



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
7:00	Break
7:15	Program, Part 2
8:15	Drawing for Prizes
8:30	Adjournment

Editorial notes . . .

Register your vote of a political nature and then attend our meeting where you will be given a chance to cast a second vote— this time for a change to our Bylaws. How often are you given the opportunity to vote twice on the same day?



Make someone's holidays a bit better by remembering to bring non-perishable food and/or a toy to the meeting. We will be offering extra door prize tickets for your donations for the next two months.

Watch for computer related items that offer a full rebate, make the purchase, file for the rebate, then donate the items to the club for our door prize raffle— it won't cost you anything and your reward will be an extra ticket. We all win!

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
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Minutes of October 3, 2006
 — 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 50 persons in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

During the preliminary announcements, President **Jerry Finkelstein** opened discussion of the proposed by-laws change to be voted upon at the November meeting. Secretary **John Hunter** explained that the change will allow current officeholders to continue to serve past the three year term limit until a replacement can be found.

Also discussed were the extra door-prize tickets individuals will receive if they bring food and/or toys to the November and December meetings. Members are now encouraged to donate door-prizes to the club. However, the door-prizes must be new or useful and nearly new. Windows 95 Operating Manuals do not qualify. **Dave Askew and Bo Wozniak** will determine the condition and usefulness of the donations before each meeting.

Noted as well was the announcement that a slate of officers will be presented to the membership at the November meeting to be voted on in December. All members are encouraged to seek club office themselves or to nominate another member for office.

Jerry also noted that November's presenter will focus on everything you need to know about Ebay. This speaker will be shared with the Syracuse Central New York Computer Club.

Since the November meeting will be held on election day, November 7th, **Jerry** encouraged everyone to vote before coming to the meeting.

Treasurer **Bill Gorrell** reported that income was \$50.90, expenses were \$271.95, and there is a balance of \$3,584.78 as of September 30, 2006.

The Mid-York Library System is looking for volunteers to take a survey to measure Internet library use. If interested, contact Mid-York at rcosgrove@midyork.org.

On Tuesday, October 10th, the Tri-County Computer Users Group will be offering a Microsoft Vista workshop featuring a beta version of Vista. The meeting will be held at Whitesboro High School.

Bob Schaffer and Tim Clinehens will present a Vista presentation in December. **Bob Schaffer** reviewed upcoming presenters through June 2007. In addition, Bob asked members to donate used computers for his English as a Second Language class members. **George Bracken** suggested that Bob contact Utica City Hall. George said he saw a room full of unused computers when he last visited the building.

PROGRAM

At 6:43 PM, **Bob Schaffer** introduced October's speaker, **Al Fasoldt**. Bob asked Al the first question regarding wireless routers. Al indicated that Bob's wireless problem resulted from a lack of range rather than equipment malfunction. After answering Bob's question, Fasoldt announced that he had

retired from the Syracuse newspapers in April, although he continues to write his Sunday edition computer column.

The major portion of Al's presentation dealt with computer security. Worms, viruses, zombies, identity theft, spoofing, phishing, spamming and spammers were defined and explained. Fasoldt indicated that he believed Microsoft Vista might not be available for purchase by consumers until the spring of next year. Al hoped that most of the security issues computer users face with Windows have been solved, although he is not counting on it.

Al indicated that the MAC X operating system is faster, safer, and will run windows software. Fasoldt's 3 Simple Rules for computer safety include: 1) Don't open attachments from people you do not know; 2) If you don't know the sender, delete the e-mail; 3) If you are suspicious of the e-mail, delete it.

Fasoldt also mentioned that hardware firewalls are more effective than software protection, but some free software that works well includes: AVG anti-virus to be found at www.free.grissosof.com. Al also recommends visiting www.grc.com to test the effectiveness of your firewall and virus protection.

Al concluded his remarks by announcing a photo seminar he will conduct beginning in November. The three-session first seminar will focus on digital photo basics. A second seminar to be held in January will feature intermediate photography tips and elementary photo editing. A third seminar will deal with photo editing. All seminars will be held in Liverpool. Fasoldt concluded his program at 8:20 PM.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

- Optical Mouse Lorelee Whitlock
- Flash Drive Gerald Olmstead
- USB.20 four port hub Fred Cole
- 15 CDR Joe F. Madeira
- 10 DVD Vincent Coyne

[donated by Microsoft Pub Co]

- Building Access Applications John Cleary

[donated by Al Fasoldt]

- CD & DVD Make 7 Titanium Suite Dave Salsberg
- Win DVD Player 6 Tim Clinehens
- Fireman 2.0 CD/DVD Burner Bob Kinsella

[donated by Jerry Finkelstein]

- File Folders & Post It Notes & paper Bob Angelhow
- 2 Notebooks & Post It Notes, File Folders Joe Penabad
- File Folders & Post It Notes Ray Tryon

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

John Hunter, secretary



**Bring a toy and non-perishable food
 Receive extra door prize tickets**

Word Processing Tips

— by Bob Schaffer

Word — Let Word alphabetize lists for you

Do you occasionally need to alphabetize a list of names? You could waste an entire hour on that single task, but Word can sort the list instantly. The Sort Text command can be used to alphabetize lists instantly.

- Type a list of names, pressing ENTER after each name. Your list should look something like:
 Madeleine Kelly
 Brian Cox
 Tamara Johnston
- Select the entire list.
- On the Table menu, click Sort.
- Click Options, click Other, press SPACEBAR and then click OK.
- In the Sort by list, click Word 2; then click OK.
- Now your list looks like this:
 Brian Cox
 Tamara Johnston
 Madeleine Kelly
- Repeat steps 1 through 5, but click Word 1 in the Sort by list, and your list will look like this:
 Brian Cox
 Madeleine Kelly
 Tamara Johnston

WordPerfect — Turn the tables

Try turning data arranged with tabs and spaces into a true table for easier manipulation.

Select the text, click the Table menu, and choose Convert. Under Text Delimiters, pick out the formatting option that seems to separate your data. In most cases that will be the tab.

WordPerfect makes a guess as to the number of columns on the left side of the dialog box, but you can adjust this for a better result.

Your table might take some experimentation and editing depending on how consistently the existing formatting codes were used. ❖

Receive a Word and a WordPerfect tip every other week by email from Bob Schaffer.



Send your request to rhschaffer@adelphia.net.

Book Review

— by Bob Schaffer

This book will be a door prize at an upcoming meeting.

Dispatches from Blogistan: A Travel Guide for the Modern Blogger

— By Suzanne Stefanac. New Riders, 2007.

Since I have never blogged, it may seem strange that I'm reviewing a guide to blogging, but the book is so interesting and the coverage so complete—yet succinct—that I feel called upon to shout its praises. You get a fascinating look back at the history of social communication—termed “open discourse” in the book—from hieroglyphics to the Internet.

The focus is on the ubiquity of bloggers, now found everywhere. Stefanac writes, “The word blog wasn't coined until 1999, and yet by late summer 2006, blog search engine Technorati.com was reporting 50 million blogs worldwide . . . and more than a million new posts being uploaded each day.”

Chapters 3 thru 7 deal sequentially with blogs as linkfests, diaries, clubhouses, newsrooms, and soap-boxes. Obviously, for different writers, blogs serve varied purposes. Chapter 10, “Writing that Engages” is a better reference for good writing than a freshman English Comp text I recently evaluated at MVCC.

As an English prof, I was impressed with the practical suggestions made by Stefanac:

- ✓ When asked for the secret of his success as a writer, the novelist Elmore Leonard replied, “I try to leave out the parts that people skip.” Stefanac urges us to “get to the point.”
- ✓ “Shorter almost always is better. . . All online writing rewards brevity. Shorter headlines will scan better in newsreaders.”
- ✓ “A good lede [yup, that's the way it's spelled] reassures the reader there is a point to the story; it doesn't have to give away the punch line. The trick lies in providing enough information to act as a summary while still acting as a teaser for the details in the full text of the story.”
- ✓ “Heated exchanges attract readers. Posting angry words should be avoided, but heated exchanges based on strong feelings, well-reasoned arguments, and a dash of humor can be a fine recipe for attracting and involving readers.”

Just to show you that I'm in touch with Stefanac, this winter I'll be conducting a workshop at SUNY IT entitled *Sex, Politics, and Religion*. Oh, boy! ❖

POSTING PHOTOS ON eBAY

— by Kim Komando

Q. I'm cleaning out the spare bedroom to make room for my holiday guests. I found a lot of things I want to sell on eBay. But I don't know how to get the photos into the eBay ad. Can you give me easy, detailed procedures on uploading photos to eBay?

A. Selling things on eBay is a great way to get rid of clutter and make some money doing it. I recently posted a portable studio on eBay – I wanted my garage back!

Getting started on eBay can be a bit daunting. But we'll get you up and going in no time! Before we start, be sure the pictures are on your hard drive.

OK. In the Add Pictures section of the Sell Your Item form, you're given two choices. The first is to use eBay's Picture Services.

Click the Basic eBay Picture Services link. Then click the Browse button. Use the navigation tools to locate the picture on your hard drive. Once you select it, it will be uploaded to eBay.

If you're using Internet Explorer on a Windows machine, Enhanced eBay Picture Services is automatically selected. You'll be prompted to download a small piece of software. Click Yes.

Once the software is downloaded, click Add Picture. Navigate to the picture on your hard drive. Select it and click Open. The software will help you rotate and crop your photo. It is then uploaded to your listing.

Your second option is to host the picture on a different Web site or photo service. For most people, this is less convenient. eBay's sell form includes a place to insert a URL, or Web address, for the picture. The picture will be displayed in your listing.

If you want to add more than one picture, you can use HTML (Hyper-Text Markup Language) in the body of your listing. HTML is the coding used in many Web pages on the Internet. It allows you to insert links to other places on the Web. Visitors would click the link and be taken to a page displaying the picture.

eBay will display one picture for free. It charges for additional pictures, larger pictures and slide shows. You may prefer to pay these extra fees, rather than learn HTML or find a service to host your photos.

Now, let me give you some advice to get the most out of your listings. First, make sure the object is the only thing in the picture. Clutter can detract from what you're trying to sell and confuse buyers.

Also, pay attention to the lighting, and watch for glare or reflections. These can make the item look damaged or magnify blemishes.

You may want to use software to crop your photos or to enhance the lighting. But I advise against using the software to touch up the item you're selling. Buyers would likely see it as deceptive.

If you need more information on working with your camera and photo software, visit my site. I have a number of tips listed that will offer more help. ❖

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PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS

Currently:
Article VI OFFICERS

B. The term of office for all officers is one (1) year, with a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms in each office.

Proposed:
Article VI OFFICERS

B. The term of office for all officers is one (1) year, with a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms in each office, *or until a successor is elected.*

**December election nominees
SLATE OF OFFICERS**

- President Jerry Finkelstein
- VP Lisa Britt
- Secretary John Hunter
- Treasurer Bill Gorrell
- Director Jim Pease

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

Are We There Yet?

The days are short and getting shorter. The nights are cold and getting colder. It must be November. If you just can't stand thinking about this and have to plan your getaway from our usual dark, dreary, drudgery, find your way out by clicking on googlemapsmania.blogspot.com. The site bills itself as "an unofficial Google Maps blog tracking web sites, mashups and tools influenced by Google Maps."

This site provides many interesting and potentially useful mash-ups of google maps coupled with special interest maps and itineraries. For example, you can find America's drunkest cities as reported by Forbes Magazine. This investigation of business nightlife focuses on state laws, number of drinkers, number of heavy drinkers and so on to determine the drunkest cities in the country.

Virender Ajmani, creator of U.S. News by Zip, uses Google maps and the list of 35 cities in the article to create a mashup map of America's drunkest urbs. Interestingly, NYC comes in at number 32 on the list. First on the list is Milwaukee which is followed by Minneapolis-St. Paul at number two. Columbus, Ohio, Boston, Massachusetts and Austin, Texas complete the top five.

Definition

Dictionary.com defines mashup as "a digital recording that combines and synchronizes instrumental and vocal tracks from two or more songs . . ." [Think hip-hop and rap] Programmers use the term to identify separate software programs that are made to work together seamlessly. In practice, a mashup is the same as adding chocolate syrup to a bowl of vanilla ice cream and mashing the two together to form a cold, beige goo that is soooo good. Now you know.

Other Cool Mashups

The web page also provides links to other interesting sites. Are you looking for a map of abandoned New York State rail lines? Click and you shall find. How about a map of all Dublin, Ireland murder sites in 2004? You got it. How about the world map at night? There it is, provided by a link to Georgia Institute of Technology. If you wish, you can

spend your entire winter sitting comfortably at your computer going from one link to another. Enjoy.

Travel

Many of us travel to get away from the winter. The more desperate of us, fly to warm weather. But bad weather causes flight delays and cancellations. To avoid unnecessary airport waits, go to www.flightaware.com. To find the status of any flight, enter the flight number or the aircraft tail number. The site provides links to real time flights. When I visited, the site provided simultaneous tracking for 4,817 non-military aircraft. The U.S. map pictured flight congestion on both coasts, Florida and the mid-west. Not much action in the Dakotas and Montana. But who goes there anyway?

Enter the flight number and airport code and pinpoint your target. The site refreshes all tracks every five minutes. If you click on aircraft type and specific city, a map of all planes of that type flying appears and indicates flight direction. Choose a city and view aircraft of all types approaching or leaving that airport. All in real time. No need to wait 5 hours with no information for aunt Nellie's arrival in Syracuse when her plane is still in Chicago.

Bargains

Now that you know when your flight will arrive, you can find the lowest price per seat on www.Airfarewatchdog.com. Unlike other web sites that promise to find low fares, this site promises to give you unpublished bargains airlines don't want you to find out about. On the day I visited the site, you could fly from Syracuse to New York City and Syracuse to Pittsburgh for \$69 one way.

The apparent super bargain of the day is a Syracuse to San Francisco round-trip flight for \$248. One overnight stay in SF required. If you want beer and don't mind flying to Milwaukee, you can book a weekend round-trip for \$162.

The site is not as easy to navigate as some other travel sites, but it does provide links to all airlines, including Southwest and JetBlue, and competing travel web sites, just so you can compare Airfarewatch prices with those of competing sites.

Please remember that Dave Askew is heading the holiday food and toy drive beginning this month. Please be generous.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that Notepad (part of your Windows Accessories) has the ability to act as a notekeeper, complete with date stamp? If you have never used Notepad you may not know where to find it. Go to Start | Programs | Accessories | Notepad. This will bring up a very basic word processing program. There are regular Menu items at the top of the program. FILE allows you to Open/ Save/ SaveAs/ PrintSetup/ Print/ Exit. The PrintSetup allows you to change paper size and margins as well. Next in line is EDIT which has the regular copy and paste commands and a few unique selections. Time/Date is useful when you want to enter those into your document. For keyboard junkies, type F5. Check WordWrap or you will get one continuous line of text when you type. Clicking Font allows you to set the font you want as well as attributes of the font and size. My preference is to use Arial, regular, size 10. You are free to use whatever fonts are on your own system. The Time/Date feature can be automatic every time you open a file. I keep a file like a diary to keep a record of when we have done something at our cottage. For example, one day I might enter, “went fishing”; another day, “fixed roof shingles that blew off in storm last night”; or “installed carpeting in living room”. All of these could be documented by knowing when the entries were made. To utilize Notepad’s automatic capability do the following:

- * Open Notepad. Type “.LOG” without the quotes, but make sure you start with a dot and use upper case. Press ENTER twice. Choose File | Save. In the dialog box that pops up, navigate to a folder of your choice, enter a name for the document in the File Name Box, and click Save. Close Notepad. The resulting file will have a .txt extension.
- * When you next open Notepad, or click on the filename, Notepad will add the time and date automatically and you can enter whatever you want. When finished typing your new entry, press Enter once or twice to add some spacing before the next entry.

That’s all there is to it. You have now made a diary type file that you can use however you’d like. ❖

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

I’m looking forward to our next general meeting when we will be discussing e-Bay, that online world community store which trades in the stuff that dreams are made of. It’s often said that you can buy just about anything on e-Bay, and therein lies the notion that e-Bay caters to the dreams that money can buy. Hollywood was always considered a dream factory. Now e-Bay is the online dream megastore. You can indulge your every whim, Irish linen, historic 1950-60 robots, you name it.

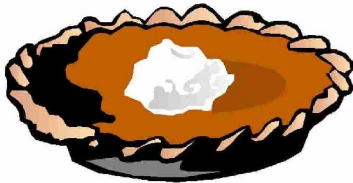
E-Bay is more than a straightforward buy and sell business. It offers a terrific nostalgic trip. You can relive your past with an electric train set you wanted so much and prayed for when you were a kid. You can be that kid again. Apparently, you still are that kid. This opportunity just might be your second chance to move on. Just browsing e-Bay can get you out of your usual present life and on nostalgic trips to last a lifetime: the signed baseball bat you always wanted but never did get, that first issue of Action Comics you traded for the first issue of Detective Comics, your past is all there.

You can also reinvent yourself on e-Bay with items to try on, music to listen to but with new ears, ideas to think about and see how they fit with the new you. E-Bay also offers you opportunities for the future in the products being bought and sold, in the opening of markets, in the business of buying and selling. Is there life after retirement? You bet.




When you come to the meeting on e-Bay, you might want to come armed with questions. Sometime before the meeting you might want to take a stroll on e-Bay, if you haven’t been there already, get yourself somewhat acquainted with the look of it, navigate the site. Write down your questions. Common questions concern the safety of doing business online: are the sellers legitimate, is the whole pitch a fraud, a set-up to take my money and run? Are there any built in protection devices? Am I being paranoid? You’ll have your own questions. Bring them in. See you at the meeting. ❖

explorer

Everything you always wanted to know about eBay
 Tuesday ★ Nov 7, 2006 ★ 6:00 PM ★ Whitesboro High School



Happy Thanksgiving

what's.com/ing			November 2006			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 VOTE			1	2	3	4
				Q & A SIG 6:30 PM St. John's		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS				
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
		Board of Director's Mtg 6:30 PM				
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
						
26	27	28	29	30		