

X-TRA Easy Excel Database and Word Documents

Linda Oltz, whose excellent training we have enjoyed before, will be on hand Tuesday, June 5, to show us how to make using a database much easier and more efficient.

Have you ever used a database or table to keep track of information? Then you know how difficult it is to keep the information current. If you have more than one list you may have to update information in each one.

It would be easier to create one data list in Excel with all your information and then use it to make mailing labels, envelopes, bills, cards, notes, letters, and other forms. After you have the list completed you can easily use and share the information. You only have one list to keep current with changes. You can sort the list in any order you would like. It is especially efficient if you do a bulk mailing by zip code.

Linda will show you how to organize your data and how to set-up Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, name the ranges, and link Excel tables to Word documents to automatically update the Word documents with the current information.

Linda M. Oltz serves as District Treasurer for the Lyncourt Union Free School District. Linda will have handouts that will help you replicate her procedures. ❖



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

Go to:

mvpcug.com/index1.htm

* <http://tinyurl.com/2pjlg9>

* <http://tinyurl.com/5k7pp>

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

Your Explorer staff is going on vacation, but we will return with the September issue. Watch your mailbox at the end of August. Have a safe and wonderful summer!

Our traditional "Ask The Gurus" night will be held at 6PM on Sept. 4th, at the Utica Maennerchor on Flanagan Rd, Marcy.

Tuesday, June 5, 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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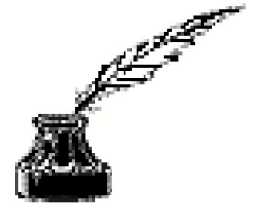
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Meeting Agenda

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 . . .

[Don't forget: To use email address shown in the newsletter, change the "at" to "@" and delete the spaces.]



Both Beverly and Ruth have graciously consented to answer any questions you may have. They may be contacted by phone or email.

Beverly Choltco-Devlin, Reference Specialist
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Minutes of May 1, 2007
 — John Hunter, Secretary

The MVPCUG general meeting was held at the Whitesboro HS cafeteria. President Jerry Finkelstein called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM. There were 35 persons in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

President Jerry Finkelstein welcomed members and visitors and reminded those in attendance that the last Q & A session of the year will be held at St. John’s Church in Whitesboro on Thursday, May 3rd at 6:30 p.m. No SIG meeting will be held in June.

Jerry reminded everyone that the June meeting will be the last before the summer hiatus. Jerry also indicated that the program in June will be presented by Linda Oltz and feature Microsoft products.

Treasurer Bill Gorrell presented the financial report. Bill indicated that last month the club received 17 renewals and inducted 5 new members. As of April 30, 2007 income totaled \$474.27 and expenses totaled \$136.10. This produced a positive balance for the month of \$338.17. Account balances for checking, money market and the GPO credit union account totaled \$3735.03.

Following the treasurer’s report, Jerry asked if members had any questions. One question regarded a dual boot from an external hard drive. Another question arose about a photography issue related to auxiliary camera lenses. A third question related to using Picasa to resize pictures to be emailed.

PROGRAM

At 6:20 p.m. President Finkelstein introduced the speaker for the evening, Beverly Choltco-Devlin. As she has on previous occasions, Beverly came with a very interesting program that focused on research tools provided by the Mid-York Library System. Kirkland Town Librarian Ruth Cosgrove assisted Beverly.

Beverly first discussed plans for the second Regional Read that Mid-York has scheduled for September and October. The book this year will be Tom Friedman’s *The World is Flat*. One interesting note about the book is that the audio version is available as a free download from the New York City Public Library. Anyone can obtain a NYC library card

simply by accessing the URL through Mid-York.

Another service provided by the Mid-York system helps those researching family histories is the acquisition of two software programs: Ancestry and Heritage Quest. Four member libraries have this program: Canastota, Utica, Herkimer and Rome. Cost concerns will require users to go to each of these libraries to access the software.

Mid-York also provides access to NOVEL, New York Online Virtual Electronic Library. This free service provides free access to magazines, newspapers, journals, maps, illustrations and primary sources among other research aids.

After the break at 7:15 p.m. Beverly talked about free software for those who wish to develop a personal WIKI. The WIKI and other Web 2.0 elements such as blogs, RSS feeds and the like are also technology areas Mid-York supports. Beverly finished her presentation at 8:10 p.m. and door prize drawings began.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

- Staples Photo Paper 8 X 10 **Jerry Finkelstein**
- Photo Paper 4 X 6 **Bob Angelhow**
- 2 GB USB Flash Drive **Lou Barile**
- 15 CDR **Diane Parrish**
- 10 DVD-R **Don Jennings**

[donated by PeachPit Press]

- How to Wow with Power Point . . **Nelson Robinson**

[donated by Microsoft Mindshare]

- Encarta Premium **Don Pianka**

[donated by Jerry Finkelstein]

- 10 Slim Jewel Cases **Helen Russell**
- 10 CD cases **Stu Culp**

[donated by Rod St Clair]

- 10 Jewel Cases **Bill Gorrell**

[donated by Beverly Choltco-Devlin]

- Coffee Mug **Vince Coyne**

*The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.
 John Hunter, secretary*



Book Review

— by John Hunter

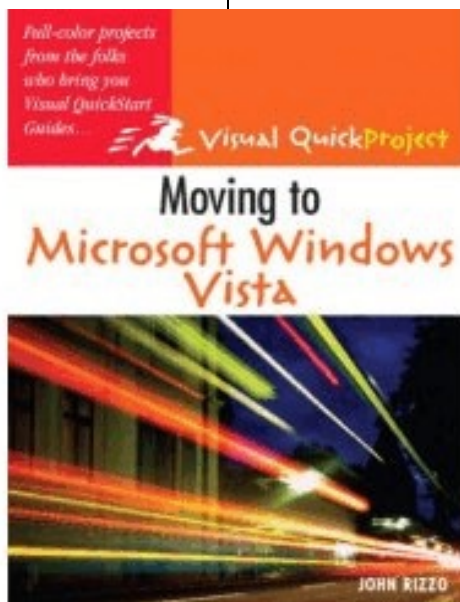
Moving to Microsoft Windows Vista. By John Rizzo. Peachpit Press. Berkeley, Ca. 2007. 129 pages. \$16.99.

Editor's note: This book is available at Amazon.com for \$11.55. It is also available for loan at the New Hartford Library.

The introduction to ***Moving to Microsoft Windows Vista*** touts “a unique way to learn new skills. Instead of boring you with long text descriptions, this book uses color screen shots with clear, concise, step-by-step instructions to show you how to complete a specific project in a matter of minutes.”

Rizzo's statement of intent has been brought to successful fruition in this volume. As promised, the book provides full-color screen shots on every page with the step-by-step sequential delivery of the material. All good technical writers know that dense, text-filled pages intimidate and frustrate readers who want to know how something works or how to make something work. Rizzo's approach successfully provides readers with the knowledge to install Vista themselves without relying on a technician or helpful brother-in-law. Rizzo's typical page format includes many areas of blank space, 16 point or 18 point type faces and helpful arrows that direct the reader to specific areas on the featured screen shots. The large type faces certainly appeals to readers with old and tired eyes. The organization on each page makes understanding of the material a snap.

Important concepts appear in numbered sequence; important terms appear in orange; and captions explain what is shown and why it is important. Headings for each group of tip items discussed match the section title, and a page number in each tip heading references the specific page to which the tip item refers.



Chapter 1 begins with “prepare to upgrade,” and discusses the pros and cons of installing Windows Vista on an older PC as opposed to purchasing a new machine with the operating system already installed. Obviously, readers electing to purchase new equipment probably need not read any further in Chapters 1 and 2. Readers who purchase new machines will find later chapters useful as they navigate the transfer of files from their old PC to the Vista machine [Chapter 3].

Chapter 4 deals with exploring windows vista. Much has been written about the new look to Vista. The new look features the Windows Aero theme interface. Aero requires a large hardware investment to even run, but Vista provides a lower technology Vista Basic theme version for those who opt to try one of the lower priced versions of the operating system. For PC users who don't want to change themes, Windows Classic, a Windows XP theme version also comes with Vista. As Lisa Britt indicated in her Windows Vista presentation a while back, all the old parts of Windows XP are still around, you just have to look hard for them.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 deal with configuring the desktop, start menu and taskbar. Chapters 8 and 9 involve new approaches to working with folder windows, copying and moving files, sorting files and folders and other types of data management.

The last chapter deals with computer security. Microsoft assures users that this version of windows provides much more security than previous iterations. Nonetheless, not a day goes by without someone publishing another Vista vulnerability. And so it goes.

The index at the end is small but generally fills the bill for people who want to address a single concern. All in all, John Rizzo offers a surprisingly simple, effective and useful text to make the jump to Vista easier. I recommend this book to all club members, especially those members who have just purchased a Vista machine or who plan to purchase a Vista machine during the next year.



RESIZING MULTIPLE IMAGES

— by Kim Komando

Q. I gave my parents a digital photo frame as a gift. I loaded a bunch of JPEGs on a memory card. Unfortunately, some of the photos are so large that they take a long time to load. The instructions say that the pictures should be 600x480 [or smaller] resolution. Is there a program I could use to convert images to a smaller size in a batch? I know JPEGs can be compressed.

A. Yes, many programs can resize batches of photos. I'll tell you about a few in a minute.

But first, let's clear up the difference between photo size and compression. It confuses a lot of people. Understanding the difference will help you take better pictures. And when you edit or resize your photos, you'll get better results.

Most cameras allow you to take photos in three [or more] sizes. The sizes vary depending on how many megapixels a camera has. For example, a 10.2 megapixel camera will take larger photos than a 6.1 megapixel camera.

A lot of attention is paid to megapixels when it comes to marketing cameras. Many people equate it with image quality. But megapixels simply dictate how big you can make a picture and get decent prints.

The more closely spaced pixels are, the smoother the image will look. If an image contains more megapixels, the more you can enlarge it.

Of course, the more megapixels, the larger the file size. Larger files cause photos to load more slowly in your picture frame.

Compression is different from photo size. Cameras usually have three levels of compression. The less compression used, the larger the file size. And, the better the prints will look.

Compression reduces the amount of data in a picture file. It doesn't do this by reducing the number of pixels. Rather, it reduces the number of colors.

For example, you may have 100 different shades of blue in a picture. Compression will eliminate shades of blue that are similar to other shades. One level of compression may reduce the 100 shades to 80. More compression may cut the number of shades in half.

Compression can make your photos look bad. Subtle transitions may become distinct bands of color.

The best way to reduce a picture's file size is to resize the image. If that doesn't work, then try a little compression. JPEGs are already compressed. So, don't compress them further unless necessary.

You say the frame maker recommends photos that are 600x480 pixels. This isn't a standard photo size. The recommended size probably is 640x480. You can make your photos this size without distortion.

I link to three programs on my site that will resize batches of photos: Fast Image Resizer [adionsoft.net], Fotosizer [fotosizer.com] and Multiple Image Resizer .NET [multipleimageresizer.net/]. They run on both Windows XP and Vista.

All three programs are easy to use. Some let you specify custom sizes. But, that isn't a necessity. You need 640x480, a common size.

Of these programs, I like Multiple Image Resizer .NET the best. It's the most complicated. But you can use it to rotate and flip images. You can also change the compression of your images.

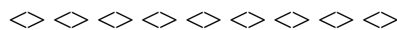
NOTE: Multiple Image Resizer requires the .NET framework 2.0 or 3.0. If you're running Windows XP, you may need to install it. There is a download link on the site. The .NET framework is installed with Vista.

Make sure you don't reverse height and width when you resize your photos. If you're resizing a photo in landscape orientation (the horizontal edge is longer), use 640 as the width and 480 as the height. For photos taken in portrait orientation (the vertical edge is longer), use 480 as the width and 640 as the height.

If you don't pay attention to this, your photos will be distorted. For example, your subjects will look short and fat. You can't resize portrait- and landscape-oriented photos simultaneously.

These little complications can be confusing. But figuring them out is worthwhile. ❖

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It's time for your newsletter staff to take a break and enjoy the summer. When we return in September we hope to have more input from members. Could you provide a review of a new software program? Could you send a tip or hint that will assist in making our computing life easier? Let's hear from you!

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

Do You Want to be a Regular Guy?

Want to lower your risk of heart disease or diabetes or high blood pressure? How about keeping your weight in check? All these are the byproducts of fiber. Yes, the same fiber that also keeps you regular. Fiber is now one of the “in” foods, at least according to Newsweek Magazine. To view for myself the wonders of fiber, I visited wholegrainscouncil.org.

According to the Whole Grains Council, increasing your consumption of whole grains will lower your risk of heart disease by 25% to 36%, reduce the chance of stroke by 37%, reduce the incidence of Type II diabetes by 21% to 27% and reducing digestive system cancers 21% to 43% and reduce hormone related cancers by 10% to 40%. All this as well as improving your regularity. What a miracle food. For more information, click on the link that discusses health studies.

Plan Your Summer Vacation Getaway

New York State has played many important roles in the history of our country: gateway to the west, breadbasket to the revolution, a major link in the Underground Railway to name just a few.

For ideas and itineraries to many important historical sites in NY State that have played vital roles in the growth of our country visit HeritageNY.gov. Heritage trails are a program of the NYS Department of Parks, Recreation and Preservation [your tax dollars at work again]. The department has created a series of heritage trails to “preserve and celebrate NY’s rich heritage; improve visitor experience at designated sites; promote tourism; and educate teachers, students and the general public about NYS history.”

These trails feature state-wide historical themes such as The Revolutionary War, Underground Railway, Theodore Roosevelt and Women’s to name several. Clicking on Women’s Trail first presents a map of NY listing sites in Albany, Syracuse, Hyde Park, Manhattan, Seneca Falls and Jamestown to name only six of about 24 sites in the Women’s Trail.

If you click on the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, not only will you find a description of the restored nineteenth century tenement building and a list of programs that benefitted the poor and explore

the lives lived by immigrant women during the period of immigration in NYC, you will also find links to other heritage trail sites in the immediate area. These include Fraunces Tavern, Trinity Church; St. Paul’s Chapel [next to the World Trade Center site], and Ft Green Park all parts of the Revolutionary War Trail.

King Manor, and Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims, and the Henry I. Lott House are features of the Underground Railway Trail. The Alice Austen House Museum and the Weeksville Heritage Center are other components of the Women’s Heritage Trail. I encourage all who are interested in NYS history to visit these sites.

Charlotte’s Web and Other Webs

Except for reading *Charlotte’s Web* as a child, spiders have never interested me very much. That all changed recently when I received a telephone call from one of my sons who told me that he had been hospitalized due to a bite from a Brown Recluse spider. At the time I didn’t know a brown recluse spider from a wombat. But after talking with my son, I headed to the web to find out more about the venomous arachnid.

I wound up at www.ohioline.osu.edu/hyp-fact, a Cooperative Extension site supported by the School of Agriculture at Ohio State University. The site featured a very easy-to-read article by an Assistant Professor of Entomology that provided all sorts of information about the N.A. [nasty arachnid].

I found that my son’s injury could be very serious and that although high doses of antibiotics are usually prescribed, surgery may be required to remove necrotic tissue caused by the venom. Fortunately, my son is now out of the hospital and back at work, but he still faces additional plastic surgery to repair the gaping hole in his arm left by the necrotic tissue.

MTV For Adults

My kids say that the Weather Channel is MTV for adults. As one who checks the channel regularly, I have to agree, at least in part. Another interested weather person is club member **Doug Walsh**. Doug recently sent me a number of weather related web sites to check with during the coming thunderstorm season. Www.intellicast.com/Icastpage, www.hamweather.net and www.metro.psu.edu/~gadomski are three sites to visit when you want weather and not weather stories.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that this is the season for Spring cleaning? Your computer deserves a good cleaning too. You know all about backing up your files, right? Well, after you have backed up you can defrag your drives. You may need to run scandisk to make corrections if there are errors on the drive. Then set it to defrag your drive and go have lunch or clean out a closet.

. . . that computer screens get dirty? An LCD screen should be treated very carefully. Do not use detergent or glass cleaner and *never* press down on the screen. There are cleaners made for LCD screens but a 50/50 mix of isopropyl alcohol and water will do the trick. Spray some on a lint-free cloth and gently wipe the surface from top to bottom, not in a circular motion. Dry, if necessary, with another lint-free cloth. NEVER use a paper towel as that might scratch the screen. A CRT screen can be cleaned with the same solution or any glass cleaner.

. . . that accessories also get dirty? The same 50% isopropyl alcohol–50% water solution works well to clean greasy keyboards. You shouldn't be eating while working on the computer, but I do it all the time and my fingers do get sticky. I am very careful with liquids especially working around the laptop. Liquid on a keyboard can spell doom to a laptop.

. . . that the inside of your computer needs cleaning too? Dust accumulates around the fan and could cause heat to build up. A fan-powered system draws dust into your tower and static electricity charges inside make it stick. Cleaning out dust means you have to remove the case. Never force anything and always make sure to discharge yourself by touching something metal before you do anything inside the case. A static electric charge could render your computer useless. Compressed air can be used to blow dust out of the case, but hold the nozzle of the can at least 5" away from computer components. While the case is off, check the accessory cards and make sure that all are firmly seated.

. . . that now that your computer is clean you can do some other house cleaning? Wash those windows—and not the Microsoft kind! ❖

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

Once again Beverly did a masterful job at our last Club meeting unlocking the mysteries of information retrieval at the Mid-York Library System. It's easy to boggle the mind to think that so much information is out there in so many media formats. But thanks to Beverly we were able to travel the various pathways to access some of the huge amount of available material. Beverly and Mid-York are keeping up with the rapid changes taking place in how we're getting the information we need. We talked of downloading the latest news, music, the most reliable information on health. She showed us her 30 gig Ipod holding, among other things, the entire book *The World Is Flat* by Thomas Friedman, the book slated for the Fall's Regional Read. A friend of mine uses her Ipod [also 30 GB] to watch TV shows she's missed while away from home. Keeping up with the 21st century is interesting, but it's also troubling. I greet the changes with ambivalence.

All PC newsmagazines, the daily papers all report on the changing ways we're getting the news and all information in general. More and more of us are turning to the Internet for our information needs. The aforementioned Ipod is ubiquitous. Teachers are going bonkers over their students text-messaging their friends. Everyone, it seems, laments the death of letter writing; everyone, including the one who is complaining, has switched to email. More and more people are turning to the Internet, the blogs in particular, for special reports on the presidential race, for the instantaneous news [and pictures] on the war in Iraq. It is not always a matter of the news on TV not coming in fast enough. It seems that TV coverage itself is suspect. Of course the validity of the instantaneous responses on the blogs may be suspect as well.

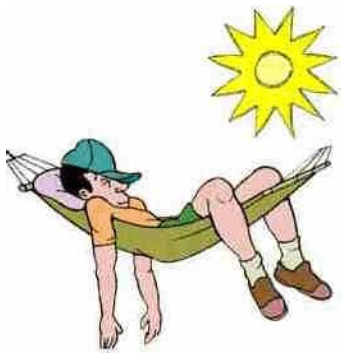
In any case, the times they are a-changing; the news media are hurting, CD sales are down, down, the new Sony digital book is getting decent reviews, Google is in the midst of digitizing whole libraries of books. Does all this signal the end of the book as we know it? I hate to think that Beverly, our representative from the Mid-York Library System, is contributing to "the demise of the book." She is, after all, recommending to download a copy of *The World is Flat*, the Regional Read for the Fall.



You might want to pick up the book for a summer read. It comes out in paperback in July.

Wishing you all a fun summer. See you in September. ❖

explorer

Linda Oltz does magic with Word & Excel
Tuesday ★ June 5, 2007 ★ 6:00 PM ★ Whitesboro High School



what's.com/ing					June 2007	
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
On June 22 1942 the Pledge of Allegiance was recognized by Congress					1	2
3	4	5 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 	15	16
17 	18	19	20	21 Summer begins	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30