

Beverly's back with more surprises

Beverly Choltco-Devlin—the gal with the impressive name—returns on May 1 to tell us more fantastic tales about the valuable resources available to us through the Mid-York Library System. She will be assisted by **Ruth Cosgrove**, Librarian at Kirkland Town Library, Clinton.

This will be Beverly's third visit and based on the hugely practical information that she passes on to us, we can look forward to an adventurous evening "at the library."

Her information buffet will include:

- > Introducing participants to more of the electronic resources available to them through the Mid-York website
- > Reviewing placing online requests through the catalog
- > Looking at the general periodical, health, business and newspaper resources
- > Identifying sites by Subject link which provides annotated access to freely available, quality websites on a variety of topics.

Questions about these topics will be very welcome. This permits Beverly to clarify ideas and to also present additional information.

Our very knowledgeable presenter—as you already know—won't be bothered by any other inquiries you care to put to her. ❖

On our website
— **Links of Interest** —
Go to:
mvpcug.com/index1.htm
* www.midYork.org/sites
* www.pandia.com/goalgetter
Click on the links to find out more about these subjects.

Even though we have received no official word from Time-Warner, email addresses that use **@adelphia.net** will be switching to **@roadrunner.com**.

I have edited my email program to reflect the new address and have been sending out email using roadrunner instead of adelphia. It works, as does the adelphia address.

At this time there has been no notification that the adelphia addresses will not work, but you should be aware that in the future all those using **adelphia.net** should be changed to **roadrunner.com**.

Email to **twcny.rr.com** is not affected as that is part of the Syracuse system, not the Utica roadrunner system.

Tuesday, May 1, 2007- 6PM at Whitesboro HS 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 . . .

Welcome new members —

Patricia Bruno

Ben Dreidel

Diane Parrish

John Sloan

Andrea Zygmunt



Effective this month—all email addresses will be shown with “at” replacing the “@” sign. This will prevent robots from picking up our email addresses on the web version. Simply substitute the @ sign for at when using the address in email and close up the spaces..

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
M V P C U G
PO Box 586
Marcy NY 13403-0586

Minutes of April 3, 2007
— John Hunter, Secretary

The MVPCUG general meeting was held at the Whitesboro HS cafeteria. President Jerry Finkelstein called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. There were 58 persons in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

President **Jerry Finkelstein** expressed his appreciation for **Jim Pease's** news item in the Observer-Dispatch regarding our meeting tonight. Jerry also observed that the weather forecast predicted snow tonight.

Bill Gorrell gave the treasurer's report that as of March 31, 2007, income of \$304.55 and expenses of \$117.57 producing a net increase of \$186.98 were recorded. Bill reported that 14 members renewed their memberships during the month.

Jerry then welcomed new members and visitors to the presentation. Jerry and Bill reminded attendees that the Q & A Sig would meet on Thursday, April 5th at St. John's Episcopal Church Whitesboro.

Several members asked questions regarding the best way to replace a CD drive; how to replace a hard drive; a question about the daylight savings time change and its effect on computers; and a question from Jerry regarding sound quality on PODcasts.

PROGRAM

At 6:25 p.m. Jerry introduced Marcy Dunn from Sandhills Publishing Co who presented an interesting program featuring the computer magazines published by the Sandhills Publishing Company.

The presentation ended at 7:30 p.m. and the door prize drawings commenced.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

- 15 CD-R **John Sloan**
- 10 DVD-R **John Neustadter**
- 2 Gig Bit Flash Drive **Richard Harris**
- 4 X 6 Photo Paper **Bill Gorrell**

[donated by Microsoft]

Streets & Trips **Rod St. Clair**

[donated by Peach Pit Press]

Everyware **Neville Hendrickson**

[donated by Smart Computing]

- Free 1-year subscription **Kay Janowsky**
- Magazine Reference File **Stuart Schwartz**
- T-shirt **Fred Cole**

[donated by Rod St. Clair]

Microsoft CD The Magic School Bus .. **Sal Carollo**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45: PM.

John Hunter, secretary



Book Review: How to Wow with PowerPoint
— John Hunter

How to Wow with PowerPoint. By Richard Harrington and Scott Rekdal, Peachpit Press, Berkeley, CA. 2007. 192 Pages with CD. \$39.99

In January club members listened to Elizabeth Rossi from SUNYIT present a program on *PowerPoint*. I found the presentation very helpful, but since I have no access to the software and no occasion to make presentations, over the ensuing three months I have forgotten many of the things Elizabeth taught me.

Richard Harrington and Scott Rekdal have solved my PowerPoint memory problem with ***How to Wow with PowerPoint***. This how-to book is written for the novice who has never used presentation software. And yet the experienced PowerPoint user will find plenty of helpful tips to improve a presentation as well. Seven chapters take the newby through typography, layout and design; tables, charts and graphs; photos and graphics; audio/video and multimedia; creating custom themes and templates; adding motion and creative transitions; and delivering the presentation.

Each page in each chapter is crammed with full color graphics that demonstrate pictorially what the text presents. The authors have adopted a simple, straightforward writing style that does not confuse or intimidate the reader. And the index at the end provides quick help to find just the topic you need. The book is printed on deluxe coated stock that allows the color illustrations to jump out at the reader.

All in all, this is a handy, easy to follow, easy to read reference text for anyone assigned to develop a PowerPoint presentation. I recommend this book to everyone, from expert to novice. Happy presenting. ❖

Digital Photography, the basics

— by Donna Gorrell

Film cameras are about to become dinosaurs, if they haven't already. Can you purchase film anymore? I had an Kodak 126 camera that took great pictures but they stopped making that size film years ago. So, if you haven't yet jumped on the digital bandwagon, it's about time to do so.

Do you want to print enlargements? Do you want to take shots for web use? Do you want to fiddle and tweak your images? These are things to ask yourself before you buy a camera. Visit a web site and compare cameras. One excellent site is:

steves-digicams.com/hardware_reviews.html. Another site is: [//dpreview.com/](http://dpreview.com/). Go to: digicamhelp.com/index.php for help on a more basic level. Their buying guide is great and will answer most any questions you might have.

Megapixel is the gold standard in camera jargon. The number of pixels will affect how big the final image can be. To get more specific, a camera's megapixel rating indicates how many millions of pixels the camera can record per shot. That capability determines how large the picture can be printed and still look good. You should have at least 3 megapixels to make 8x10" prints.

There are only two things I might add to what to look for in a camera. Megapixels and ease of use are great, but the most important features to me are the viewfinder and glass lens. All Kodak cameras have glass lenses. I do not know about other cameras but that is one thing I would ask before I bought a new camera. My camera is no longer available, but that could be true of one that was just purchased yesterday! I have a Kodak DC 4800, 3 megapixel and it works well for me. It only has an optical zoom of 3 and today's cameras zoom to 10 or more. Ignore digital zoom. Optical zoom uses the actual lenses to zoom in and out. Digital zoom, simply enlarges the pixels in the middle of the picture electronically and throws away the pixels around the edges, essentially the same thing as cropping a picture in an image editing program. You might disable the digital zoom feature by setting an option in the camera's menu. One good use for digital zoom; you can crop your pictures in the camera so you can print without connecting to a computer.

The acronym ISO refers to the International Standards Organization, which among other functions sets some standards for photography. When we talk about a camera's ISO settings, we're talking about ways to adjust how sensitive the camera is to light.

A digital camera's ISO rating corresponds to the speed ratings for 35mm film: A low number, such as ISO 100, is "slow," or relatively insensitive to light; a high number,

such as ISO 400, is fairly sensitive. Every time you double the ISO, you halve the amount of light needed to properly expose a picture—and vice versa.

Unlike film cameras in which you must set the camera to correspond with the film's rating, the ISO of digital cameras is adjustable on the fly. To ensure plenty of flexibility, shop for a camera that has a good range: ISO 100 to 400 is typical in an affordable point-and shoot, and more expensive cameras allow you to use higher settings.

Generally, you want to shoot with a low ISO because it results in a sharper picture with less digital noise; but a high ISO is handy for taking pictures at night and in the dark. If you want to do a lot of low-light photography, it's a good idea to look for a camera that has a wider ISO range.

Expect a lot of digital noise at ISO settings above 400.

Shutter Lag is a spec you won't see advertised by the camera manufacturer: the time between when you press the shutter release and when the picture is actually taken. You'll need to read a camera review or try the camera in a store to get a sense of its performance in this regard. All digital cameras suffer from some amount of shutter lag, so check on that if it is important to you.

Focal length is a measure of how much a camera lens can magnify a scene. Terms like wide angle and telephoto describe the relative size of a camera's focal length. A short focal length like 20mm or 35mm is generally considered wide angle; it creates a wide, spacious view. Telephoto lenses like 100mm or 200mm zoom in on the action and include a very narrow field of view. As a point of comparison, the human eye has a focal length of about 50mm. Look for digital cameras that offer a wide bottom end of the zoom range; you'll find it's more useful in the long run to get a camera that can handle 20mm wide angle rather than 400mm telephoto.

JPG vs RAW or TIF—most cameras take photos in various quality settings. If you want to print sizable images, use the highest possible setting. This is also good if you want to manipulate the photo in some manner. Low quality setting offers little opportunity for enhancement. Saving in RAW format might not be best as each camera saves the RAW file in a propriety format. This means it cannot be used by some programs. My camera takes photos in sequential order so I do not have a problem overwriting a photo, but my son's camera [also Kodak] rennumbers from the start each time the memory card is downloaded. When saving photos to your computer make sure you have folders set up so that files will not be overwritten. I download the original photos into one folder and then I rename the files to something more sensible than DCP_0004.jpg. That tells me nothing. However, D:\Photos\Fineview\RosysunsetJul04.tif tells me the photo was taken at the river July 2004 and it was of a rosy sunset.



BLUETOOTH GADGETS

— by Kim Komando

SDIO (Secure Digital Input/Output)

Q. At an electronics store, I've seen SD cards that aren't really memory cards. Some have small cameras attached to them. Others are slightly larger than SD cards and connect to Wi-Fi networks. I'm thinking about buying a Bluetooth or Wi-Fi one to use in my camera. I think it would be cool to transfer pictures to my computer as I take them. Can you make any recommendations?

A. Yes, I can make one very good recommendation. Don't buy one of these cards and expect to use it in your camera!

You were correct when you said these aren't really SD cards. They're SDIO (Secure Digital Input/Output) cards.

SDIO cards are usually slightly longer than SD cards. That means they protrude from the gadget to which they're connected. Additionally, many of them have attachments at the end.

SDIO cards are really quite remarkable. As you noted, they can add Wi-Fi and Bluetooth to gadgets. They can also add GPS, a TV tuner, fingerprint recognition and more.

But there's a catch. Not all SD drives can accept SDIO cards. For example, many handhelds and smartphones are SDIO compatible. But I know of no digital cameras that will accept them.

That's unfortunate. I know many people would like to network their cameras with their computers. But to do so, your camera must have wireless capability built-in. Canon, Nikon and Kodak all make such cameras.

If you want to use SDIO cards with your handheld or smartphone, it must be SDIO capable. Consult the manual or check on the manufacturer's site.

Next, make sure the SDIO card itself is compatible with your particular phone or handheld. This is very important.

The SDIO card contains drivers. A driver is software that allows hardware items to work together. The card must contain a driver that works with your gadget. Otherwise, the card won't work.

SDIO cards come in different sizes. There are SDIO cards that fit in standard SD slots. You'll also find SDIO cards that fit mini SD slots. This is handy, since smartphones are beginning to use the smaller mini SD format.

WIRELESS HEADPHONES

Q. I just bought a phone that plays music. It also features Bluetooth. Is there a way I can listen to music wirelessly in stereo? I would also like to be able to listen to music wirelessly from my computer. I know technology has come a long way, but are we there yet?

A. Yes! There certainly are ways to listen to music wirelessly. For years, manufacturers have been making wireless headphones. These are designed to be used with a home stereo system. They use RF (radio frequency) technology to pick up music from the stereo.

You could use a pair of these with your computer. But, you wouldn't want to try them with your cell phone!

That leaves Bluetooth. Bluetooth has been used with hands-free headsets for quite a while. But these are for talking.

For music, you need the Advanced Audio Distribution Profile (A2DP). This profile allows you to stream high quality audio via a Bluetooth connection.

You'll find a variety of Bluetooth stereo headphones on the market. There is a catch, though. These headphones won't necessarily work with all gadgets. Both the phone software and the hardware must support A2DP.

If your phone is relatively new, it should support A2DP. Even some phones featuring early versions of Bluetooth support A2DP. If you're unsure, contact the manufacturer.

As for your computer, don't expect to find support for A2DP. The current version of Mac OS X does not support it; the forthcoming version of OS X should.

Windows XP and Vista do not support A2DP. However, some Bluetooth dongles include drivers for A2DP. You may have to buy a new dongle for your computer. Fortunately, they're not expensive.

If your phone doesn't support A2DP, don't fear. There is a solution that will work, although it is a little less elegant.

You can purchase wireless headphones that include a Bluetooth transceiver. This is a small box that plugs in to a headphone jack. It converts the audio for streaming to the headphones.

Like I said, this will add bulk to your phone. But you might be okay with that. You can also attach it to music players or other gadgets with a 3/4-inch jack. ❖

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www.komando.com

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

What's For Dinner?

My wife buys and reads cookbooks the way fiction writers buy novels, by the carload. But lately, even she says she has to cut down. Well, I've found a no-volume alternative for the cookbook reading habit, www.101cookbooks.com. The day I visited the site, the featured recipe presented a nice take on pasta salad, this time using ravioli instead of the usual rigatoni or macaroni twists. A close-up photo of a pasta salad bowl proved very attractive and even though I'm not a regular cook, I immediately read the explanation and recipe directions. The salad looked scrumptious.

In addition to the featured chi-chi recipe, the site offers many food categories in which many other recipes appear. Appetizers, chocolate, holiday and vegetarian recipes appear when the visitor clicks on the various links. Clicking on the vegetarian link I found recipes for: Curried Noodle Patties, Butternut Squash Tart, Sage, Walnut and Dried Fig Stuffing and many more. The curried noodle patties are constructed with spaghetti or any other pasta and include curry powder, tofu, onions, peanuts and other veggies and spices. Cooking time totals 3 to 5 minutes a side in a pan of sesame or olive oil. The recipe makes 8-12 patties. Sounds tempting, and I'm not a vegetarian.

The site also provides reviews and critiques of new cookbooks as they come to market. For anyone interested in modern cuisine, this site is a must visit. Now, if I can only convince my wife to visit the site, maybe we can save some money on unnecessary cookbooks.

Teaching, Anyone?

The professor of my first teacher-education course observed that the three best reasons for becoming a teacher were June, July and August. To these perks, teachers can now add another, TeacherDiscount.com. This site provides teachers with discounts on hotel stays, jewelry purchases and free memberships to Working Advantage, a service that offers discounts on travel and merchandise from such retailers as Target, Home Depot and Overstock.com.

When I googled the URL, the homepage presented a list of discounted services and products. The list includes links to other sites that offer office supplies, teachers supplies, software discounted up to 85% and so on. I clicked on the software link and

found discounted software such as: Microsoft Office Professional 2007 w/free Flash Drive [512MB] for \$199.98; Microsoft Windows VISTA Home Premium upgrade for \$89.98; and a disk featuring 300 Power Point backgrounds for \$9.98. Teachers can even purchase QuickBooks Pro 2007 for \$99.98! QuickBooks Pro 2007 for Mac's go for \$199.98. Too bad, Bob Schaffer.

Other savings categories include: cars, computers, loans, insurance and music as well as jobs and dating. This seems to cover all of life's bases. These savings opportunities are great, but as my wife cuttingly observes, there have to be some extra perks for putting up with the little angels for 40 weeks a year.

Free Word Processing Software

All of us are familiar with Microsoft's Office software that includes word processing, spreadsheets, database, desktop publishing, presentation software and the like. We also know that Microsoft charges as much as the traffic will bear for these programs. A lower-priced alternative is the Corel Office production suite which offers the same services. Donna Gorrell produces the club newsletter in Corel's WordPerfect, for example. But how about free? I have found a free open source alternative to both of these software giants: Open Office.

Click on www.OpenOffice.org and you will find a software package that includes: writer—a word processor fully compatible with Word and WordPerfect; Calc—a spreadsheet also fully compatible with Excel; Impress—a PowerPoint-like presentation program; draw—a program that allows you to produce simple diagrams or dynamic 3D illustrations; base—a database program that produces tables, forms, queries, and reports; and math—a program that produces mathematical equations with a graphic user interface.

"Ok," you say. "What's the catch?" As far as I can determine, there is no catch. The software complies with the international standard format, is compatible with Microsoft products [you can access and save in the MS data formats]. And best of all it's free for any purpose. Use it for business, education, home, public administration- all the bases are covered. And there are links for help if you run into a problem you can't solve.

I have been playing with the Writer program, and find it is very intuitive to use. If you know Word or WordPerfect, you can get up to speed in Writer immediately. As I continue to play with this software, I'll keep you informed about the other modules.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that you should use “Safe Disconnect” before removing your Thumb Drive? There is an icon in the systray [XP] that brings up the dialog box for closing out the drive. Damage could be done to your device if you don’t follow the correct procedure.

. . . that you can download a program that will print a list of the files in a folder? The name of the program is DirPrinting, and it’s free. You can download it at: www.dirfile.com/dirprinting.htm.

. . . that you could place a shortcut to a program on your desktop? Click Start | All Programs. Then find the program you want and right-click it. Select Create Shortcut. At the end of the list, you’ll find “program name” (2). Click it and, depressing the left button, drag it to the desktop.

. . . that you could make a shortcut to a file for your desktop? To do this, right-click the desktop. Click New | Shortcut. Click Browse and find the file. Double-click it. Click Next. Enter a name for the shortcut and click Finish.

. . . that there is a free program to help you make Web pages? You don’t need to know HTML. The program’s name is NVU and works both in Windows and OS X. Download at: nvu.com/index.php

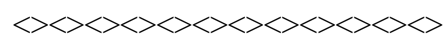
. . . that there is a free calendar program from Mozilla? Kim Komando says, “Mozilla, the organization behind Firefox, now offers a calendar program. It’s still under development, but it looks great and works well. Dubbed Sunbird, it is simple and flexible. Click a button to see this month, this week or today’s appointments. You can also skip to future appointments and events. Entering appointments in Sunbird is as simple as double-clicking a date on the calendar. And you can reschedule appointments by dragging them to different dates. To ensure that you don’t get lost, Sunbird features a “go to today” button. For those who forget to check their calendars, Sunbird features alarms. You can set alarms to remind you of coming events. Sunbird can play a sound or provide a pop-up alert.” Download it at: www.mozilla.org/projects/calendar/sunbird/. ❖

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

This column sometimes reports on the next new technological thing. Sometimes it’s not easy keeping up, things change fast. Sometimes the new is an add on to the old, and at times the new is really innovative. Often, the new sweeps aside the old and life as we knew it is gone.

There are people living among us who never heard the sound of a typewriter. There are also those who pound their PC keyboard as if they are pounding on their old manual Underwood. There are lots of people out there who wouldn’t have the foggiest notion of what a rotary telephone looks like if they weren’t tuned in to Turner Classic Movies. The latest news is that the DVD as we know it will be gone in just a few years. Once again our information storage systems are changing.

In the midst of all this changing our technical life is becoming more integrated. The PC and TV, for instance, are now more interactive. TiVo, for example, is now much more than a video recorder. The easy stuff: You can pause live TV, you can rewind it, you can skip parts of a TV show. Think of it, no more commercials. Cable TV companies may be in hot competition but TiVo, apparently, is way ahead: That box on top of your TV is now heavily linked to the Internet and offers all sorts of interesting features. Right now Bob, our Director-at-Large, can upload home movies and slide shows of his new grandchild to TiVo and the whole world of TiVo subscribers can share Bob’s pride in the new baby. TiVo’s new offerings also include cell programing. You can, from your cafeteria seat at our PC meeting, program to record a show on your home TV “even if you give it only 15 minutes notice.” The TiVo system is also able to bring you community movie listings, weather, traffic reports, podcasts. And there’s more. No stopping what the set-top box will do. And more integration with the Web is on the way. It seems that the Ipod is not the latest thing on the market. Vista is now making the rounds; the new OS is waiting in the wings. ❖



A new perk of belonging to our club—you can open an account at GPO Credit Union by showing your membership card. For a free checking account you need to maintain a \$5 balance in a savings account.

explorer

Mid-York's Valuable Resources
Tuesday ★ May 1, 2007 ★ 6:00 PM ★ Whitesboro High School



what's.com/ing				May 2007		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS	2	3 Q & A SIG 6:30 PM St. John's	4	5
6	7	8 Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		