

The Inside Track

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Backing Up is Easy to Do

The first thing we should learn about computers is how to turn them on. The second thing is how to backup what we put on our computers. Once you input data to the computer it becomes essential to back it up so that you will not lose that data; be it a document or those all too precious photos that we all seem to be taking with our digital cameras.

Bill Gorrell is going to show us a variety of ways to backup:

- √ **Backup Devices** — USB hard drive, ESATA hard drive, flash or thumb drive, DVD/CD
- √ **Types of Backup** — Image, file by file, recovery DVD/CD
- √ **Programs** — Free vs purchase
- √ **Online Storage** — Carbonite, Mozy, Dell Datasafe

Bill Gorrell currently is treasurer of the Mohawk Valley PC User Group, Inc. He retired after 37 years as an engineer with General Electric. He worked on the radar of the E2 airplanes for the military and was involved with computers for many years.

Don't forget — there will be a vote on June 1 to decide if dues should be increased to \$25.

A moderator is needed for the forum on our website. If no volunteer comes forth the forum will be discontinued.

Watch for your *Explorer* in late August for details on the September meeting. See you in the fall . . .



Tuesday, June 1 — 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 . . .



You may have noticed that the officers and directors have email addresses that are @mvpcug.com. The club is allowed to use that ending and the Board of Directors recently decided to offer all club members the opportunity to have their own email address using @mvpcug.com..

If you would like to have your own email using the mvpcug ending, please email Bill Gorrell [treasurer@mvpcug.com] and he will set up an account for you.

I had Bill set up an email account in my name. My email program, Eudora, collects the email and I can also send it from the program. You might elect to have a Web based account. Bill can give you directions on how to do it either way.

This is another perk for club members.

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 May 4, 2010

— HRussell, 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 34 persons in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

Jerry started the meeting by asking Bill to give a treasury report covering for the month of 4/1/10 to 4/30/10, to the attending members. Those that are interested in the full treasury report can check either with the secretary or Bill Gorrell.

Next Jerry mentioned that if the School decides to take extra vacation days in June all the MVPCUG members will be notified if the meeting is canceled.

Jerry announced that an Email account is available for members only. Bill Gorrell will set up the account to those requesting an account. First contact Bill advising of a user name and you will be walked through the rest of the procedure.

A moderator for the club’s forum for the website is still needed. Full time or part time members can apply, check with Lisa or Bill if interested. Items for sale can be added to the website but a moderator will be needed in order to make this happen.

At the June meeting a vote will be taken by the attending members to approve raising the yearly dues to \$25.00 to start 1/1/11.

There were no questions asked for the Q & A session.

Patty Bruno, our Program Chair, advised the members of the up and coming programs scheduled for the months ahead, as follows:

- June - Backup Computer
- Sept - Guru - Ask Questions
- Oct - TBA - Perhaps Best Buy
- Nov - Nancy Fasoldt on Face Book

PROGRAM

For tonight’s program, Jerry introduced Gary Virkler, who will demonstrate the various usages from Google

Earth. You have to be on-line, <http://earth.google.com> in order to activate the program. Gary handed out a diagram sheet to the members showing exactly how to navigate in searching how to locate landmark places. By hitting the search tabs you can find businesses, get directions by viewing Google Maps. You can zoom in and out of viewing buildings, roads and places of interest. Gary showed an in-depth view of Griffiths Air Base. He also recommends that if you save any pictures, save them as JPEG to your desktop. Gary then treated us by showing many of the pictures that he had taken from up at the Adirondacks. Another fine presentation from one of own members, Gary Virkler.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

- Flash Drive 2gb. Patty Bruno
- Flash Drive 4gb. Gary Virkler
- Pkg.Copy Paper,8-1/2X11. Jim Pease
- Gel Stick Pens. Lisa Britt
- 4X6 Photo Paper. Don Pianka

[Donated by Que Publishing]

- Book - Project Mgt. Don Jennings

[Donated by Rod St. Clair]

- CD-Akuazone. Dave Yeaton
- 10 CD Cases. Lou Barile

[Donated by Nick Dudish]

- Case Modem. Patty Bruno

The meeting adjourned at 8:23PM.

Helen Russell, secretary



Don't forget—we're going on vacation!

Watch for your Explorers in late August for news of the September meeting.

All Things Google —Donna Gorrell

There's more to Google than just a search engine. If you only use Google for searching, you are missing out on a lot of features.

I use Google's Gmail when I want an address for web use and don't want to use my roadrunner account. However, some people use it as their primary email. Mail is accessed by going to the website, but I have the mail forwarded to my *Eudora* email program and can send mail from *Eudora* too. Gmail also has a POP fetcher which can retrieve messages from up to five of your other email accounts. It also allows you to send mail using any of those five account addresses from Gmail via a drop down menu in the From box. Using IMAP you can access your Gmail on multiple computers or mobile devices and changes you make on one device are reflected elsewhere. IMAP syncs the read and unread status of all your messages in all your labels. To enable IMAP in Gmail's Settings, click the "Forwarding and POP/IMAP" tab. You will have to configure your email program using Gmail's secure IMAP settings; click the "Configuration instructions" link to get details for your software. Gmail has filters that you can set and it does a great job of putting spam into a spam folder; after 30 days spam is deleted from your computer. There's lots of storage and it's all free.

Microsoft Outlook has a calendar, but Outlook Express does not. Since I use neither of those, I have no access to a calendar. Here's where Google comes to my aid. I was given a web address to obtain Google Calendar but my AVG antivirus software kicked in and told me the site could be harmful. So, I brought up Google main page and then clicked on "More" on the upper left side of the page. This brings up the calendar and after a few clicks on the help page, I figured out how to use it.

It is very easy to enter your appointments, either by using the Create Event, Quick Add or by clicking in the date box. There's a category that is labeled Tasks which brings up a sidebar on the right side of the calendar. Here's where you would enter any tasks you want to record.

To bring up your calendar, make sure to bookmark

it or you'll have to go through Google|More to get to it again. When you create an event you can also configure an email or popup reminder—days, weeks, or minutes before the event.

To receive your daily agenda via email go to the calendar list on the left of the page, click the down-arrow button next to the calendar, then select "Notifications". Check the "Daily agenda" box and save your settings. For those of you with smart phones, you can even have a text message sent to your phone. Text the word *day* to shortcode GVENT [48368] to get your agenda. Remember – fees apply for text messaging.

Another feature you can add to your calendar is the weather forecast. Go to Settings, General Tab, enter your location [city or zip code] and then , near "Show weather based on my location", choose Celsius or Fahrenheit. Remember to save your changes. The forecast will now appear as small icons on the next four days; click on the icon to expand the details.

If you aren't afraid to work in the clouds, Google Docs might be for you. Once again, go to Google and click on "More". Choose "Documents" from the drop down list. Follow the instructions or click on the "Browse Template Gallery" next to the search box. There are thousands of templates and forms that you can choose. There was one for diabetes management, one for a survey which could be used on a webpage, or sent as e-mail, and so many more that you just have to investigate them yourself.

You can access your documents offline. There is a free browser add-on for Firefox, IE, and Safari [Google Gears] that allows access to your files while offline and will sync the changes once you reconnect to the Internet. Download at <http://gears.google.com>.

While you are in the clouds you might also want to store and/or share files other than documents. Well, Google has taken care of that too. To save your files, simply click the Upload button. File sizes can be up to 250MB. You are allowed up to 1GB of space for storing non-Google Doc files, such as music, video, photos or zip files. Once uploaded, you can select a file and click the Share link to give other access to it. You can also share entire folders; create a Dropbox-like meeting space for your friends and colleagues to collaborate on files.

Google isn't just a simple search engine anymore!

THIS 'n THAT —Donna Gorrell

MaximumPCs Awesome Websites

If you have a complaint or need to ask a question it is possible to speak to a human being—just go to: <http://gethuman.com/> and choose the company you want to get in touch with. You can scroll the list or type in the company in the top search box. There are instructions for getting through to the human and also ratings for each company's responses.

Looking for answers for those yellow exclamation marks in Device Manager? Check out <http://pcidatabase.com/> for listings of PCI vendors and devices. If you need help with USB devices, try <http://www.qbik.ch/usb/devices/>.

Want to know how to forage for edible plants—boil water—baton vegetables? <http://www.howcast.com/> has the answers. There are lots of mini videos showing you how to do any of the above and much, much more. Very detailed — even a caveman could follow these directions.

For the most accurate weather forecasting tune into <http://www.wunderground.com/>. You can choose the state and area that you are interested in and select several to make them your favorites. My daughters live in GA and SC so I can pick both of those areas and know what kind of weather they are experiencing, as well as know what our local weather is.

For all you non-cooks out there, try checking out the recipes on <http://www.cookingforengineers.com/>. The recipes are given in detail — with photos — and explicit directions written in cup, teaspoon and metric equivalents. I looked at macaroni and cheese and the peanut butter cookie recipes. At the end of the recipe are comments sent in by people who have tried the various recipes. Interesting comments. For all you engineers, these recipes are ideal as they give precise amounts and directions. For non-cooks, it gives precise directions that are easy to follow.

For all you movie fans, check out: <http://www.rottentomatoes.com> for the latest reviews and ratings for any movie — new or old.

Do you need a panoramic photo? Do you want to put a 3D version of a photo on a website? Don't have a good graphic editing program? All is not lost. Download Microsoft's Image Composite Editor [ICE] at: <http://tinyurl.com/5e99su>. According to Microsoft:

“What is Image Composite Editor?

Microsoft Image Composite Editor is an advanced panoramic image stitcher. Given a set of overlapping photographs of a scene shot from a single camera location, the application creates a high-resolution panorama that seamlessly combines the original images. The stitched panorama can be shared with friends and viewed in 3D by uploading it to the Photosynth web site. Or the panorama can be saved in a wide variety of image formats, from common formats like JPEG and TIFF to the multiresolution tiled format used by Silverlight's Deep Zoom and by the HD View and HD View SL panorama viewers.”

Visit the website for more information and explanations of what HD View and Deep Zoom are capable. *MaximumPC* recommends that you take photos using a tripod and capture at least two photos [three would be optimum], starting at the left and moving right, overlapping your photos by placing an object on the right-hand side of the first photo and placing that in the middle of the second photo, and so on for as many photos as you take. Select the photos from your hard drive and drag and drop them into ICE's main window. ICE automatically stitches the photos together. If you don't like the result, you can play around with the Camera Motion pull-down menu. There are eight points in a rectangle around the preview image. Drag these points to resize and crop the image. When you are happy with the results, press the Export button to save the cropped panoramic image.

MaximumPC gives www.fatwallet.com a thumbs up as a reliable site for bargain hunters. There are sections for Forums, Coupons, and Top Deals. There are offers for deals at WalMart, eBay, buy.com, and several others. I found a coupon for *Michael's* craft store giving 20% off total purchase — including sales items. *Kohl's* offers 20% off online purchases and *Home Depot* has a buy one get one free offer. Apparently the Forum offers more deals. Can't hurt to check it out—you might find yourself a great deal! ♦

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

This and That

You should be about finished with your Spring cleaning by now, but if you have procrastinated and still need to clean and organize your stuff, click on containerstore.com. This web site provides inexpensive storage containers for anything you want to organize and store. A button at the top of the page allows you to shop by category, all 20 of them. Categories range from elfa storage systems to moving, shipping and storage containers; with dorm, closet, kitchen and other types of storage containers in between. You can even specify items made in USA! Clicking on the Made in USA-office items, I found slate writeboards, 3-ring binders, sticky to-do notes and drawer organizers to name just a few. If you just can't find those erasable file folder labels at Staples or KMart, this is the site for you. Prices for these items are under \$30 so even the most frugal can afford to shop here.

Working Women

Intact families today rely on two incomes. Yet not all workers are treated equally. National statistics suggest that women earn just 79% of the salaries paid to men working at the same job. In New York State, 43.43% of working mothers function as primary breadwinners while another 20.24% serve as co-breadwinners of family income. Yet the disparity in median salaries paid to women in New York is \$8,392 less than median salaries paid to men, or 83%, a percentage amount which is slightly higher than the national average.

To access a web site that provides median salary information by sex in all 50 states click on www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/04/women_breadwinners.html. This interactive map allows viewers to track by state, the median dollar amount difference between men and women. The American Assoc. of University Women compiled the data and relied on Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Census Bureau and other organizations such as Kaiser State Health Facts for information.

Another web site with similar data can be accessed at www.nationalpartnership.org/site/Pageserver/. At this site you can download state specific information that includes a list of family budget areas such as food that would be increased if inequities did not exist. For those who believe that this situation does not affect

them, just remember that your mother may work, or your wife or your daughter or your granddaughter. Inequities hurt everyone. End of sermon.

Free Coupons

In strained economic times, even those of us who never clip coupons may now do so to save money. Some true believers brag that they can save hundreds of dollars a month on food and other expenses just by using coupons that come in the mail or are downloaded from the computer. CouponForum.com is a site for the coupon novice. In addition to providing downloadable coupons, the site includes forums where interested users trade information. On the free coupon button, I found info on the following: coupons for free magazines, 50% off code for 'Hooked on Phonics', earbuds and headphones at 80% off, \$10 off diapers or formula with free shipping, Crocs Outlet buy one get one free and Fisherprice.com sale + free shipping, just to name a few.

Other coupon sites include the following.

Www.afullcup.com which in addition to coupons provides articles on such topics as Couponing 101, How to have a successful garage sale, How to use rain checks to your advantage, as well as a link to www.centsoff.com which touts 320 coupons in 39 categories.

It seems as if couponing has become the newest extreme sport. For the really hungry bargain hunter, go to slickdeals.net. This site offers a truly amazing collection of below retail offers such as a 50" Panasonic TC-P50S2 1080p Plasma HDTV for \$999; a Borders or Waldenbooks 40% off printable coupon, or a Craftsman 50' 5/8" all rubber garden hose for \$20. Happy bargain hunting.

Touring and Traveling

If you find yourself traveling and want to get some inexpensive exercise while touring an unfamiliar city, click on rentabikenow.com. This site provides bike rental companies for U.S. and foreign cities. At my visit I chose Boston, MA. The site provided me with eight bike shops in the greater Boston area that rent vehicles. The locations ranged from 0.7 miles from the city center to 44 miles from city center. All listed shops will provide free roadside service in case of mechanical difficulties. Rental prices for one shop in Boston ranged from \$80 per day to \$440 per week. The shop offers a choice of many bicycle makes and types to appeal to all kinds of riders.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that XP was the last operating system to have the Run Command in the Start Menu? You can add it to Vista and Win7 if you want. Right-click the Start button, choose Properties. Click on the Start Menu tab [make sure Start Menu radio button is selected in Vista]; then click the Customize button. Scroll down until you find the Run Command box, check it, then click OK twice. Now the Run Command will appear on the bottom of the right side of the Start Menu.

. . . that you can change the size of your desktop icons? In XP, there are two ways to do this. Right-click the Desktop and choose Properties. Under the Appearance tab, click the Effects button. Putting a check mark next to Use Large Icons will make your icons larger; removing the check mark will make them smaller. If you want still more customization, click the Advanced button under the Appearance tab, then choose Icon from the drop down list under Item. You can increase or decrease the size of your icons by pressing the Up or Down arrows in the Size category. XP icons are set to size 32. Change the size of the Icon font by selecting a number in the Size drop down list. In Vista and Win7, change the icon size by right-clicking on the Desktop, choose View, then select Large Icons, Medium Icons, or Classic Icons [Small Icons in Win7]. You can also press CTRL or ALT while using the scroll button on your mouse to change the icon size.

. . . that you shouldn't just yank out a flash/thumb drive from your computer? On older computers using an A drive with floppy disks we were warned not to remove the disk until the drive light went out. There is no light on most flash drives. You might take out the flash drive before your computer has finished writing to it, thus causing loss of files and damage to the drive. On my computer there is a little icon in the systray that looks like a green arrow above a grey thing [it's too small for me to identify it any better]. I click on that and a small box will pop up telling me it's ok to remove the flash drive – or not, if it is still being written to.

. . . that we'll be taking a summer hiatus. Look for your Explorer in late August. ♦

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

Last month the new new thing in the magazines, the daily newspapers, on TV was the iPad, another Apple success. Since that time it's got competition going strong and the inevitable comparisons of the various experiences of reading the different e-books are showing up everywhere. As usual, the evaluations don't commit to any of the e-books, their software, or to reading satisfaction. In the interest of fairness, something nice is said about all of them.

The new talk is about Microsoft's recent release of its latest [2010] version of Office. Actually, there are two versions. One version of the new Office will store your documents on your hard drive, just like in the days of yore. The other version moves Microsoft closer to the future and stores your documents up in the air, in the clouds. Cloud technology, a bunch of servers in a bunch of warehouses all over the world. Open a Window, Facebook is there. It's a move that throws the old models off to the wayside. The questions of safety or security do not seem to come up. Supposedly, cloud technology is better at keeping your documents safe. Hard drives die all the time. Passwords with eight characters are tough to crack. Right now just about all of us here at MVPCUG are using the "old" stuff, storing our documents on our PCs, and of course we're backing up those documents on some sort of hard drive. Some of us are even backing up our hard drives with other hard drives. Maybe Cloud technology is safer. But how do they know this at this stage of the game?




The *New York Times* recently wrote about the sad state of acoustics in iPod, mobile phone and PC technology. There's been lots of advances in the visuals even if pictures taken with your cell phone are often miserable representations of the original object. Does anybody really recognize his/her grandchild in that mobile picture? Can you really differentiate one little kid from another little kid in that less than sharp little picture? Still, the visuals are better than the fidelity of the sound. Years ago you showed off your high fidelity equipment with pride. You sat down and listened to the music. So much of the truth of the music was in its sound and many people lamented the loss of that fidelity when CDs took over from the warm and realistic sound of the LP. When I switched from LP to CDs a purist friend of mine didn't talk to me for almost a year! Some people take their sound seriously. I hear people talk about how many songs their iPod or MP3 player can play. They talk about the compression of the music. Does anybody ever talk about the sound? ♦

explorer

Backup

Tuesday ♦ June 1 ♦ 6:00 PM ♦ Whitesboro High School



what's.com/ing		~Dairy Month~			June 2010	
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS	2	3	4	5
6 D-Day	7	8	9	10 Nursing Assistants Day	11	12
13	14 	15	16	17	18	19
20 Happy Father's Day!	21 	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	June is also: Adopt a Shelter Cat Month, National Rose Month, National Candy Month, National Smile Month, and National Bathroom Reading Month.		