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

Surf and Cruise Simultaneously

Those of you who cannot live without a continuous Internet connection will have a new toy to play with: the LTE Connected Car. Toyota, Alcatel-Lucent and several other companies have joined to produce an internet connected automobile that will provide video on demand, gaming, audio library, home control, e-commerce, enhanced navigation and vehicle monitoring. To view the future, visit www.ngconnect.org.

To activate this digital wonderland, users will tie into 4G broadband via a touchscreen. An interactive concept car experience can be viewed at www.ngconnect.org/Iteconnectedcar. And people say that using a cell phone while driving is dangerous.

Saving Money on Water Bills

According to the EPA a household toilet consumes roughly 27% of total water consumption. For those of you who wish to lower water bills and balk at the idea of spending \$300+ for a new toilet, help is at hand. Available for \$99 at overstock.com is a Brondell Dual Flush kit. The kit installs on your existing toilet and takes about 30 minutes for a homeowner to connect. Payback on the expense will take about 12 months or a savings of \$100 a year, the cost of the unit.

The kit provides two types of flushes: a half flush of 0.8 gallons for liquids and a full flush of 1.6 gallons for solid waste. Several other manufacturers provide similar products. Be ecological and thrifty at the same time. How good is that?

Need a Dentist and Can't Afford It?

The National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped offers a program of free dental care for individuals who are disabled, elderly or medically compromised and who cannot afford treatment. This program of Donated Dental Services [DDS] is sponsored by The NY State Dental Association and the National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped.

To find out if you qualify click on www.nfdh.org. Dentists donate their services to pre-screened patients and services are provided locally. If you need assistance contact either organization listed above.

Putting a Price on Good Health

Need eye surgery and don't want to travel to Canada or India or Thailand, bid on medical services

at www.PriceDoc.com. At this site you can bid on the cost of hundreds of procedures, tests and inoculations, including many not covered by health insurance [i.e. cosmetic surgery]. The free online service provides coverage in 30 US cities for cash and credit card-paying patients.

Select a procedure from any of seven tabs for medical, dental or vision and type in your zip code or city and choose from local practitioners, clinics and practices. You can "reserve" a price from published fees or make a lower offer. Print a voucher and contact the provider.

NOTE: A Firefox addon I use called Web of Trust [WOT] lists the site as one with a poor reputation. According to WOT, the site rates 45 out of 100 for trustworthiness, 37 of 100 for vendor reliability, 12 of 100 for privacy and 47 of 100 for child safety. Visit this site if you are brave, foolhardy or exceedingly frugal.

Want to Take in a Broadway Show but Can't Do the Stairs?

The Theater Development Fund Accessibility Program [TAP] offers discounted orchestra seats to those who are hard of hearing, are partially sighted or require an aisle seat for medical reasons, can't use stairs or are wheelchair bound. Theatergoers must become a TAP member [free] and provide documentation of the disability. Visit www.tdf.org/tap and sign up.

In addition to the orchestra seats at a 50% discount TDF Accessibility members can take advantage of the following services: open captioning on an electronic display at the side of the stage at select performances; sign language interpretation at select performances; tickets by mail to eliminate waits at the box office and appropriate seating to accommodate guide dogs.

Shop and Donate at the Same Time

Shop for bargains at 1400 retailers and donate to your favorite cause at the same time. Click on www.goodshop.com and find links to retailers who will donate up to 30% of your purchase to the charity of your choice. The website trumpets the 30% discount, but careful examination shows that most retailers donate 1% to 5% of purchase amounts.

You can type in the name of a particular store or click on a button that will provide the entire list. Identify your store and your particular school or charity and shop to your heart's content.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that you can purchase Windows7 upgrade and use it to do a full install? If you have any version of Windows you can buy the upgrade, but it is advisable to reformat your hard drive and do a clean install of Windows7, especially over XP. You can upgrade from Vista, but not XP.

. . . that if you want to use a dual boot system it is necessary to purchase a full copy of Windows7, not merely an upgrade? When you buy an upgrade, Microsoft assumes you are going to uninstall an old version and use the new version of the operating system. To use an upgrade version and retain an old version [say using XP and 7] on the same computer is illegal. To use them both, you are required to purchase each one as legal copies. When you go to Microsoft's Update site, your computer is scanned to make sure you have legal copies of all Microsoft's programs. If you are using the same license for both XP and 7, Microsoft might consider this as theft and you could be in trouble.

. . . that Microsoft has some excellent info on their Microsoft at Home website [microsoft.com/athome/]? Tips on how to optimize your computer for peak performance can be found at microsoft.com/athome/setup/optimize.aspx. Go to microsoft.com/athome/setup/maintenance.aspx if you want to put your PC maintenance routine on autopilot. Full instructions for Window7, Vista, and XP are on this webpage. For those of us who still use XP, there is a great tip page at microsoft.com/athome/moredone/5xpstricks.mspix.

. . . that Google can be used to help researching your genealogy? I've recently discovered that typing in a family name and choosing NEWS at the top of the Google website brings up articles from various newspapers. At this level the articles are mostly current, but you can choose Archives from the list on the left side, then can choose a decade to search if you so desire. Not all newspapers are represented, but I've been fortunate in finding wedding announcements, obits, etc., in Ohio and Chicago papers. Some of the papers charge a fee for the full article but most will show you the digitization of the original newspaper. ♦

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

Beverly Choltco-Devlin and her very able assistant Ruth Cosgrove, our speakers at last month's general meeting, once again reminded us of the importance of the librarian and the great value we have in our library system. The innumerable services offered at our local libraries never cease to impress me. There are book clubs, as you might expect, and poetry groups, special programs for the kids, loads of historical and cultural programs, health classes and displays of artwork. And, of course, there are free computer classes.

You might want to check out the areas libraries' monthly schedule for specific computer classes and dates. Classes are held at various times during the week and on Saturdays, they're considerate of members' scheduling needs. The Utica library classes appear to focus on the novice computer user; they cover computer fundamentals and "the basics of how to use" word processing (Microsoft Word), the Internet, Email, and Excel. Extended workshops are offered by The New Hartford library. For instance, there are three sessions of 90 minutes each for their "class" on the introduction to the personal computer. There are five sessions, 90 minutes each, for their introductory classes on the Internet and Word Processing. There's a 90 minute class on Email and one 2-hour session for their introductory class on Digital Photography.

The Dunham library at Whitesboro has an extensive program of computer classes, some of them obviously directed to the beginner. "How Do I Turn This Thing On" and "What Do I Do Next?" are for the absolute beginner. Some of my best friends are absolute beginners, and it is absolutely wonderful to see the fun they have as they progress and discover the world of computing. There are classes on Windows, the keyboard, Email, setting up a buying and selling account on Amazon. Of course, there's a class on buying and selling on Ebay. A class, similar to Bev's, is offered re getting to know/accessing the information available from Mid-York, it's "Information at your fingertips." "Googling Around." is a favorite. Check the library's monthly calendar.

There is a lot doing at your local library. And we haven't begun talking about the books.

Audiobooks. Check them out. ♦





explorer

Excel - the Basics

Tuesday ♦ March 2 ♦ 6:00 PM ♦ Whitesboro High School

Happy St. Patrick's Day



what's.com/ing ~Red Cross Month~ March 2010						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM	10	11 Johnny Appleseed Day	12 Girl Scout Day	13 Genealogy Day
14 	15	16	17 	18	19	20 Spring begins
21	22	23 National Puppy Day	24	25	26	27
28 Palm Sunday	29	30 	31	Mar 3 1931 - <i>Star Spangled Banner</i> made National Anthem Mar 12 1915 - Girl Scouts of USA founded Mar 14 - turn your clock ahead one hour Mar 20 - Vernal Equinox [Spring]		