

A Special “Ask the Guru” Night

A very special “Ask the Guru” night will be held on a special date. The first meeting of the season will be held on **THURSDAY**, September 10 instead of the regular first Tuesday of the month.

To make this meeting *extra special* we have invited Christopher Urban, Lecturer, Computer Science to head the panel of Gurus, and he will be bringing along some of his students from SUNYIT.



Chris presented a program on open-source software at our February 2009 meeting. His primary focus is the practical application of computer information systems (CIS) technology to satisfy real-world requirements.

Chris holds an M.S. in Information Systems and an M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies. He is a retired career Naval Officer with significant leadership, management, and project management experience, and he has served as a chief information officer (CIO). He has taught at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD and the United States Naval War College in Newport, RI.

THURSDAY, September 10, 2009 - 6PM
Whitesboro High School 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 . . .



This first meeting of the season was a challenge as the first Tuesday of the month came before Labor Day. The Board of Directors really went to work on trying to solve the problem of when and/or where to hold a meeting. In the end it was decided that to start off the new year of meetings a special "Ask the Guru" night on **Thursday, September 10** would be offered. Please make sure to check the calendar and make note of this change in date. We hope this does not inconvenience anyone.

As a special treat, Christopher Urban will be heading our Guru panel and he is bringing some of his students to help out. Chris did an excellent job when he presented "Open-source software" to our group in February.

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

Name _____
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Please mail this application with a check payable to MVPCUG to
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Minutes of June 2, 2009
— HRussell, 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 40 persons in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

Jerry started the meeting by announcing that this is the last meeting until September. Jerry is getting permission from the school administrator to change the meeting from Sept.1 to Sept.10. All the members will be notified by the newsletter and website.

Jerry then asked Bill to give a treasury report covering for the month of 5/01/09 to 5/31/09, to the attending members. Those that are interested in the full treasury report can check either with the secretary or Bill Gorrell.

Jerry reminded the members that Lisa is working on changing the club’s website. If anyone has any ideas that they would like to see on the website to contact Lisa at vicepresident@mvpcug.com.

PROGRAM

Tonight’s interesting program consisted of Basic *Picasa*. Patty Bruno gave us a hands on introduction on how to download *Picasa* for free. This is a program that lets you manage, edit and organize your photos from your digital camera. By using *Picasa* you can enhance, remove red-eyes, edit, crop and resize your photos. Your original photos will certainly look much better. Patty also showed us how to create an on line photo album. Patty answered many questions from the members. This worthwhile and timely program was enjoyed by all.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

Flash Drive 4gb. Richard Eades
25 Pk. DVD-R. Don Pianka

[Donated by Rod St. Clair]

Mouse Pad. Fred Cole

[Donated by Que Publishing]

Beginners Guide to Project Mgt.. Rod St. Clair
Speed It Up. Bill Brunnett
Cyber Crime Fighters. Lisa Britt

[Donated by Microsoft]

Ball. Steve Gorrell

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Helen Russell, secretary



Most of you know how paranoid I am when it comes to backing up my files. I have a lot of genealogical info on my computer and all my digital photos. None of which can be replaced if my hard drive crashes. I do backup periodically to an external hard drive, but not nearly as often as I should. I also have flash or thumb drives that I use to back up more frequently or move files to a different computer.

Keeping files on the flash drives means that I have to check to make sure I have the most current version of a file or that I've not deleted something, etc, etc, etc. This can get confusing unless you do it on a daily basis.

Bill found a program that he likes and uses to sync up his laptop files with his desktop computer. The program is *Allwaysync* and is available at <http://allwaysync.com/>.

“*Allway Sync* is free file and folder synchronization software for Windows. *Allway Sync* uses innovative synchronization algorithms to synchronize your data between desktop PCs, laptops, USB drives and more. *Allway Sync* combines bulletproof reliability with an extremely easy-to-use interface.”

I downloaded this program and fell in love with it. Once you set up the folders you want to sync, it becomes so easy to just hit the “analyze” button to see what the differences are between your main computer and the flash/thumb drive. Then you tell the program to copy the files in whichever direction you want—to or from the computer.

The folders I backup are Genealogy, Photos, Graphics, MVPCUG Newsletter, RootsMagic, and a few others. The program allows you to create a number of tabs to work with. And the best part is that it’s all free.

— Donna Gorrell, editor

Microsoft Office 2007 Tips

OFFICE 2007

File Multiple E-Mail Attachments Quickly in Outlook

Here's a quick way to save multiple files attached to an e-mail message. Open the message, and then click Other Actions on the Ribbon. Click Save Attachments. Hold down the SHIFT key while using the arrow keys to select the attachments that you want to save. Alternately, hold down the CTRL key and use your mouse to select the attachments that you want to save. Click OK. Browse to a folder on your hard disk drive or to a document library on a Microsoft SharePoint site, and then click OK. The attachments will be saved to the new location.

POWERPOINT

Reduce File Sizes by Changing Image Formats

The Compress Pictures button in PowerPoint can often reduce your .ppt files by up to 50 %. But that can still leave you with large files, especially if your images have been created from .png files. You can save even more space by changing them to .gif or .jpg formats. [Note: The .png format is more flexible than the other file formats. Flattening to .jpg or .gif reduces flexibility.] Here's how to reduce file sizes:

1. Save your PowerPoint file as Hypertext Markup Language [HTML], which creates an .htm file and a folder of the same name, which will contain all the images from the presentation.
2. Open the folder, and sort it by size to reveal which files are the largest.
3. Locate the largest images in your presentation. They may have been scaled, so they might look smaller than the saved image.
4. In PP, make sure that the image isn't grouped.
5. Select the image.
6. On the Picture Tools menu, in the Adjust section, click Compress Pictures.
7. Right-click the image, then click Save as Picture.
8. From the Save as type menu, select .jpg or .gif [if you need to use transparency effects], then save the image.
9. Delete the original image from your presentation, and reload the saved image at its original place.
10. Regroup the images if necessary.

Another way to compress the images is to use an

image editing tool like Microsoft Digital Image Suite. This tool gives you more image compression options and can save you yet more space.

EXCEL

Move the Cursor in Any Direction During Data Entry

By default, the cell pointer in Excel moves down when you press ENTER after entering data in a cell. You can, however, change the direction in which the cell pointer moves. Click the Office button, click Excel Options, and then click Advanced. Select the After pressing Enter, move selection check box if it isn't already selected, and then on the Direction menu, click the direction in which you want the pointer to move. Also, when working in a document, you can make the pointer move in the opposite direction from the one you've chosen by holding down the SHIFT key while you press ENTER.

To Enter a Series of Data Using Fill Series

Type the first value in the series into a cell. Type the second value into a cell below or to the right of the first cell. Select the cells. Drag the Fill Handle [a black square that appears at the bottom right corner of the last selected cell] over the cells into which you want to extend the series.

WORD

Print Page Backgrounds with Your Document

By default, page backgrounds created with the Page Color option in the Page Background section on the Page Layout tab in Word 2007 do not print. However, you can print them with the document if needed. To include the page background when printing, click the Office button and then click Word Options. On the Display tab of the Word Options dialog box, select the printing option Print background colors and images, and then click OK. [Note that this setting is not document-specific and will apply to all documents that you print from Word 2007 while the setting is active.]

VISTA

Zoom in on your desktop

Open any Windows Explorer window, select an icon, hold down CTRL and scroll your mouse wheel—and your icons will expand before your eyes. It makes them easier to view, and as nearly every icon is a snapshot of the file itself, you can see what's inside them as well. ♦

THIS 'N THAT . . .

— Donna Gorrell

Tutorials:

<http://www.comptechdoc.org/><http://www.techtutorials.net/><http://www.officetutorials.com/><http://www.microsoft.com/education/tutorials.mspg>

How to stream your movies, music or photos to any TV using Tversity can be found at:

<http://www.maximumpc.com/article/streaming>.

If you ever find yourself having to use DOS commands and have forgotten [or never knew] what they were, *MaxmiumPC* offers a list of essentials. They give seven commands that everyone should know.

cd—change directory, which helps you navigate. To do this type “cd [directory name]”.

dir—lists the contents of the current directory [folder]. To do this type “dir [directory name]”.

copy—copy a file. To do this type “copy [filename] [destination filepath and filename]”.

mkdir—creates a directory. To do this type “mkdir [directory name]”.

move—move a file. Use same syntax as “copy”.

del—delete a file. Type “del [filename]”.

rd—delete a specific empty directory. Type “rd” [directory name]”.

rd/s/q—deletes an entire directory tree. Type “rd/s/q [directory name]”.

Thanks to **Rod St. Clair** for the following:

www.prlog.org - is a free press release site. You can select a subject, country, state, city etc., to see what is the latest news from that location.

[Www.software.informer.com](http://www.software.informer.com) - this site lists hundreds and hundreds of software programs, or I should really say, thousands. There are 300 pages with about 15 per page. It also has a forum.

Bob Angelhow just sent me some info that might be useful if you have somehow managed to get tangled up with the conflicker worm. Are you Infected by Conficker? One of the effects of your computer having been infected with the Conficker malware is that it blocks your access to many Anti-Virus vendor

websites. The “Conficker Eye Chart” has links that will be blocked if your computer is infected. Go to: <http://www.confickerworkinggroup.org/wiki/> to read about the Conflicker worm and click on “check for infection” to test your computer.

Dee Pfohl found an interesting article in *PCWorld* about safeguarding your privacy online. If you are on Facebook [and who isn't?], check your privacy settings. You have the power to control what you send to the world. You can create lists of friends and restrict content sharing to certain lists. Your best friends might be able to view all your photos , but business friends may be restricted from viewing all photos. Check this site for info on privacy settings: www.allfacebook.com/2009/02/facebook-privacy/

If you use Gmail and want to know if your account password has been compromised, there's a link at the bottom of the screen that shows when your account was used and from where. A message shows “Last account activity: xx minutes ago at IP #” and a link: *Details*. Click the Details link, and a pop-up window shows all sign-ins over the last couple of days, together with other useful info and a button to Sign out all other sessions. If you find unfamiliar IP addresses or activity recorded when you weren't using the account, reset your password immediately and notify Google of the breach.

Also in *PCWorld* is an article by Dave Johnson which advises stripping metadata from your photos before uploading them. Vista can do this. Right click a photo and choose *Properties*, then *Details*. At the bottom of the dialog box is a link - *Remove Properties and Personal Information*. Click it and Windows strips away all metadata from the photo. Forever! You may want to keep this info on an original photo and make a copy with the info taken out so you can share the photo without giving up personal info. Don't have Vista? Download *JPEG&PNG Stripper* from <http://www.steelbytes.com/?mid=30>.

Thanks folks for this input. This is what “members helping members” is all about. Do you have a hint or tip that you could share? Or have you downloaded a program that you find useful? Please share the information—just send an email to: editor@mvpcug.com.



Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

Is Summer Really Over?

Although the calendar says that officially summer ends the fourth week of September, for all intents and purposes, summer really ends with the Labor Day weekend. Unless . . . you're retired! Retirees can continue to travel when kids and their parents are forced back into the daily grind.

So retirees, if you wish to score travel discounts, plan a visit to the following site: seniordiscounts.com. This site provides members with many discounts on travel as well as other services. When I visited the site, I found the organization provides a 3-tier membership program that ranges from free to \$12.95 per year.

Free membership includes a subscription to weekly email newsletters that provide senior discounts, hot deals, access to bulletin boards and other news and events all keyed to your zip code. Gold membership at \$7.95 per year entitles you to all the basic information plus access to the database which allows you to see all 150,000 discounts. Premium membership includes all of the above plus a SeniorDiscounts Guide Book, a SeniorDiscounts card and a list of businesses that provide additional discount information.

At my visit, in addition to travel discounts including airlines, cruises, travel agents, tours and charters, the site offered, discount information on local attractions, museums, theaters, amusement parks, supermarkets, bakeries, home care services, home furnishings, hotels, movie rentals and much, much more. Keep on truckin.

School Help

Remember sitting at the dining room table trying to help your kids solve math problems of a type you never studied in school? Well, if you still face that challenge, visit www.mathforum.org. Drexel University sponsors this site and provides help to math teachers and to parents who ask questions about math.

I clicked on the **math help** button at the top of the page and found myself at Ask Dr. Math, a service that answers specific math questions. Dr. Math provides FAQ answers to stock questions such as, "how do I compute compound interest?" That question provided quite voluminous answers. You may make more specific queries, though the answer may take more time than you wish to spend.

Another helpful site parents and teachers tasked with helping students write well is

visualthesaurus.com.

This site has two separate types of help: an online version and a CD disk. Both charge a fee, \$20 a year for the online version and \$40 for the CD. Both versions provides a visual representation of all words connected to the subject word. But the CD is helpful when Internet access is not available. For those of you who have plowed through Roget's Thesaurus, this program provides instant gratification for finding synonyms and antonyms and interesting word links. Write on.

Free PDF Creator

We all have the free Adobe Reader on our computers. But if you want to create a pdf file in word or another computer program, you will quickly find that Adobe software is pretty pricy. As an alternative, consider a visit to pdfforge.org/jproducts/pdfcreator. This site provides a free open source pdf creator that is usable with any windows software application that is able to print. The software also allows the user to encrypt pdf files and send generated files via email.

In addition this program also allows you to create PNG, JPG, TIFF, BMP, PCX, PS and EPS files. You can autosave file by tags such as username, computername, date, time and so forth. And you can merge multiple files into one pdf. The download is free even for commercial use. With all this utility for free, why would anyone pay for Adobe?

How to Communicate Without a Computer

All of us have friends and relatives who are computer phobic or unconnected to the Internet. For those who wish to send these friends and relatives letters and photos combined in a snail mail delivered newsletter, visit www.sunnygram.com. This company will convert digital messages and photos to paper that is delivered to a mailbox.

Click on the web site and up pops a free trial offer. The free trial includes customized newsletters by mail, unlimited free responses by mail or phone, special newsletters for birthdays and holidays, and large print at no extra cost.

To use the service, simply email text and photos to sunnygram. Any number of people can be included in the newsletter which is compiled and printed by the company. Your friends and family can use personalized stationery to respond or telephone at no cost. For \$9.95 per month, can't you do this yourself and save money?

Until next month . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that you could look up your IP [Internet Protocol] address? This address is a number which identifies your computer and gives it the ability to communicate on a computer network. It works the same as your home address as it allows your email to go to your computer the same as snail mail goes to your home. To find your IP address go to: www.whatismyip.com/. On this page you will find info on how to trace an email using the headers that come with each email. I use Eudora and to find the header of an email click on “Blah, blah, blah”—the third tab at the top of the email. You can also do a look up of an IP address. I entered the number which was on the header of an email I received from someone in Wilmette IL and the IP address was for Comcast in Chattanooga TN. This means that her email was routed through TN to get to NY from IL. And you think the Post Office does weird things—the difference is that while email may be routed great distances, the time involved is almost instantaneous.

. . . that Windows Explorer opens showing the My Documents folder? To change the default setting so that all top-level drives and folders are shown, follow these steps: 1. Click Start | Programs | Accessories, then right-click Windows Explorer, and click Properties. 2. Under Target field, which reads %SystemRoot%\explorer.exe, add to make the line read %SystemRoot%\explorer.exe /n, /e, /select, C:\ 3. Click OK.

. . . That you could add album art to any music folder? One of the features in Windows XP is its album thumbnail generator, which automatically places the appropriate album cover art on the folder to which you are copying music [generally in WMA format]. But what about those who have already copied their CDs to the hard drive using MP3 format? Download album cover art from sites such as www.cdnow.com or www.amguide.com, and then use the XP folder customize feature to display the proper image for each folder. You have to manually edit the folder properties for every single folder and you will lose customizations if you have to reinstall the OS. There's a fix, however. When you download the album cover art from the Web, save the images as folder.jpg each time and place them in the appropriate folder. Then, XP will automatically use that image as the thumbnail for that folder and, best of all, will use that image in Windows Media Player for XP if you choose to display album cover art instead of a visualization. And the folder customization is automatic, so it survives an OS reinstallation as well. ◆

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

The stuff of computers got a big boost this summer. Cell phones were particularly newsworthy, along with YouTube and blogs, as reports of a major protest in Iran were seen throughout the world. The riot was shut out of the mainstream media but the reports came through anyway via pictures taken by cell phones by the protesters themselves. Remember the times before the advent of the cell? It was the camera that was at the ready. You never knew when you would run into a fireman saving the life of a child. Or of a cat stuck up in a tree. A president riding down the avenue in his open car . . .

The new movie, *Julie and Julia*, makes it quite clear that Julia Child would not be the Julia Child we know if it weren't for her manual typewriter. And Julie Powell, the Julie of the picture, became famous because she blogged her way through Julia's recipes. Nora Ephron, the writer/director of the movie, does a wonderful job of promoting the blog as an effective means of communication, disseminating information, social networking. She did the same with e-mail in her movie, *You've Got Mail*.

I also find it interesting that these relatively new innovations of communication have made some powerful inroads into the use of the cell. A recent movie saw ticket sales drop drastically in just a few days after opening, not because of mainline critical reviews but because of really bad mouth “talk” by people in the audience twittering friends and acquaintances how awful the movie is. When I saw the movie lots of little lights were going on all over the darkened theater. The twittering kept up throughout the movie.



As innovations continue, the meaning of media is bound to change. Right now, newspapers are trying to redefine themselves. We need new workshops to discuss what's new in the nature of communication. Does anybody write letters anymore? Does anybody write? Lately, there have been letters to the editors about the death of penmanship. When was the last time you talked to your grandchildren about penmanship? Telephone? What's that? ◆



explorer

“Ask the Gurus”
THURSDAY ♦ September 10, 2009 ♦ 6:00 PM ♦ Whitesboro HS



what's.com/ing				September 2009		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
SPECIAL MEETING 9/10 Sept 2 1945 - V-J Day Sept 7 - Labor Day Sept 11 - Patriot Day		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS	11	12
13 Grandparents Day	14	15 Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM	16	17	18	19 Rosh Hashanah
20	21	22 Autumn begins 	23	24	25	26
27 Gold Star Mother's Day	28  Yom Kippur	29	30	Sept 14 1814 - "Star Spangled Banner" written Sept 17 1787 - US Constitution approved Sept 18 1947 - US Air Force established		