



# microCHIP

the Newsletter of the

## Mid-Hudson Computer User Group Inc.

Monthly since 1977

[www.mhcug.org](http://www.mhcug.org)

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### A new project management software application

Sushil Bhatia and Rachana Bhatia of Infobrella spoke concerning a new project management software application at Mid-Hudson Computer User Group General Membership and public meeting Thursday, May 8.

Your brain is amazing - it allows you to process information so you can enjoy the smell of hot pizza, the sound of your favorite music, and see the rainbow of colors. It even allows you to recall memories from 20 years ago. But can you remember everything, and more importantly, where exactly you stored all of your information? Think back to the last project you were working on. You had emails going back and forth with multiple people, Word/PDF/jpg files, phone conversations, URLs, and personal notes. Can you remember where you kept all of these different kinds of information? Spread out across how many different places? Will you remember in a month when you're onto your next project and you have to recall why you did something?

At Infobrella we have created an application which allows you to keep all of your information in one system and integrate it so you don't have to waste time and energy on correlating it. You can link all of your different types of information to a task with easy drag and drop functionality. All of your data is easily found

so you can make informed decisions faster and make knowledge transfer easier.

More advanced users can utilize our functionality to create your own class of data with whichever properties you choose. For example, you can create a class of data called 'house' with the properties of 'square feet', 'number of bathrooms', etc. You can then create instances of that class and then again link all of your data to that instance. Our application is currently in the beta testing phase. We are seeking enthusiasts to use the software and give us their feedback. We are also looking for a marketing partner. Interested? Contact us at <mailto:info@infobrella.com> [info@infobrella.com](mailto:info@infobrella.com) Members can request the userID and password to download the program. ☐

### June 12: Stephanie Spivack speaks on

#### "How to Promote Your Passion over the Internet"

Nearly everyone has a passion of one sort or another, whether it be cooking, gardening or even a hobby turned business. One might want to start a club or sell craft items to raise some extra cash. Stephanie's passion is teaching preschool children through the use of songs that are easy to remember and fun to listen to. Using her Note Worthy Pre-School as an example, Stephanie will walk the audience step by step from conception through successful completion.

Stephanie's songs are available on two CDs, the songs we sing volume one and volume two. Each CD includes more than 45 songs about Insects, Art, Music, Rocks, The Ocean, Dinosaurs, Birds, Weather, Flowers and NYC.

The meeting is preceded at 6:30 p.m. with a Q & A session on computer topics and a short business meeting at 7 p.m. The public is invited to come and learn how you too, can Promote Your Passion over the Internet. ☐

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**Monthly Meetings**

Scheduled the second Thursday of every month. Check [www.mhcug.org](http://www.mhcug.org) for possible changes to general and SIG meetings. Local radio stations will be advised if a meeting is cancelled unexpectedly.

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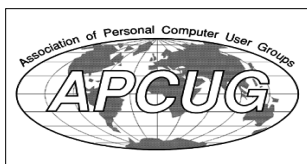
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\* All area codes are 845 unless shown otherwise.

**Website: [www.mhcug.org](http://www.mhcug.org)**

**Bits, Bytes 'N Kudos**

by Dick Kranz

The Electronic Security and Targeting of Online Predators Act (e-STOP) was signed into law by Governor Paterson May 14 2008. Four days later, Mark T. Hoops, a favorite speaker at Mid-Hudson Computer User Group (MHCUG) was on hand at the Association of PC User Groups-Membership Leadership Development Conference 2008 (APCUG-MLDC 2008) in West Nyack, NY to reveal details of the new

law. The Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) maintains a computer registry of names and addresses of convicted sex offenders under New York State's Sex Offender Registration Act. Unfortunately, our laws have not effectively prevented sex offenders from creating screen names and accessing social networking sites used by children.

This new e-STOP law attempts to address that problem by imposing three facets: (1) the new law requires convicted sex offenders to register their Internet screen names with the sex offender registry. (2) social networking web sites will be allowed to obtain those screen names, enabling the sites to prohibit such account holders from accessing web sites where they could contact children. (3) The law mandates that dangerous convicted sex offenders who are serving a term of probation, conditional discharge or parole be prohibited from using the Internet to contact children.

Approximately 25,000 letters are being sent to sex offenders who are in the sex offender registry advising them that they must register any Internet and e-mail accounts used for the purposes of online chatting, instant messaging or social networking. DCJS will advise offenders that if they change the e-mail address or create a new online profile, they must notify the state within 10 days and that failure to comply with the registration requirements is a felony.

Sponsored by Senator Dean Skelos and by assembly member Joseph Lentol, the bill took effect immediately and new requirements relating to registering Internet screen names apply to all sex offenders who currently are registered or who must register in the future. Offenders failing to comply with this new e-STOP law will invariably be faced with much stiffer penalties than imposed for the original offense.

Serving as event co-chair, with Jack Marsella and Hank Feinberg, this writer was elated to lead the largest PC user group delegation to attend the APCUG-MLDC 2008. Our MHCUG delegates were fully involved, cooperating with any volunteer requests, often standing by to offer assistance as needed. Harry Elder manned a video camera to help document the entire event. Bob Morales video taped my Membership Wizard Networking presentation and Recap for DVD reproduction. David Dunlop and Bob also shot digital photos.

Jeff Dowley commandeered a laptop to record and LCD project my recap session of attendees brainstorm impressions. Cassandra Dunlop duplicated a handwritten hardcopy backup on a giant flip pad. Find event articles elsewhere in this newsletter written by Ron McDermott, Ray Polivka and others that may have been submitted. Delegates cooperated to work out favorable car pool schedules. William Collier helped spread word of the event to ACM members. My wife, Dot assisted in many ways, including procurment of a wizard hat and then reminding me to wear it at the appropriate time.

Magnitude and financial success of the event would not have been possible without committee members APCUG President, Jay Ferron; APCUG Director, Bill James; and APCUG Region 1 Advisor, Sam Wexler; who rounded out the committee, working long hours with us in planning and implementaion.

Sam Wexler is quoted as saying, "In the online survey sent to all attendees immediately after the conference ended, 97% (ninety-seven percent) said they would definitely or probably come to a similar meeting next year if one was held and the remaining 3% did not know. Everyone learned at least one thing and almost everyone learned a ton more. All attendees left with a virtual wheelbarrow of giveaways from our generous vendors and those who won the raffle drawings needed two wheelbarrows."

*continued on page 4*

# Special Interest Group News

## Technology Workshop

by Harry Elder

Hi everyone. Just to be honest, I didn't attend this month's meeting, having just returned from the 2008 APCUG MLDC meeting this past weekend, I took the night off. Our club president, Dick Kranz, will report on the exciting events of the conference elsewhere in this issue.

I'm relying on the use of digital and audio tapes that Dick made of this month's Technology SIG to write this article. Dick used an older model Sony digital recorder, compatible with Dragon Naturally Speaking. I plugged the memory stick from the Sony digital recorder into my PC and copied the audio files. Then I downloaded the CODEC files from <http://www.sonydigital-link.com/dna/downloads/downloads.aspx?l=en&ct=ICD&f=DVP21> and voila!,- the audio files played in my PC. Dick also used his trusty analog micro tape recorder to record the meeting, and I used a small patch cord to re-record the tape into my PC's 'line-in' port on my sound card, recording with 'Audacity' from SourceForge. Everything with both the Sony digital recorder and the micro cassette recorder sounded great. Here's what I heard...

Jim Peabody started the meeting with a demonstration of the latest version of AVG – 8.0. AVG is mainly anti-virus software from Grisoft, although it also protects against spyware and scans email. The basic edition of AVG is free; find it at 'free.grisoft.com'. AVG seems to be a favorite among many of our club members. The free version of AVG doesn't have rootkit protection, but Jeff Dowley mentioned two free alternative solutions for that: 'Sophos' anti-rootkit, and 'Superantispyware'. I started using Sophos at same time that I started using AVG 8.0, and am happy with it.

The discussion then turned to Smart Computing magazine. Smart Computing may be one of the best deals around. In addition to being a highly respected resource for computing information, subscribers get full access to web content information from all of their sister publications – five in all. Moreover, if you can't find your questioned answered online, Smart Computing offers its subscribers free live, local tech phone support.

MHCUG gets credit for your subscription. For every five paid subscriptions our club gets a free subscription to use in raffles, door prizes, etc. Select 'User Groups' from the left side of the Smart Computing home page, then select 'Subscribe or Renew Today'. Near the center of the form is a section 'Give your group credit for your order!' where you can select 'Mid-Hudson Computer User Group – Poughkeepsie, NY'. Our thanks in advance for your support!

Also discussed was 'Foxit Reader'. Foxit is a great tool for reading and printing PDF documents, and it's free. It's small and fast, so it opens large PDF files almost instantly. If you need to create PDF documents, try 'Foxit PDF Creator'. While not free, it has a very low price, and in Foxit's own words, it's 'small, fast and accurate for converting any popular file formats to professional quality PDF files'.

The meeting then continued with glowing reports from members who attended the APCUG MLDC, which as I mentioned earlier will be reported on in a separate article in this issue.

The next Technology Workshop will be held on the third Monday, June 16 in Conference room "B" at Guardian Storage Business Development Center, 3 Neptune Rd. Town of Poughkeepsie. Contact Technology Workshop leader Dick Kranz for additional information. ☐

## Upgrade and Repair

Ray Polivka

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Upgrade and Repair Special Interest Group gathered. Again it was a very full house with over 22 persons in attendance. The meeting was lively and informative.

The new version 8.04 of Ubuntu was distributed to those who were interested. The June issue of PC World on page 26 has a review of Ununtu 8.04, alias Hardy Heron. To quote them "Hardy Heron feels snappier and more responsive than the previous edition, Gutsy Gibbon". (Holy Cow where do they get those names! I had better careful Holy Cow may be a forthcoming version.) It appears to be a good idea to bring a flash drive with you to these meetings since you never know what may be available.

Someone exhibited a 16-gigabyte flash drive that he purchased for \$40.00 at the Trenton Computer Fair. Bigger and bigger flash drives are coming.

A lengthy discussion concerning security threats occurred. It was said that approximately 6,000 new attacks occur each day. We were warned about Windows looking like Microsoft Windows. Check in the lower left corner of the Windows desktop to recognize that the proper tasks are running. Our Webmaster found outsiders using our web site. They were making money on the clicks to the MHCUG site. He found 34 people unknown to the club. That is being corrected. Hereafter people who are not club members will have to register to get into the MHCUG site. It also was suggested that one close an active window via the Alt+F4 means rather the through the standard "X".

Someone asked what "Tracking Cookies" were. The response was that all cookies are tracking cookies because they are designed to follow what you are doing on your PC. It's just that the adjective is usually dropped. The history of your activities was thought to be in memory but it is said to be in the Registry. Someone was to investigate accessing the history

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*continued from page 2* **Bits,Bytes N'Kudos**

Participating vendors Included Microsoft, Pinnacle, PC Magazine, AiSquared, Infobrella, Magix Entertainment and Reallusion. Also participating were United Cerebral Palsey of New York, National Cristina Foundation and Rockland Photography Club. Recipients of the many free software packages are requested to give them a try, write a review for our newsletter and/or demonstrate same to our general meetings or special-interest groups. Any software received, not of your interest, could be donated to our drawings or passed on to someone in the club for evaluation to share with the group. It is important that vendors receive the biggest bang for their buck, if they are to be asked to support future events of this kind. They fed us well, with food, products and their time. The least we can do is acknowledge their generosity with kindness.

This article was written with a slant to local MHCUG influence and readership interest. No sleight is intended by omission of the many user groups, their attending members and all speakers who participated in the event. Hopefully, we can include additional proceedings in future issues, including coverage reported in APCUG publications. ☐

*continued from page 3* **Upgrade and Repair**  
file embedded in the Registry.

Version 8 of AVG is now available. However, someone said it is hard to find the free version. One way is to enter AVGFree into Google. Do read material carefully since there is a priced version.

Someone purchased the set of cables and connectors to move between USB2 and SATA, IDE connections. However he reported difficulty in connecting to a hard drive. It was quickly pointed out that what seemed like the obvious connection was not the proper one. The connection must be between the one where two pins are open. If that is confusing, come to the next meeting with you cables et al.

Another person using Win98 who ran defragging software reported that it kept running. He was only able to run in Safe mode. Win98 would not turn off. Ctrl+Delete+Alt only produced a page fault. Apparently this is a familiar bug. The suggestion was to Google for "Win98 Shut Down Problem". It was further suggested that turning off the Screen Saver since it could interrupt a shutdown.

The status of XP was discussed. The situation is not too clear. This June, Microsoft will stop

selling it to major vendors. Starting January 2009 retailers are to stop selling it. We shall see. It was said that the various versions are different. Win XP SP3 was discussed. It was available on April 29 to manufacturers. If you are set for Microsoft to automatically download upgrades, Microsoft will be downloading it shortly. (Note it was downloaded on my desktop last week.) WinXP SP3 combines all previous released performances, security, and stability updates. There is little in the way of new functionality. One notable exception is the material from Vista, namely Network Access Protection, NAP. It is to better protect network assets. For those of you who are interested in more detail Google Vista SP3. Then click on the item entitled "Overview of Windows XP Service pack 3". You will get a 12 page summary of SP3. They report that if you download it via Windows Update the download size is 70 MB. Now if you download it through the Microsoft Download Center, the download size is approximately 580 MB.

One person reported that after purchasing a new charger for his laptop, he no longer had any problem. Another attendee reported buying a Tom Tom GPS. They have reduced its price to \$169.95. It is fairly compact but he reported that the battery lasted for only 2 hours. Again Google or Yahoo Tom Tom GPS for more details. An Adobe Reader 8.1 upgrade is now downloadable. However Fixit Reader 2.3 from Foxit Software was also mentioned. It is a free PDF document viewer and printer. This organization also has a family of related software packages some of which are reasonably priced. For example Foxit PDF Creator is priced at \$35.00. Perhaps some of you may have purchased flash drives with U3 on them. If you are not interested in having it on the drive, there is a removal tool called "U3\_Uninstall available from the U3.com site.

These are some of the things that occurred during this meeting. I realize some of the information described may be incomplete. If you are interested and want more information come to the next Upgrade and Repair meeting. ☐



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**All submissions for the Microchip must be in the hands of the editors by the Thursday following the General Meeting. Any articles or information received after that date will be held for the following month's publication. Send submissions to [editor@mhcug.org](mailto:editor@mhcug.org)**



Frank Bernell



Jerry Goldstein

### Special Interest Groups

Special Interest Groups are for people with common computer interests—novice through expert.

Call group leader to verify schedule.

### Upgrade/Repair

Leader: Dan Sullivan  
Tel: 229-0241

e-mail: [dansull@optonline.net](mailto:dansull@optonline.net)  
Schedule: 4th Mon. 7:00 PM  
Location: Business Development Center Conf. Room B

### Technology Workshop

Leader: Dick Kranz  
Tel: 297-1813, 896-7376 or 265-4169 or e-mail:

[president@mhcug.org](mailto:president@mhcug.org)  
Schedule: 3rd Monday, 7:00 PM  
Location: Business Development Center Conf. Room B

### Digital Photography

Leaders:  
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Tel: 914-475-0885  
e-mail: [lesm1@optonline.net](mailto:lesm1@optonline.net)

Jim Warner  
Tel: 297-3175  
[jhwiii@optonline.net](mailto:jhwiii@optonline.net)  
Schedule: 4th Thurs. 7:00 PM  
Location: Business Development Center Conf. Room B

### Ulster Computing Workshop

(formerly HVPCC)  
Leader: Robert Morales  
e-mail: [4bobmorales@earthlink.net](mailto:4bobmorales@earthlink.net)  
Schedule: 3rd Thurs. 7:00 PM  
Location: Ulster Comm College Hasbrouck Bldg. Room 219

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# I was one of several attendees at the APCUG-MLDC 2008 conference the weekend of May 16-18.

by Ron McDermott

The first day was largely devoted to the goal of increasing membership in computer users groups, and led to the exchange of many useful ideas to further that goal, but there were a couple product demonstrations. Of particular interest was the use of real-time conferencing between the attendees and a homebound user in, I believe, Oklahoma. This kind of long-distance communication will, hopefully, open new avenues for the dissemination of ideas, product information, and even vendor presentations. It opens up the possibility of using presentations given elsewhere, in either a “live”, or “canned” format, as a part of a local group’s general meeting. This holds the potential of making possible the exchange of information and experiences between far-flung groups, effectively enlarging a groups effective “membership”. The day ended with a drawing for a variety of goodies: external hard drives, travel software (with gps!), Windows Office 2007, and a variety of other items.

The second day was geared more to product demos. I was particularly interested in those related to Windows Live and Home Server. I learned a lot, got to ask some technical questions, and visited for awhile with the Microsoft presenters, both of whom went on a great length about their own usage of technology in their homes. They expressed an interest in coming up to visit with us at some point in the future! Lots of stuff given away on this day as well, including a copy of Windows Vista Ultimate and Windows Live for all attendees!

Overall, I enjoyed my weekend, and one of the biggest pluses was interacting with other computer enthusiasts from around the country.

Sharing experiences, ideas, and knowledge is what users groups are all about! ☐

Ray Polivka

As a member of the MHCUG group to the two day APCUG regional conference, I would like to add my impressions. The first day was largely devoted to providing material and information to enhance local user groups.

One of the interesting early events was a real time video conversation with a former APCUG president now house bound in Oklahoma. The connection used Verizon, Skype Wimax and other current technology. This is an illustration of the nature of future vendor presentations to clubs like ours.

Dick Kranz, our club president, spoke about how to promote a group. The term group was apropos in that the list of things he mentioned really could apply to many nonprofit organizations. Following along in that vein, a lawyer addressed in detail how to setup and maintain a nonprofit organization. He was quite specific even down to the proper way to sign documents and letters. His presentation dovetailed nicely into the following talk by a young lady from the IRS. Her opening summary slides defined what she covered. The topics were

- The major distinctions between Tax exempt and Non profit .
- The major types of exempt organizations
- The benefit of being Tax exempt
- The major types of public charities
- The actions which will jeopardize a tax exempt status

I especially found it interesting in that she said that organizations should keep their documents forever especially the original determination letter. You will never get another one. With respect to the club doing any political activity – don’t. (Lobbying was acceptable – Now who was I telling you to vote for?)

Rob Limbaugh, the president of the Danbury Area Computer Group, described the results of a Focus Group exercise that they did. Again he was quite specific. Some of the points he made were

- Make joining and staying easy
- Create and manage membership online
- Their group valued “networking” over “socializing”
  - People were looking for “professional”, “networking”, and “technical” fulfillment
  - The newsletter should feature articles over promoting the next meeting
  - Offer new SIGs, workshops, and seminars

Dick Kranz concluded the first day by having us jointly summarize the events of the day to determine what we retained and learned. Since time ran out on the first day, at the conclusion of the second day a fine presentation on Fund Raising was presented.

To me one of the highlights of the whole weekend was the presentation given under the somewhat misleading general title, “Community Service Projects build Membership”. This talk gave us an in depth view of the very successful project, PC Renew. PC Renew is a project done by the Rockland PC Users Group.

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What do they do? They

- Collect donated computer equipment,
- Do technical refurbishing of the donated equipment
- Dispose of stripped down parts,
- Deliver and setup refurbished computers, and
- Provide computer skills training.

They do all this in a very professional and detailed manner. They rebuild, quality test, serial number, distribute, and track the computers and then train persons when necessary. To date, they have distributed over 2,500 computers. The range of people and organizations who have received them include.

Disabled or handicapped persons

- Low income families,
- Other nonprofits (501 C 3),
- Schools,
- Libraries

Day Care Centers

Veterans and their families

Homeless shelters and Soup kitchens.

I was very impressed. One lady who came just to personally thank the director of this effort, Hank Feinberg for the 21 PCs they contributed to an Indian reservation in North Dakota. He warned anyone who considered doing such an effort; think tonnage. While user groups such as MHCUG probably could not undertake such an operation, perhaps we could funnel equipment to them...Hank opened his presentation with the quote by Mohammed Ali,

“Service to others is the rent you pay for your room on Earth.”

You had to be impressed by the operation. I certainly was.

Yes, there were other interesting presentations. AI squared, Pinnacle, Microsoft and others made presentations or were at the small vendor fair. There were the standard raffles and giveaways. (My wife asked – “Do you really need another Tee shirt?”)

I must conclude with one personal note. The Microsoft presenter really caught my attention with something he just showed in passing. He illustrated a small application just written by a fellow Microsoft person. With it he was able to enlarge the screen, draw on it creating straight lines and pointers. This twitched the educator in me. Since it was a freebie I asked him to send me a copy. He said he would that night and he did. Now this is a very new package having been created in March. So it was not surprising that I had some trouble starting it. I asked him for some help I received a very prompt reply to my inquiry in the next day e-mail. His instructions were very detailed. I am now exploring and yes debugging this package too. I was very pleased by his prompt and knowledgeable response.

Overall, the conference was quite worth attending even with the early early morning risings. I was very grateful for being able to car pool with David Dunlap. ☐



*Steve Lindsay-Microsoft Corp*



*Heather Little - Pinnical Systems*

# Buying a Mouse – More Important than You Might Think

By Vinny La Bash, Member and Contributing Columnist, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

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The average computer user recognizes how important the mouse is to getting things done. Mice have been part of the computer scene for over twenty years and with rare exceptions are simple devices to operate and control. That doesn't mean that people who use them are necessarily familiar with all their features and functions. That's not as bad as it may sound. Most automobile drivers don't have a clue how the internal combustion engine inside their auto engine works. Yet they usually manage to drive from one place to another without incident.

Selecting a mouse is much simpler than choosing an automobile, but there are things you should know before laying out money for a device that if not properly designed, may result not only in poor computer performance, but may cause you injury.

The mouse may be the most common of the tracking technologies used in modern computers, but it is not the only one. There are trackballs, touch pads, and for ThinkPad users, track points. They all have their advantages and drawbacks. We will focus on the mouse.



Mechanical mice, those with the rolling balls on the underside, are obsolete. They have a tendency to gather debris on the underside, and require cleaning. Moving parts are their most serious weak spot because they will break down sooner than devices that rely on other technologies. Newer optical mice suffer no such defects. They generate a beam of light that combines with an optical sensor providing a screen pointer that is well suited for meticulous graphics or serious game playing. No moving parts mean less maintenance and lighter weight. Optical mice will work on any smooth surface; a mouse pad is unnecessary.

Look for a mouse with a USB connection. It will probably be difficult to buy a mouse that does not have this type of connection today. Make sure it is compatible with USB 2. The mouse is not considered a high speed device so this caution may be unnecessary.

You may want a wireless mouse for no other reason than to reduce desktop clutter. There are many generic wireless mice on the market that will perform adequately, but doing this on the cheap comes with a price. You will have a mouse that requires AAA batteries. Save your pennies and get one with an integrated rechargeable battery. High end wireless mice include receivers that double as battery chargers, so your mouse will never suddenly expire in the middle of an important project.

Most rodents on the market today feature at least two buttons and a scroll wheel. The right button is used mainly for bringing up menus or lists of options. The left hand button activates functions or commands. The scroll wheel, as its name implies, is used to scroll up and down screens. Sometimes the wheel can function as a third button activating instructions. Advanced scroll wheel functions allow left to right scrolling which can be very useful in wide spreadsheets or large graphics. Used in conjunction with the keyboard, the scroll wheel can zoom in and out of some applications, and can be used to make text appear larger.

Mice do not come in a one-size-fits-all product. Enlightened companies such as Logitech manufacture mice that are specifically contoured to fit a wide variety of hand sizes. Logitech was among the very first companies to recognize that different sized people have different sized hands. Choose a mouse that is ergonomically designed to fit your individual hand size. This will go a long way to reduce the probability of developing carpal tunnel syndrome or some other crippling ailment.

A mouse is a simple device by computer standards, yet it seldom gets the attention it deserves. Take the time to find a good ergonomically designed mouse that suits the physical characteristics of your hand along with suitable options for your personal computing preferences. Productivity and good health are not mutually exclusive.

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*Chow line at APCUG-MLDC*



# Make Your Wireless Network Safe

By Marjie Tucker, Editor

Mountain Computer User Group

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Wireless networks are becoming more and more popular, but they do add some additional security risks. You need to spend a little extra time to ensure that your data and your identity are secure.

What are the Risks?

Because wireless networks don't require a cable between the computer and your Internet connection, it's relatively easy for someone else to use your Internet connection for free, to hijack your messages, or to sneak into your computer and view or steal your data.

So What Should I Do?

There are several important steps that you should follow to protect yourself and your computer:

1. Don't use a default password on your wireless equipment. Most networking devices are pre-configured by the manufacturer with a simple password to simplify the setup process. This is the password that allows you to access the router configuration. These

"default" passwords are well known by anyone who has used a similar device and they are available online, eroding any protection they might have provided. Check the instructions that came with your device and immediately change the password.

Remember that the best passwords contain both upper and lowercase letters as well as numbers. And, always shy away from passwords that can be easily guessed by your friends - such as the names of your children or your dog.

Experts suggest using a poem to derive a "pass phrase." You merely take a line from a poem or poem title and use the first letter of each word. For example, using the poem "Mary had a little lamb" you would use the letters from the first line - Mary had a little lamb; its fleece was white as snow - mhallifwwas. Add at least one uppercase letter by

capitalizing the M for Mary - Mhallifwwas. Next add at least one number by changing some of the letters to numbers, such as making the first letters for little and lamb

into 1s. Now we have a phrase (Mha11ifwwas) that is reasonably secure and very easy to remember.

2. Restrict your network to only your computers. Every computer device has an embedded address on it called a media access control (MAC) address. Wireless access

points and routers can be configured to exclude all other MAC addresses.

3. Encrypt the data on your network. Encryption prevents outsiders from viewing your transmissions. There are two methods of ensuring that your information is adequately protected, Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP) and Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA). Because WEP has several security issues associated with it, WPA is considered the more effective method, if it is supported by your equipment. However, since this is another area where a secure password is important, you should use a passphrase like I described in item #1.

4. Choose a unique SSID. Your equipment may have a default name that identifies your network, called an SSID. Be sure to setup a unique name and, if possible, avoid broadcasting that name. That will make it harder for outsiders to find your network.

5. Install a firewall for your network. Microsoft Vista and XP both provide a firewall that is designed to protect your computer, but your network itself will be safer with its own firewall. A host based firewall is easy to obtain (some of them are free over the Internet) and can be installed directly onto your wireless device.

6. Install and regularly update both anti-virus and anti-spyware software. You can keep attackers at bay with these protective programs. However, remember to update both of them on a regular basis. New viruses and spyware attacks are being developed daily; so your software must be updated to be effective.

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Mark Hoops @ APCUG-MLDC

## Moving on to Vista – Part 7

by Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, Washington

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Does your computer go to sleep? By default, Windows Vista was designed to go to sleep after an hour of inactivity. This feature is primarily designed to conserve laptop battery power. Microsoft estimates that allowing a PC to go to sleep during off hours, as compared to leaving it on all the time, saves anywhere from \$55 to \$70 a year so this feature has some value for desktop users. Of course the amount you save will vary depending on the type of monitor that you use and your local electric utility rates. Here in the Pacific Northwest, with our relatively low electric rates, I suspect that the savings will be something less than \$55 a year but multiply that amount by the number of computer monitors that you have and you can probably fill your gas tank once or twice. ;-)

With Windows XP, application programs can veto a user's request for the PC to go to enter sleep mode. Consequently, laptop owners who thought they had put their computer to sleep, might discover a few hours later that the machine had remained on and the battery had been drained. Vista features a group policy tool that can enforce power management settings over the wishes of application programs. Vista's new sleep option, allows you to wake up your computer to install security updates, while letting it remain in the power-saving mode the rest of the time.

So how can you control this energy/battery saving feature?

1. Go to your **Control Panel** and select the **Classic View**.
  2. Double-click on **Power Options**.
  3. The right pane of the **Power Option Window** shows the main power plans which are currently available or in use. In the top left pane of the **Power Option Window** you'll see the following options:
    - Require a password on wakeup is self explanatory.
    - Chose what power buttons to use opens a new window where you can select implementing the sleep mode by pressing a sleep button, the power button or closing a laptop's lid. Actually there are a number of options available here including Hibernate and shut down.
    - Choose what closing the lid does is similar to the above option (it even uses the same window).
    - Create a power plan offers three basic plans plus an option to create customized plans.
    - Choose when to turn off the display offers sixteen different time intervals to activate this feature.
    - Change when the computer sleeps works the same as the turn off the display feature.
    - Adjust the display brightness obviously controls the screen's brightness and the amount of power consumed by the screen.
- So make your choice(s). Save power, your battery and the environment.

On another topic, when I first tested the pre-release version of Windows Vista I noted that file transfers seemed to be much slower than with Windows XP. This problem was not corrected when Vista was released to the general public. The problem becomes very noticeable when you try to transfer very large files from one partition to another. Maybe it will be corrected when Vista Service Pack 1 is released but, in case it isn't, here's how you can fix it.

The cause for slow file transfers is apparently something called Remote Differential Compression which is used when files are transferred from one partition to another. The fix is to disable Remote Differential Compression. How do you do that?

1. From the **Start button**, open the **Control Panel**.
2. Go to the **Programs and Features** section.
3. In the left pane select **Turn on or off Windows features**.
4. Uncheck the option for **Remote Differential Compression**.

That's all there is to it! Enjoy your faster file transfers.

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APCUG-MLDC - MHCUG delegates



Ron McDermott - cat napping

# Bookmarks Page

by Hank Pearson, Treasurer and Webmaster, ASCIi (Arizona Association for Computer Information, inc.)

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Wouldn't it be nice if you could view a searchable webpage of bookmarks for your favorite websites? You can, but why?

## Find Bookmarks with Forgotten Names

One reason to view your bookmarks as a webpage (as an alternative to looking in a menu) is to be able to find sites when you can't remember the first word in the name.

Let's say you have a Firefox bookmark named Carbonite Online Backup, and you can't remember Carbonite but you know you are looking for the word Backup. On your Bookmarks page (you will soon learn how to view), you can easily search for Backup.

You are using Firefox, aren't you? If you haven't discovered Firefox, download it from Mozilla (<http://mozilla.com>). It's free, fast, and secure. Make Firefox your default browser.

## View Bookmark Descriptions and Tags

Another reason for a bookmarks page is to give you plenty of room to view (and find) descriptions of your bookmarks. You will learn how to add tags to improve your searches.

## Zoom In and Out

A third reason to display your bookmarks on a webpage is to allow you to zoom the text in and out so you can see it clearly. To zoom any webpage, press Ctrl+Plus or Ctrl+Minus, using the numeric keypad.

## DIY for Fun and Learning

So, how do you display your bookmarks as a webpage? You could download a tool to do the work for you, or download a tool to search bookmarks. But it's easy enough to DIY (Do It Yourself). It's interesting, fun, and educational. Are you just using your computer to perform certain tasks, or do you also enjoy learning by experimenting? If you like to learn, this tip is for you.

## Find the Bookmarks File

You don't need to create a bookmarks webpage. It already exists on your own hard drive! The name of the file is simply bookmarks.html. Press Win+F to find it. (While holding down the Windows key (next to Alt), press F, for Find.) In the left window pane, click 'All Files and Folders'. In 'All or part of the file name', type 'bookmarks.html' (without quotes). Click Search.

If you get multiple results, it's easy to determine which bookmarks.html file to use. It's the newest one. In the View menu (of your Search Results window), click Details. In the right window pane, click the Date Modified column header (to sort the list). The file you are interested in has the newest date and time (for a file with the Type shown as Firefox Document).

## Bookmark the Bookmarks File

Double-click that newest bookmarks.html Firefox Document to open it in Firefox. Press Ctrl+D to bookmark the bookmarks.html file. In the Name field, insert a hyphen (-) at the beginning (to name the bookmark '-Bookmarks'), so this new bookmark will appear at the top of the list.

Now, with your Bookmarks page displayed, press F5 to refresh the view. (F5 is a common shortcut key for Refresh.) Surprise? The new -Bookmarks bookmark is at the bottom - not the top. Let's address that. (This is Firefox 2.0.0.11. Future versions might vary.)

## Create Another Top Bookmark

First, create another bookmark that will be displayed at the top. For example, open Google.com, press Ctrl+D, and name the bookmark -Google (starting with a hyphen).

## Sort Your Bookmarks

Now, in the Bookmarks menu, right click any bookmark, and click Sort by Name. Look in the Bookmarks menu to confirm that the bookmarks are indeed sorted. Note the two bookmarks that begin with hyphen (-) at the top of the menu.

Look at your Bookmarks page again, and press F5 to Refresh. The new bookmarks are still at the bottom.

## Rearrange Your Bookmarks

To force Firefox to rearrange your bookmarks page, move a bookmark in the menu. In the Bookmarks menu, drag, for example, either new bookmark that starts with a hyphen up or down to precede or follow the other bookmark that starts with a hyphen. (Having two hyphen-prefixed bookmarks lets you rearrange those two at the top without rearranging the other bookmarks.) Press Escape to close the menu.

Refresh your Bookmarks page with F5. The bookmarks on the webpage are now arranged as shown in the Bookmarks menu. (Do you need to refresh three times? No, we simply demonstrated that the bookmarks.html file is rearranged when you move a bookmark in the menu.)

## Finding Bookmarks on the Page

When you are viewing your Bookmarks webpage, press Ctrl+F for Find. Type Backup, for example, and press Escape (to close the Find toolbar). To find the next occurrence of Backup, press F3. (F3 is a common shortcut key for Find Again.) When you find the desired bookmark (link), click it (or Ctrl+click to open the site in a new tab). (Or press Enter, or Ctrl+Enter to open the site in a new tab.)

*continued on page 12*

*continued from page 11*

### **Add Descriptions and Tags**

To add or change descriptions of your bookmarks, in the Bookmarks menu, right-click the bookmark you want to edit, and click Properties. In the Description field, type anything (including your own tags) that might help you find your bookmark and remember what it is for. After clicking OK and pressing F5 (for Refresh), you will see your new Description in the Bookmarks page.

### **Make Changes through the Menu**

Now that you know where bookmarks.html is located, you might be tempted to edit it directly with a text editor. Mozilla warns that it is automatically generated, so do not edit it, as your changes would be lost. Make your changes through the Bookmarks menu.

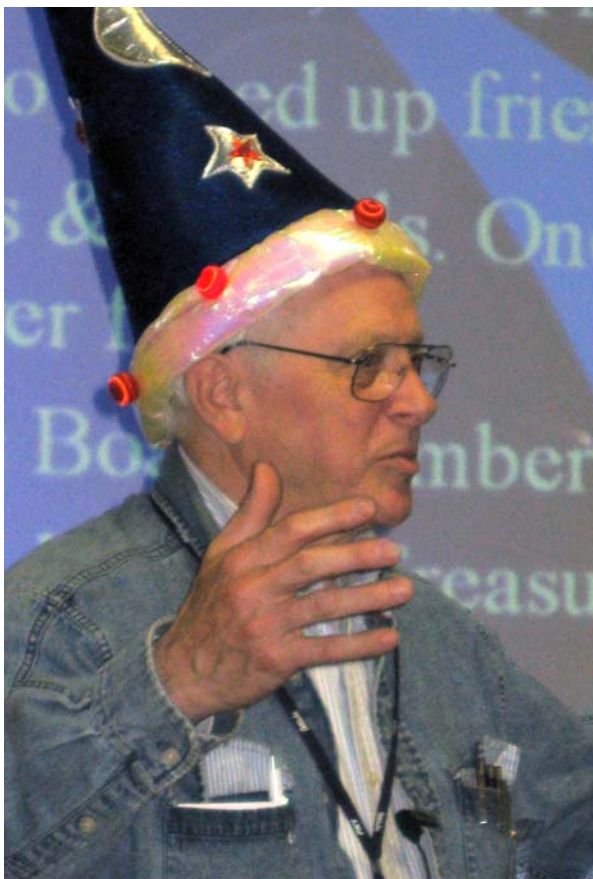
Displaying your Bookmarks as a webpage is a start in discovering many more tips and tricks related to Firefox.

—Hank Pearson (hank.pearson(at)asciigroup.org) is the Treasurer and Webmaster for ASCII (www.asciigroup.org). He is a long-time member who frequently writes articles for the group's newsletter, and has served as President, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and Presentations Coordinator.

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## **Photographs from the May APCUG -MLDC**



*Dick (Harry Potter) Kranz*



*Sam Wexler*



*Mark Hoops*



*Richard Nayman*



*Hank Feinberg*



*Talking Dog*



*Jay Ferron*



*Jay Ferron, Pres APCUG*



*Heather Little*

# Minutes of the Mid-Hudson Computer User Group Board of Directors

by Jim Walsh

The monthly MHCUG Board of Directors meeting is open to the public and held on the first Thursday of the month in Conference Room B of the Guardian Center at 3 Neptune Road, Poughkeepsie.

At 7:09 p.m. Dick Kranz, President, called the meeting to order. Officers and Board members in attendance were: Eli Cohen, Dick Kranz, Les Muldorf, Rolf Nijhuis and Jim Walsh. SIG Chair Jack Marsella was also in attendance.

Eli Cohen moved that the Minutes of the April Board meeting be accepted as published in the microCHIP. The motion was seconded by Rolf Nijhuis and unanimously approved by the Board.

Eli Cohen, Treasurer, confirmed that he had sent the notice of the MHCUG status as a charitable organization to the IRS as required. Eli next delivered the Treasurer's Report in which the MHCUG finances were reported as follows:

Monthly Income/Expenses - 4/1/2008 to 4/30/2008

INCOME		
Drawing	\$26.00	
Interest Income	\$24.14	
Membership Dues	\$315.00	
TOTAL INCOME		\$365.14
EXPENSES		
Internet		
ISP	\$40.00	
Best Western		
Wireless	\$25.00	
Meetings		
Board	\$30.00	
General Member	\$175.00	
SIGs	\$90.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$360.00
OVERALL TOTAL		\$5.14
NET WORTH as of 4/30/2008		
Cash and Bank Accounts		
HVFCU CD's	\$6097.68	
HVFCU S1 Savings	\$817.11	
HVFCU S9 Checking	\$468.04	
TOTAL Cash and Bank	\$7382.83	
TOTAL ASSETS		\$7382.83
LIABILITIES	\$0.00	
OVERALL TOTAL		\$7382.83

Rolf Nijhuis moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted and approved. Les Muldorf seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Dick Kranz, acting for VP/Programs, confirmed that representatives of Infobrella would describe their new advanced personal productivity software at the upcoming general meeting. He also announced that every attendee will receive a free beta version of the software.

In his President's Report, Dick Kranz, observed that the MHCUG membership was well represented in the registration for the upcoming APCUG Leadership Development Conference. Dick also stated that additional vendors were coming on board.

Les Muldorf, Newsletter Editor, reported that the current issue of the microCHIP had been completed on time and was available to the membership. Because of other commitments, Les will require a stand-in to produce the July microCHIP. He plans to contact Linda Ritch to see if she will be available. Jack Marsella suggested that the July and August issues can be combined if a replacement editor cannot be found.

Jack Marsella reported that the Upgrade/Repair SIG had 22 attendees at their last meeting and that the Technology Workshop topic-driven format was very successful. Jack also reported that there had been no attendees at the Ulster Computing Workshop meeting held at a tentative new location in Esopus. Les Muldorf reported that he had made an Adobe Photoshop presentation at the Digital Photography SIG.

Dick Kranz confirmed that Ed Morzen had delivered all MHCUG announcements to the media in a timely manner.

Dick Kranz announced that there was a lockdown policy in effect for the Forum hosted on the MHCUG website until a policy for stopping its abuse by users could be put in place.

At 8:12 Les Muldorf moved that the meeting be adjourned, Rolf Nijhuis seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

# Help Line

Having a problem? Volunteers have offered to field member's questions by phone. Please limit calls to the hours listed below. Days means 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Evenings means 6 to 9:30 p.m. Be considerate of the volunteer you're calling, remember this is a free service. If you'd like to have your name added to the list, call or e-mail the editor, or see us at the next meeting.

Need help on a subject and there's no name listed for it here? Try contacting one of the SIG leaders or post a message on our Website FORUM. Simply go to [www.mhcug.org](http://www.mhcug.org) and click on the "Forum" menu item, then follow instructions. Answers will be returned to you by e-mail, as well as being accessible via the Website.

Program	Name	Phone #	E-mail	Time
Access (MS)	Eli Cohen	897-5921	mhcug@yahoo.com	( e )
APL (all flavors)	Ray Polivka	462-2698	polivka@acm.org	( d e )
CAD	Fred Krasselt	565-5622	krasselt@aol.com	( d e )
FlightSoft	Clark Zeaman	814-663-0538	zeamanc@juno.com	( d e )
Internet	Art Scott	849-1378	artscotti@gmail.com	( d )
Lotus 123 Macros	Ralph Pollard	462-3389	ralphpollard@verizon.net	( e )
Lotus for DOS	Bill Rogers	452-9104	—	( e )
MS Office	Bryan Rifenburgh	590-0092	MCPPro20@yahoo.com	( d e )
Paradox 4.5	Jim Warner III	297-3175	jhwiii@optonline.net	( d e )
Partition Magic	Dan Sullivan	229-0241	dansull@optonline.net	( d e )
PC/AT Hardware	Phil Van Itallie	462-3924	pvanitallie@yahoo.com	( e )
Personal Finances	John Bickford	435-8615	johnbick@us.ibm.com	( d )
SAS	Ralph Pollard	462-3389	ralphpollard@verizon.net	( e )
Symphony 3.1	Jim Warner III	297-3175	jhwiii@optonline.net	( d e )

Please help us to keep the **Help Line** current by advising us about changes. If you have particular knowledge or expertise about a program or product, please ask to be listed here.

All members of the MHCUG are encouraged to take photographs of any club activity for publication in the MicroChip. Now that we are in a digital format on the web, photographs can be displayed in glorious color or stunning black and white. In addition, we would also like you to exhibit your photographic skills and submit photos of the beautiful Hudson Valley. Here is an easy way to get your name in print. Please forward any pictures to [lesm1@optonline.net](mailto:lesm1@optonline.net). Give me your name and the title or subject of your pictures so I don't have to make anything up.

## Wanted New Members



**Bounty Hunters  
Needed**

**Sponsor a  
new member**

**Get a 3-month  
membership  
extension**

For each new member you bring in you receive a three month extension on your current membership. Ask the new member to name you as sponsor on their application.

New Appl.    Renewal    Addr. Change

The MHCUG is a nonprofit educational organization which promotes activities encouraging the use of computers by its members. The MHCUG encourages professionalism and the development of technical skills.

A **Member** may be anyone with an interest in computers who supports the purpose of the MHCUG.

A **Student Member** must be under 25 years of age and attending an educational institution full-time.

If new applicant or renewal, please check one:

**Member:** dues: \$35 per year

**Student:** dues: \$15 per year

Full-time ID (reqr'd) \_\_\_\_\_

I am enclosing a check for  1  2  3 yrs (Students renew yearly)

Check No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Mid-Hudson Computer User Group, Inc.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (        ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like an e-mail reminder of upcoming meetings?  Yes  No

How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

If sponsored by a member, please provide name: \_\_\_\_\_

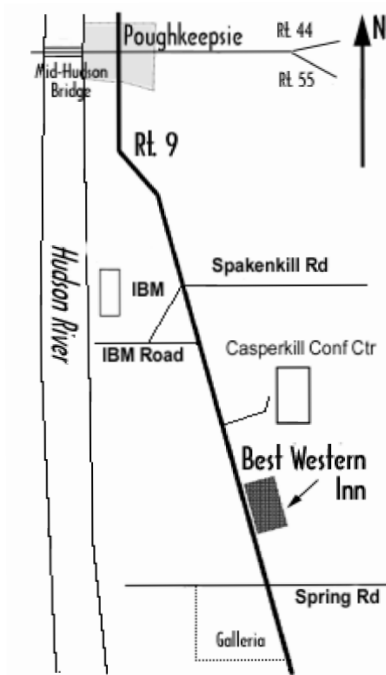
Dues Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Contribution Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Make check (on US bank only) payable to:  
**Mid-Hudson Computer User Group**

Send form and check to: Attn Treasurer  
Mid-Hudson Computer User Group  
PO Box 1962  
Poughkeepsie NY 12601-0962



## How to find us on the night of the meeting



## ☞ **Our Next Program** ☞

**Where:** Best Western Inn & Conference Center  
Rt. 9, Poughkeepsie

**When:** June 12th, 2008  
6:30 – 7:00 Q&A Session: Questions from the floor  
7:00 – 7:30 Regular Business Meeting  
7:30 – 9:00 Program

**Program:**

Stephanie Spivack will speak on “How to Promote Your Passion over the Internet” at the June 12 open public meeting of Mid-Hudson Computer User Group, Best Western Inn on Rte. 9 In the Town of Poughkeepsie, NY., commencing at 7:30 pm. The meeting is preceded at 6:30 p.m. with a Q & A session on computer topics and a short business meeting at 7 p.m. The public is invited to come and learn how you too, can Promote Your Passion over the Internet.

## Coming Events June 2008

### **First Thursday June 5th, MHCUG Board meeting**

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

### **Second Thursday June 12th MHCUG General Meeting**

6:30 p.m. at Best Western Inn and Conference Center

### **Third Monday June 16th, Technology Workshop**

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

### **Third Thursday June 19th, Ulster Computing Workshop**

7:00 p.m. at Esopus Library

### **Fourth Monday June 23, Upgrade and Repair**

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

### **Fourth Thursday June 26th, Digital Photography/Multi Media**

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building