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Smart Computing by Sandhills Publishing

Marcy Gunn on behalf of Sandhills Publishing will step members through an issue of Smart Computing, convey the value of SmartComputing.com through a live demonstration, and introduce attendees to Smart Computing's sister publications - PC Today, Computer Power User, and the Reference Series.

Each attendee will receive a packet of Smart Computing goodies and be eligible to win other Smart Computing merchandise.

Smart Computing is a monthly computer magazine that is



written for users of all skill levels. Whether you're a novice or advanced computer user, Smart Computing has timely information to help improve your computer-related productivity. Each issue provides software and hardware reviews, how-to's, tutorials, and easy-to-understand explanations of current technologies, with a strong emphasis on tech support.

This helpful information can be found in such sections as Plugged In (articles about Internet and Email), Tech Support (solving PC problems), Windows (information on Windows 98, 2000, ME, XP, and Vista), Quick Studies (brief tutorials on how to get the most out of popular applications), and the monthly Cover Story (15-25 pages devoted to a specific topic—also featured on the cover).

Smart Computing is reader-driven, not advertiser-driven.

On our website
— **Links of Interest** —

Go to:

mvpcug.com/index1.htm

* smartcomputing.com

* smartcomputing.com/techsupport

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

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webhelp@smartcomputing.com

Online:

smartcomputing.com/techsupport

Tuesday, April 3, 2007- 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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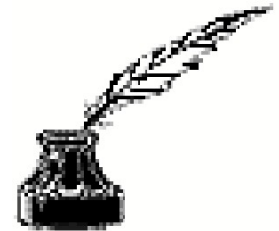
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Meeting Agenda

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

Editorial notes . . .



James Fisher donated a 17" monitor, HP printer, a wireless keyboard and a wireless mouse. The mouse and keyboard were purchased for a \$10 donation to the club.

When renewing his membership, Ray Tryon added a \$5 donation to his dues.

Thank you both for your donations—the club treasury is richer for your thoughtfulness.

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

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Minutes of March 6, 2007

— John Hunter, Secretary

The MVPCUG general meeting was held at the Whitesboro HS cafeteria. President Jerry Finkelstein called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. There were 31 persons in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

Bill Gorrell reported that income for the period January 1 through February 28, 2007 totaled \$318.10 and expenditures for the same period totaled \$393.45 with a balance total of \$3209.88 in all accounts. Catherine Dougherty completed the audit. The audit revealed that over the 2006 year, balances in club accounts decreased by \$469.67 due to a smaller membership base and level expenditures necessitated by the 2006 budget.

The audit letter indicated that all club funds were accounted for properly. The auditor suggested that the membership database be combined with the accounting program. Bill indicated that to do that will necessitate purchase of a new accounting program at a cost of several hundred dollars.

Club members were also informed that because the club has opened an account with the GPO Credit Union, club members are thus able to join the credit union.

After Bill presented the treasurer’s report, **Donna Gorrell** commented that the auditor had suggested the club purchase door prizes using the tax exempt number. Bill responded that he had been told by a NY state tax official that door prizes could not be purchased using the tax exempt forms because door prizes benefit individual members rather than the club as a whole.

The auditor’s report was accepted without comment by the membership present.

President **Jerry Finkelstein** commented on the impending daylight savings time change on March 11th and any problems club members with older computers may face. Presenter **Lisa Britt** said that Microsoft made available patches for this for XP that can be downloaded. For versions older than XP, the date must be changed manually.

Jerry also announced that April’s program will be presented by Smart Computing Magazine. May will host the program by Beverly Choltco-Devlin cancelled in February because of bad weather. June’s program will feature Linda Oltz.

PROGRAM

At 6:28 p.m. Jerry introduced club member **Lisa Britt**. Lisa’s presentation featured Microsoft’s new VISTA operating system. Lisa indicated that this new operating system features many versions ranging from a \$99 upgrade for Vista Family Basic edition to \$399 for one of the enhanced versions. Vista provides graphics enhancements and a new ribbon presentation of icons among others.

Lisa had installed the Vista Home Premium version on her laptop. She indicated that although the new system offered additional features, the old features are still around, if you look hard enough to find them. After several digressions regarding file backup issues, Lisa finished part one of the presentation at 7:20 p.m.

At 7:30 p.m. part two began with a discussion of hardware and software compatibility. Members wanted to know if older versions of office will work with Vista. Lisa indicated that a cursory check she made indicated that Office 2000 will work with Vista, at least in part. Minimum hardware requirements to run Vista basic include an 800 megahertz processor and 512 megabytes of ram memory, and this won’t give you the new graphics. Home Premium requires a minimum of one gigabyte of ram memory with two gigs recommended.

Lisa indicated she will provide links to Microsoft on the club homepage for individuals wishing more information. Lisa finished by saying, “It’s not a bad little product, but you will need at least a 17” monitor and a 19” or 22” monitor will be even better.” Lisa ended her presentation at 8:15 p.m.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

- 10 DVD +Rs **Hart Anway**
 - Microsoft Tee Shirt **Don Jennings**
 - 512 Meg USB Lexor hard drive **Fred Schmandt**
 - Post-It Picture Paper **Kay Janowsky**
 - Staples Photo Paper **Bob McMillan**
 - 15 CD-Rs **James Fisher**
 - Vista Mousepad **Allen Samuels**
 - Zoo Tycoon game software **James Pease**
- [donated by Jerry Finkelstein]
- File folders and post-it notes **Richard Harris**

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

John Hunter, secretary



A little bit of this and that . . .

WANT TO MAKE WINDOWS XP LOOK LIKE VISTA?

Steve Bass of PCWorld magazine gives you the option of staying with WindowsXP while getting the feel and look of Vista.

To download or find out more about these programs go to <http://tinyurl.com/2r6lt3> and read his column with links to the various programs.

Not thrilled about spending a bundle on Vista—and dealing with potential bugs and hardware upgrades? Stick with XP, and use these tools to emulate the Vista experience. You can use a few XP-based freebies that do a surprisingly good job of emulating some of Vista’s fancy graphical features. You can find all of the free tools and more online at “Add Vista Features to XP” on PCWorld’s web site.

Copernic Desktop Search: Vista’s search is fast and smart—and so is Copernic’s, with keyword, file content, Boolean, and wildcard searches. If you don’t like the look and feel of Copernic, Google Desktop makes a good substitute.

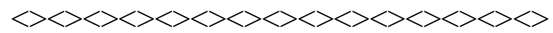
Desktop Sidebar: Vista has a handy Windows sidebar with calendars, calculators, a quick link to your media player, and RSS feeds. Desktop Sidebar offers similar features, with zillions of add-ons, including a file browser, a weather summary, news updates, and an e-mail checker. Too complicated for you? Then try the simpler LaunchBar Commander, which lets you create multiple on-screen panels (called docks) for launching various applications and documents.

Vista Start Menu SE: This utility creates a fair imitation of Vista’s Start menu, but adds functions that Vista lacks—built-in shortcut keys to frequently used Windows functions such as Reboot, Switch Users, and Hibernate. Another great alternative for organizing apps and files is JetStart Free; it’s faster than Vista Start Menu SE, but less fancy.

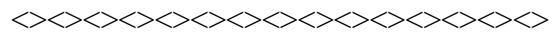
Visual Task Tips: This clever tool pops up a preview—a miniature image—of the open window in the taskbar. Scroll your mouse wheel up or down on the image to resize it.

Folder Marker: Customize your folder icons and icon backgrounds with Vista icons. Folder Marker is a snap to use, and you can visit Horizon Software to download a bunch of Vista icons. [Choose icons of the Ico file type.]

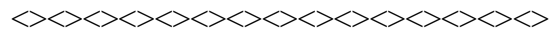
WindowBlinds 5: One prominent Vista feature you might like is Windows Glass, the semitransparent, colored window edges that Windows Aero has. WindowBlinds 5 provides skins—visual styles and themes—that allow you to change the look and feel of many parts of Windows XP. For example, this \$20 program lets you modify toolbar icons, the Start Menu and Start button, menu and dialog borders, and the taskbar and title bar. Get the Vista Plus Version 2 skin at the WinCustomize site. ❖



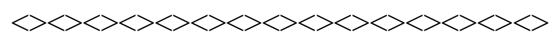
In Vista the search bar at the bottom of the start menu also functions as the run box, so if you type msconfig in the search box and press enter, it will run msconfig.



If you plan to do video editing, check the requirements on the software box before you make a purchase. Adobe Premier will not work on an AMD chip computer. Thanks to Jim Schmandt for this heads up.



This year “Spring Forward” came several weeks earlier than in past years. Microsoft does have a fix for Vista and XP users, but you have to go to the update site and install the update. If you are still using Windows98 you should have manually changed your system clock. Double click on the right side of the systray [my computer shows the time, but your’s may show a small clock]. This brings up a dialog box in which you can change the time. There is an option at the bottom “Automatically adjust clock for daylight savings time” which you should *uncheck* to keep the clock from changing on the day when Daylight savings time was originally scheduled.



How do I set a laser printer to stun?

UPGRADING TO VISTA / SLIDESHOW

— by Kim Komando

Editor's note: The first column ran in Kim's newsletter in January, but it contains information that will be useful if you intend to upgrade rather than buy a new computer.

Q. I've bought into all the hype! I intend to get my copy of Windows Vista on Tuesday. But I've never upgraded operating systems; I've always used the one installed on the machine. I'm nervous. Can you offer some pointers on upgrading from XP?

A. Vista requires a lot of horsepower, which I detail below. Most XP machines will require new hardware—\$200 - \$300 worth. If your machine is more than a couple years old, that could be just the beginning. Other parts eventually will start failing. People with old machines are typically better off to buy new.

Also, upgrading an operating system can be tricky for the casual computerist. It may well cause headaches.

Nonetheless, I'm sure many people won't heed this advice. So, I'll tell you how you can minimize installation problems.

You're probably going to need additional RAM. Microsoft recommends 512 MB for the most basic version of Vista. For premium versions, it recommends 1 GB. I would double these numbers.

Microsoft recommends 128MB of RAM for video. Again, to be safe, I would double that. I installed 256MB video cards on six new machines I bought.

To make sure your computer is up to snuff, visit Microsoft's Vista upgrade site. If your computer gets a green light, you can proceed.

First, back up everything on your computer. Making a checklist is advisable. Remember your e-mail, photos, data and Internet Bookmarks/Favorites. Make sure you know all your passwords. Back up program settings if possible. I recommend using an external hard drive.

You can do an in-place upgrade over most versions of XP. The sole exception is the 64-bit version of XP. Practically no one has that. Theoretically, Vista will keep all your files, settings, and programs as they were in XP. I haven't tried this, so I can't say how well it will work.

I wouldn't count on an in-place upgrade to go smoothly. Things could go wrong. Set aside plenty of time. To learn about in-place upgrades, visit Microsoft's site.

Your alternative to an in-place upgrade is a clean installation. We did that in the office about two weeks ago. The six installations ran smoothly, with just a few hiccups. But these are brand new, smokin' fast machines. And my staffers know their way around computers.

If you buy a new machine with Vista installed, you'll still need to transfer your data. We used Microsoft's Easy Transfer to move files and settings from our XP machines. That included a special USB cable. It generally did a good job of transferring settings and files, with the exception of Firefox data.

A couple members of my staff ran into glitches with Easy Transfer. They were easily resolved by shutting down the security programs on XP and restarting the Easy Transfer process. Unfortunately, the error messages provided no information about the problem. Less knowledgeable users could be stopped cold.

Windows Easy Transfer only works on XP and Windows 2000. If you have an earlier version of Windows, other programs are available.

Once Vista is running, you should install security software. Both AVG and avast! antivirus programs will run on Vista. They're free. Windows Defender, the anti-spyware program, is already installed with Vista. Vista's firewall has also been greatly improved since XP.

CREATING A SLIDESHOW SCREENSAVER IS A SNAP! Vernon called to ask about creating a slide show screen saver. He has a lot of photos to include.

I've created these screen savers myself. I like them because my monitor doubles as an electronic photo frame when I'm not working.

To do this, use Windows' "My Pictures Slideshow" option. First, place your photos in a single folder. Anything in the folder will be included in the slide show.

Click Start | Control Panel. Double-click Display and open the ScreenSaver tab. In the box labeled "Screen saver," select My Pictures Slideshow.

Click Settings. In the options box, click Browse. Navigate to the photo folder. Click it, then click OK. Specify any other options for the slide show and click OK again. Finally, click Apply and OK.

Did you know that Google's free Picasa software creates slide shows that you can share? I have a download link to it: komando.com/google ❖

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www.komando.com

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

Burnt Toast Anyone?

Search long enough and you can find web sites that feature just about any subject you can imagine, and many unimaginable subjects as well. Such is the case with www.mauricebennett.co.nz. Click on this site and a new meaning of “delicious art” pops up. New Zealand artist Maurice Bennett offers his constructed assemblages of pieces of burnt toast featuring images of Elvis Presley, the Mona Lisa, and New Zealand film director Peter Jackson of *Lord of the Rings* fame.

In addition to bread products, Bennett recently assembled 5040 M&M candy pieces for a portrait of Rapper Eminem. The likenesses achieved by Bennett produce recognizable images, but after viewing these artistic wonders, one questions how to protect such objects from the ravages of hungry rodents.

Currently, Bennet has just finished a portrait of a bottle of beer composed with slices of cocktail toast and slices of normal toast. The piece measures three meters or nearly 10 feet high and promotes Bennett's Wellington Lager. The work was commissioned by the annual beer competition, BrewNZ. I guess P.T. Barnum's philosophy remains alive and well, a sucker is born every minute.

Taxes

You always hear about the high property taxes paid by New Yorkers living in New York City and its suburbs. According the New York State Office of Real Property Services orps.state.ny.us/home/varp_index, “everyone pays his fair share of taxes as long as every property in a locality is assessed at the same percent of value.” I never questioned this until recently when one of my kids decided to buy a new house in Westchester County (known for its high property taxes). New York State computes the median taxes by county and lists Westchester County first at \$7,337. In contrast, the Oneida County median property tax is \$1963. This fairly represents the greater property values in Westchester. Right? I don't think so.

If the median property values by county are divided by the median property taxes paid, the result tells a different story. Using this comparison, Westchester taxes comprise 1.4% of the median property value while in Oneida, taxes comprise 2.4% or nearly double the Westchester rate. In this light,

one has to question the fair share concept. To find out more contact: www.ny.gov.governor. Additional information may be found by contacting your assembly member or senator at www.assembly.state.ny.us or www.senate.state.ny.us.

Slang

English speakers are very adept at devising new words and phrases to delightfully catch the tone or description of a situation or an event. To keep track of these verbal gymnastics, click on doubletongued.org for the Double-Tongued Wrestler Dictionary. Recent additions include the following:

unicorn defense- a legal term used when a defendant blames some mythical person for a crime;

suicide smock- an overgarment unusable for self-strangulation and given to inmates suspected of being a danger to themselves;

rubber time- an elastic time measure that describes an occurrence that takes longer than expected;

partsumer- fractional ownership as in an asset-sharing partnership of an airplane or a handbag or jewelry. Yes, ladies, you can rent handbags or jewelry.

“Pig in a python” - a spike or surge in a demographic measured over time.

How Do I Fix It?

We all have occasion to fix something and don't have the slightest idea of how to do it. If this happens to you visit expertvillage.com. This site offers a collection of thousands of video clips from experts on all sorts of useful and useless subjects. On the date of my visit, you could peruse videos to learn the proper method of a groin kick for self defense for women; how to cut a deck of cards using the “butterfly cut” method; a video on wall running to get up or over something; a video on faux painting ; drum lessons, parts of a drum kit; and how to correctly dismount from a horse.

Word Problems

If you ever need to help a child or grandchild with a math word problem, click on www.webmath.com. Then you, too, can compute how long it will take two painters to paint a house if one can paint the house in 12 hours and the other can paint the house in eight hours.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that you could drop the mouse and use keyboard commands in Firefox? Apply the following commands:

To use the address bar	Ctrl + L
Go back	Backspace
Go forward	Alt + right arrow
Scroll down	down arrow
Scroll up	up arrow
Scroll down one screen	PageDown
Scroll up one screen	PageUp
Go to top of page	Home
Increase text size	Ctrl + +
Decrease text size	Ctrl + -
Default text size	Ctrl + 0
Search within the page	Ctrl + F
Reload page	Ctrl + R
Stop loading page	Esc
Home page	Alt + Home
View bookmarks	Ctrl + B
View history	Ctrl + H
Print	Ctrl + P
Open new tab	Ctrl + T
Move to next tab	Ctrl + Tab
Move to previous tab	Ctrl + Shift + Tab
Close tab	Ctrl + W
Make a link open in new tab	Ctrl + click link

. . . that you could archive Eudora's mailboxes? The Eudora mailbox folders are simply plain text files, so you can copy and archive them. Here's how: First, clean up the folders. In Eudora, open the folder you want to archive; delete any emails you don't need to save. Then, in the "Special" menu, Empty the trash and Compact the mailboxes. Exit Eudora. In Windows Explorer or My Computer, go to the Eudora folder, copy whatever mailbox folders [the MBX files] you want to a folder you want to use as the archive destination. Once copied to the new destination, you can zip [compress] the MBX files or do what you want to them. Once your files have been copied and archived this way, you can then open Eudora and delete/ empty/ compress the original mailboxes. To restore the archived mail, shut down Eudora. UnZip the MBX file, give it a new, unique name, copy it to the Eudora folder; restart Eudora. It will see the "new" MBX file and generate a table of contents for it. You can then use it in the normal way, searching for and even replying to the once-archived mails just as if they'd never left your inbox. ❖

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

Thank you Lisa for your wonderful presentation of Vista at our last general meeting. Once again our members were alerted to the real need to know the product before you buy. A few members commented at the end of the meeting that many people haven't a clue about a particular PC or program or digital product but they buy them anyway. They figure they'll learn about it later. Later they find out that some very expensive program they've been using for years will not work with the new OS. Later they find out that their new purchase doesn't come with a tutorial. Now, what is that slot for? And where is the Start button, anyway? How much virus protection do I need and does it come with the machine? Identity theft will not be a problem for me because I don't intend to buy/sell, do any banking with my PC. I don't think all questions can be anticipated.

Sometimes, the product in question may not have been of your choosing. It's a gift from your son. Or grandchild. In such cases chances are the product is a low level one, the PC is a simple no frills model, there are not many bells and whistles to the digital camera. That's okay because all you want to do is Email.



And if there is any problem your son can come over and fix it. However, needs change once you and your PC are up and running. Now, you want to look up all those great Web sites on issues of health. Now, you're considering trying to do something on Ebay. You're hooked. Have you noticed how your son looks at you lately now that you've expanded your horizons?

Sometimes, you're not sure how to research a product because you're not sure what product you need. What products are available? At what price? Do you need to know everything about a product before you buy? Still, it will be helpful, if only financially, if you do some research regarding your potential purchase. At least ask some questions. And if your son is not available you might want to talk to some people in our Club. If they don't know the answers at least they'll lead you in the right direction to get them. Remember our old slogan? We're people helping people. ❖

explorer

Smart Computing — the magazine & web site
Tuesday ★ April 3, 2007 ★ 6:00 PM ★ Whitesboro High School



what's.com/ing				April 2007		
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 St. John's	6	7
8  Easter	9	10 Board of Director's Mtg 6:30 PM	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22  Take Care of the Earth	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	Passover - April 3			