



# microCHIP

the Newsletter of the

## Mid-Hudson Computer User Group Inc.

Monthly since 1977

www.mhcug.org

Volume 32 Issue 8 August 2008

### The Mac Experience

By Les Muldorf

This month marks a new format for the cover page of the microchip. Instead of reporting on what happened, we will be reporting on what will be happening. A recap of past meeting may occasionally found elsewhere in the issue. We think this will give us a better insight to the upcoming meeting than a few lines at the end of the newsletter.

This month, I will be sharing with you my experiences changing over from a Windows environment to a Leopard environment.

I thought about the change for a long time. I evaluated what I do on the computer, what programs I use and what is my main focus when I sit down in front of the screen. It was an interesting revelation. You might find it interesting to keep a log of your time on the computer. My results were as follows. The more than 80% of the time I was involved in some sort of graphic pursuits: photo manipulations, presentations and newsletters. The remaining time was Internet and home finance usage. After research on the internet and consultations with photographers, graphic artists and writers, I was convinced that the Mac was the platform that I should be using. The Mac was made for graphics. The programs were all very intuitive, and all operations across many programs were similar. You only had to learn things one time. Of course there was expense of the computer, (which is never discounted) and the expense of a few new programs. Then there was a slight learning curve(which was helped by OnetoOne sessions) and finally there was the actual conversion. For the one or two programs that I could not use on the Mac, there were ways (Bootstrap, Fusion and Parallels) that allow you to run a windows based machine on the Mac.

It has been just about a year since I made the switch. I am now 95 percent Mac, 5 percent PC. What have I learned? Mac is a much more stable system-no dreaded blue screens. Since there are less Macs in use, there are fewer hackers attacking the Mac OS. I have not yet installed antivirus programs on the Mac.

In the presentation I will demonstrate some of the major advantages and disadvantages of this conversion. ☐

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A condensed New York By Les Muldorf

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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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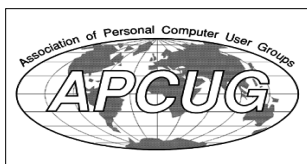
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**Bits, Bytes 'N Kudos**

by Dick Kranz

Hopefully members will make a concerted effort to attend both of our Thursday, August 14 and Thursday, September 11 meetings. August 14, Les Muldorf will be demonstrating the latest software installed on his Macintosh computer. He will show us some of the everyday things he does with it as

well as features that receive only occasional use. September 11 we will greet Steven Lindsay of Microsoft who will walk us through similar paces demonstrating his use of Vista OS.

Members are encouraged to invite and bring out your friends neighbors and relatives. As always, the audience will have ample opportunity to ask questions. Your attendance and encouragement of others to attend is important. Your support enables us to attract high caliber presenters.

Non-Board member volunteers are needed to work on our nominating committee. This writer would be very pleased to hear from three or more of you. Just send me an e-mail to volunteer or request further information about the nominating committee's function. [dickranz@optonline.net](mailto:dickranz@optonline.net) or through the web site contact list. Members who think they might want to volunteer as an officer or director can likewise request information in that respect. There is always room for additional volunteers; the welcome sign is out.

Kudos to Linda Ritch for her efforts in helping Les get out last month's newsletter during his absence. Volunteers is what keeps this organization running on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis. We would be nothing without the help of our officers, directors, special-interest group leaders and microCHIP newsletter writers and proofreaders. Edward Morzen continues to write out and submit monthly PR releases to the media. You are encouraged to give these people your personal thanks when you see them in action. Others provide assistance behind the scenes and that is always appreciated.

Kudos to the rest of you, our dues paying members! Without your support in that respect, we could not continue to operate as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization. While the rewards for those who serve MHCUG are so precious they couldn't be bought with money, the value of that service is what members receive when you pay annual dues each year. Dues of only \$35 is still a real bargain in these trying times. One night out or a technical subscription would cost that much or more, let alone a single telephone support call.

Let's review some of the membership benefits: 1. Major presentations monthly with no admission charge. 2. Free trials and vendor discounts. 3. Monthly microCHIP newsletter full of technical articles and priceless hints and tips to keep your computer operating. 4. Monthly upgrade and repair SIG's (Special Interest Groups). 5. Monthly Digital Imaging and Multimedia SIG's. 6. Monthly Technology SIG's. 7. Ulster Computing Workshop. 8. Wireless connectivity during monthly presentations and SIG meetings. 9. Vendor giveaways and chances to win prizes. 10. Opportunity to attend stupendous regional user group meetings.

We, as members of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups gain even more strength in numbers when it comes to lobbying for computer user benefits. All this said, can we please count on your membership renewals as they become due? Your new member sponsorships are also greatly appreciated. ☐

# Special Interest Group News

## Technology Workshop

By *Harry Elder*

Hi Everyone. We had our monthly meeting July 21. Despite being an ideal summer night, the meeting was well attended. Dan Sullivan started the meeting, but left early. Dan was recovering from a tick bite, and rest, along with antibiotics were required. We all wished Dan a speedy recovery.

Ed Terpstra, one of our club's directors, told us about his recent experience with Ubuntu. Ubuntu is a very popular version of Linux, if not the most popular. Gone are the days where Linux was for geeks only. Most Linux distributions – 'distros', today nearly install themselves, as stand alone or dual boot systems – Windows typically being the other 'half' of dual boot. Ubuntu and many other Linuxes will detect and configure most internal and external devices, memory, etc.

Ed began with using the 'live CD' method. This is where Ubuntu is downloaded as an ISO file, and then burned to a CD. Assuming that your BIOS is enabled for CD boots, Ubuntu will boot itself and run mainly from the CD. This is a good way to get familiar with the look and feel of running the Ubuntu version of Linux. The next logical step is to install Ubuntu to a hard drive, which is what Ed did. Ed had an older 6.4GB hard drive that he tried to install Ubuntu on, but his monitor started cycling between two colors more than halfway into the installation. This happened twice, until Ed noticed a 'safe graphics' option at install time. This luckily worked, and let Ed complete the installation.

After trying out some of the features and configuration options of Ubuntu, Ed tried installing it along side of XP as a dual boot option. Ubuntu will let you select this on installation as an option, and will even create a separate partition from your main Windows partition if desired. There is another method using 'WUBI', which is an Ubuntu installation program. My guess is that WUBI stands for 'Windows-Ubuntu Installer', or similar. WUBI was part of the Ubuntu install CD, so he booted the CD and ran WUBI. It seemed to progress well, but then issued a message 'CD-ROM could not be accessed'. This happened twice, so Ed did another online search to resolve this. Various online reports claimed that this happened only when booting from a CD, others said that it happened only when installing from a DVD. Ed decided that rather than use the CD or DVD method, 'to instead copy the Ubuntu ISO file and WUBI.EXE into the same directory and execute WUBI from there. That worked. Ed shrugged off these incidents as 'business as usual', and is now happy running both Windows and Ubuntu. Thanks, Ed.

Jeff Dowley discussed a recent CNET article that predicted the end of anti-virus checking as we know it: 'Will you be ditching your antivirus app anytime soon?' by Robert Vamosi. Vamosi says that the traditional method of checking each file for viruses, using a pattern matching technique, will be increasingly difficult as the database of known viruses grows. This can be described as a 'blacklist' method. Symantec detected over one million viruses last year alone. A newer method, known as white listing, checks files against a list of known good files and uses hashes to detect the file's validity. This approach is already used by some enterprise systems, and may be adopted on PCs in the near future.

Trend Micro has adopted a twist to the white listing scheme. Instead of having large databases installed locally, with the inherent updating requirements, to instead use the Internet itself as the repository for white list signatures.

Whatever the future solutions are, it's clear that viruses and related security threats will grow, and with that, solutions to protect businesses and end users will remain a challenge. See the article at [http://news.cnet.com/8301-10789\\_3-9994679-57.html](http://news.cnet.com/8301-10789_3-9994679-57.html). Thanks, Jeff.

Thanks to all club members for a great meeting, and a warm invitation to all readers to come to our next MHCUG Technology Workshop on the third Monday, August 18 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. ☐

## Digital Photography

by *Les Muldorf*

The Digital Photography had its monthly meeting on July 24th. The crowd was light but enthusiastic. Pictures were shown and the show was enjoyed by all. We need more photographers willing to show their work in this non-threatening environment. It was also decided that we should include all digital media in our meetings, and we will be changing our name to Digital Media. This will open our doors to still graphic media as well as video presentations. Of course we will continue with photography of all sorts. Please join us the fourth Thursday of each month.

A report on the annual New England Camera Club Council meeting was also given. This is a photography weekend held at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst MA. the weekend after the Fourth of July. ☐

## Painter 4 Essentials, a First Impression

By Dave Chalmers, Editor, Kern Independent PCUG, CA

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Corel's demonstration of their products at the recent Southwest Computer Conference showed one new product that really interested me. Corel Painter 4 Essentials is a real painting program, not a photo editing program. It has the features of being able to paint or draw with a computer. If you have a shred of drawing talent, you might really like this program.

Now I have no talents this way unfortunately. Why I would buy a program like this, being a photographer, might surprise you. Painter has a great feature that will auto paint or draw from a photo. In this mode you pick a style from many artistic techniques and stand back.

Will this look great for all photos? The simple answer is no. If you have a lousy picture you will probably end up with a lousy painting. Photos that are dependent on a lot of fine detail to work will also not be a good candidate for this product. Simple landscapes or portraits or more abstract photos will probably work the best. Now having said that, there are always exceptions that will work, trying the process only takes some time.

You start with a photo that has been corrected and cropped using a photo editing program. Jpeg's, tiff, and PhotoShop psd files will work. Just open them in Painter and start selecting the artistic medium you want. Once the program commences you will see a very blobby and abstract image in the beginning. As the process continues, details emerge; you can stop the drawing at any time or let it go to completion. Once done you can go into using your own painting efforts to add or subtract details to enhance the painting. A good example of this would be a portrait. Increasing the details around the eyes usually helps the overall composition. If some of the background contrasts too much with the person, you can blur and tone down the background.

A graphic tablet is a real plus with Painter, as it uses the stylus for changing the brush characteristics, as you go. A mouse works fine, but it doesn't have as much flexibility as the tablet. Wacom makes some tablets that are fairly inexpensive. Please note, a tablet is not required to get this program to work.

Printing with this program is quite simple. It doesn't have a dedicated color management system as more expensive programs, but if you can print a good photo, then printing with Painter is no problem.

Painter comes with some excellent video tutorials that really clue you in on the features and give a great how-to aspect to it. They are logically arranged and each segment is not too long. Painter even comes with a nice printed manual, with illustrations. The manual generally follows along with the tutorials.

Retail price is \$99 and the member price is \$79. It installs on both PC's and MAC's. As a supplement to a photo editing program, I certainly recommend it.

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*The Cyclone and Wonder Wheel - photographs by Les Muldorf*



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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)

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**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  
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 Schedule: 4th Mon. 7:00 PM  
 Location: Business Development Center Conf. Room B

**Technology Workshop**

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 Schedule: 3rd Monday, 7:00 PM  
 Location: Business Development Center Conf. Room B

**Digital Photography**

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 Schedule: 4th Thurs. 7:00 PM  
 Location: Business Development Center Conf. Room B

**Ulster Computing Workshop (formerly HVPCC)**

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 Schedule: 3rd Thurs. 7:00 PM  
 Location: Ulster Comm College Hasbrouck Bldg. Room 219

**Interested in starting a Special Interest Group? contact Jack Marsalla**

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# E-Mailing Photographs

By Richard Kennon, Editor, Amador Computer Users Group, CA

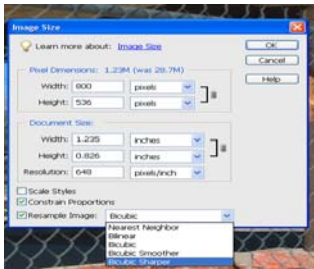
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Drtrdguy(at)volcano.net

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First, we **must** understand that photograph (image) size in the camera and in the computer is measured in **pixels**. These are the basic dots of color that make the picture. **Do not** pay any attention to anything that says "inches" or "pixels per inch." These terms are meaningless when we are considering a picture either in the camera or in the computer. They may come into play later if we want to print the photo on paper. But, that is another subject for another time. For now, we think only of pixels. Most cameras record too many pixels to e-mail. For instance a 6 megapixel camera will make a picture about 3000 pixels wide by 2000 pixels tall and the file size may be several megabytes. Our screens are usually only about 1000 pixels wide (some are larger and some smaller). So, if we e-mail the native picture, it will be wider than the screen for the recipient and the file will be so large, it may take "forever" to download to the recipient's computer. It is possible the service provider will not even accept it.

There are two things we must do to make a photo e-mailable. The first is to **resize** or **resample** the picture. We want to change the picture width from 3000 pixels to 800 pixels, for instance. This process is called resizing or resampling. We have to pick the best 800 pixels out of the 3000 to represent our photo. Well, no, that is not exactly correct but it simplifies things to think of it that way. We don't have to worry about it because a lot of very smart programmers have developed ways (algorithms) to help us. Just remember, you want to resize or resample to get the photo down to a size convenient for e-mailing. I usually use 800 pixels or 900 pixels width for pictures I attach to e-mails.



The second thing to do to make a photo e-mailable is to save it in **JPEG format (.jpg)**. That is a format that reduces file size a lot and picture quality a little so the picture can be downloaded more quickly and still be nice to look at. Some software programs give you choices of compression amount with numbers ranging from 1 to 10. One will result in a very small file but the picture quality will not be good at all. A 10 will give the very best quality but with a very large file size. A reasonable compromise is to use 5 or 6. I usually use 6.

How do you do this? First, I will describe how to do it with a free Microsoft program. Then I will try to look at some other programs.

Microsoft Power Toys for XP has a **Resize Pictures** toy that is slick and easy but feedback says it only works on XP. It can be downloaded at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx>. Right click on an image name or thumbnail in Explorer or My Computer and choose **Resize Pictures**. You are limited to four specific sizes but they are good choices. They don't tell us what compression they are using but the results look OK. Unless you tell them under **Advanced** to replace the image in the file, it will make a copy. That's good. They will add the word, "Large", "Medium" or "Small" to the end of the name you have chosen.

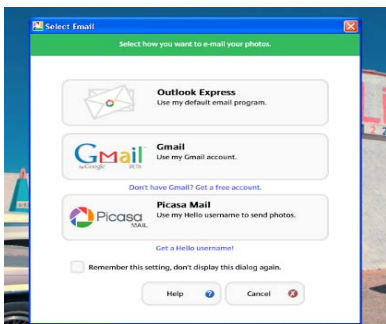
If you are happy with this solution, then read no further. But, if you want to use a picture editing program, maybe this will help.

In Photoshop Elements 5, click on **Image>Resize>Image Size** and this window will pop up. Note that there is some garbage at the bottom about "inches" but we will ignore that. First we will click the **Resample Image** box. That puts the Pixel Dimensions in play and that is what we want. I selected the Width box and changed the width to 800 pixels. Since the **Constrain Proportions** box is selected, that is all I have to do.

Note, down at the bottom, that we have several choices of sampling algorithms. This is frosting on the cake. I read somewhere that I should use **Bicubic Sharper** when downsizing so that is what I do. Most programs don't give us all these choices. Then we should click on **File>Save As** and give the photo a new name. I often just use the same name and add "\_800px" so the next time I will know it is ready to e-mail. Here we can choose the JPEG format and the compression amount. Photoshop Elements 6 is out now and sells for about \$100. If you are able to spend that much and want one of the best editing programs, I highly recommend it.

Let's look at Picasa2. It is a free program from Google and looks really good but I do not have much experience with it. By all means, try it first because the price is right! When it comes to e-mailing photographs, it is a little more automated but not any easier to use than Elements. First, click on **Tools>Options>E-Mail**. Then select the width you want in pixels. There are six choices. Then click on **Apply** and **OK**.

The next step is to click on **File>E-Mail** and you will get three choices of how you want to e-mail your photos. Fortunately, I use Outlook Express so my choice is listed.



When I clicked on Outlook Express, an e-mail page popped up with the photo attached. At this point we can write something else on the e-mail and send it. I recommend this so the recipient will know it is really from you and not something sent out by a virus. When I receive e-mails that only say "Attached", I **Delete** them without looking at the attachment. This saved me one time when I received a virus from my sister-in-law that she did not know she sent. She spent weeks and dollars getting her computer back up. Oh, I digress. If you want to send more than one picture (and, who doesn't?), you must select the picture and click on the **Hold** button near the bottom of the screen. Do this for each photo you want to send and they

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*continued from page 6*

will all be attached to the e-mail. The program automatically chooses JPEG format and a compression ratio but does not tell you. That is OK as the pictures I tried looked good. Picasa2 has considerable capability for editing photos in many respects. Try it!

There are many other editing programs that I haven't mentioned and have no experience with. In all cases you want to change the picture's size in pixels by resizing or resampling. Pay no attention to anything that says "inches" as that will have no meaning for this process. Sometime later we will talk about printing pictures and then we will use inches.

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## Skype 4.0

*By Joe Nuvolini, Webmaster & APCUG Rep, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO*

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I've been a Skype subscriber for some time now. What is Skype, you say? Well, it's an online chat/phone/video service which has, as of the end of March, some 309 million registered users. Last I heard, that is more subscribers than all the US telephone services combined! It allows you to make computer to computer calls free worldwide. It can support 12 million users at a time. In addition to audio and video chat, you can

instant message, send text messages to phones, and share files. You can call from computer to phone as well.

It has three levels of service for the computer to phone service. For \$2.95 per month you can make free computer to phone calls anywhere in the US and Canada. The \$5.95 service includes the US, Canada, and Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey Mexico. For \$9.95 per month you get unlimited free computer to phone calls worldwide. They point out that unlimited means up to 10,000 minutes per month. Let's see, 10,000 minutes is over 6.9 days! I'm currently subscribing to the \$2.95 service. To call overseas with my service it runs about 2.1 cents per minute to Europe or from Europe back to the States. Skype has been offering video calling as well since 2005. Their data compression allows quality voice transmissions on a bandwidth of as little as 2kbs and video on 6kbs. It has a new version, 4.0, which is in beta testing. It allows you to see the person you are calling full screen. For this feature to work well you need 90kbs. I'm using it and it seems to work real well. This full screen mode will be very useful for the computer user group community.

While at the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) Convention held in conjunction with the January 2008 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) attendees in their forum with the vendors discussed presentations at user group meetings. Over the years, the cost of sending representatives out to user groups for the purpose of promoting their wares has become no longer cost effective. We discussed the use of Webinars (live presentations across the Internet).

This new version of Skype looks to be ideal for such a program and it can be done at little or no cost to the vendors and user groups. If you haven't tried Skype, you should. You can download the current version (3.8) at: <http://www.skype.com/download/skype/windows/>. If you are adventurous and want to try 4.0 beta go to: <http://www.skype.com/intl/en/download/skype/windows/bets/>.

By the way, if you have wireless Internet access you can purchase a WiFi phone at the Skype online store and it will allow you to make calls whenever and wherever you have wireless Internet access. There's a lot more information which you can checkout at their Website: <http://www.skype.com>.

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*Lady Liberty By Les Muldorf*

# Email Etiquette

By John Roy, President, The PC Users Group of Connecticut

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Do you really know how to forward an e-mail? It is estimated that over fifty percent of email users do not know how to do it properly. Do you wonder why you get viruses or junk mail? Email messages get forwarded countless times without concern for the security of the previous sender's addresses.

Every time you forward an e-mail there is information left over from the people who got the message before you, namely their e-mail addresses and names. As the messages get forwarded along the list of addresses builds and builds creating a huge resource for spammers. All it takes is for someone to get a virus and the infected computer can send that virus to every e-mail address that has come across that computer. Even if the address collection doesn't result in a virus it surely will be harvested by spammers or someone looking to make a couple of cents for a listing of good email addresses. How do you stop or at least minimize the propagation of email addresses? There are several easy steps that we should all practice.

(1) Before you send out a forwarded e-mail, DELETE all of the other addresses that appear in the body of the message (at the top). That's right, DELETE them. Highlight them and delete them, backspace them, cut them, whatever it is you know how to do. It only takes a second You MUST click the 'Forward' button first and then you will have full editing capabilities against the body and headers of the message. If you don't click on 'Forward' first, you won't be able to edit the message at all.

(2) Whenever you send an e-mail to more than one person, do NOT use the To: or Cc: fields for adding e-mail addresses. Always use the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field for listing the e-mail addresses. This is the way the people you send to will only see their own e-mail address. If you don't see your BCC: option click on where it says To: and your address list will appear. Highlight the address and choose BCC: and that's it, it's that easy. When you send to BCC: your message will automatically say 'Undisclosed Recipients' in the 'TO:' field of the people who receive it.

(3) Remove any 'FW:' in the subject line. You can re-name the subject if you wish or even fix spelling.

(4) ALWAYS hit your Forward button from the actual e-mail you are reading. Ever get those e-mails that you have to open 10 pages to read the one page with the information on it? By forwarding from the actual page you wish someone to view, you stop them from having to open many e-mails just to see what you sent.

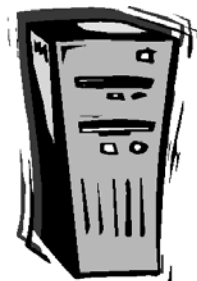
(5) Have you ever gotten an email that is a petition? It states a position and asks you to add your name and address and to forward it to 10 or 15 people or your entire address book. The email can be forwarded on and on and can collect thousands of names and email addresses. A FACT: The completed petition is actually worth a couple of bucks to a professional spammer because of the wealth of valid names and email addresses contained therein. If you want to support the petition, send it as your own personal letter to the intended recipient. Your position may carry more weight as a personal letter than a laundry list of names and email address on a petition. (Actually, if you think about it, who's supposed to send the petition in to whatever cause it supports? And don't believe the ones that say that the email is being traced, it just isn't so!)

(6) One of the main ones I hate is the ones that say that something like, 'Send this email to 10 people and you'll see something great run across your screen.' Or, sometimes they'll just tease you by saying something really cute will happen IT AIN'T GONNA HAPPEN!!!! (Trust me; I'm still seeing some of the same ones that I waited on 10 years ago!) I don't let the bad luck ones scare me either, they get trashed. (Could that be why I haven't won the lottery?)

(7) Before you forward an Amber Alert, or a Virus Alert, or some of the other ones floating around nowadays, check them out before you forward them. Most of them are junk mail that's been circling the net for Years! Just about everything you receive in an email that is in question can be checked out at Snopes. Just go to <http://www.snopes.com/>. It's really easy to find out if it's real or not. If it's not, please don't pass it on.

So please, in the future, let's stop or at least minimize the junk mail and the viruses by taking the steps outlined above.

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# For Anybody Who Has Thought About Trying Linux

By Drew Kwashnak, Linux SIG Leader, Danbury Area Computer Society, CT

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For anybody who has thought about trying Linux, it has become easier than ever before with Ubuntu 8.04 LTS Hardy Heron. As with most Linux distributions, Ubuntu is available as a free download and is freely distributable. It is even available already installed on Dell computers. The most common method is downloading the ISO image from Ubuntu's website (<http://www.ubuntu.com>) and burning it onto a CD.

From the site, you can download the Desktop version or Server for 32-bit and 64-bit systems. There is even an option to download what is called an alternative version which is just the installer and does not include the LiveCD portion, which also includes an installer. If you are like me, until a couple months ago, and living on dial-up or you do not have a CD burner handy or just don't want to put in that much effort then you can order a free CD through the corporate sponsor of Ubuntu, Canonical, ShipIt department.

I have been very pleased with the speed with which their CDs arrive. Alternatively, the website contains links to vendors where you can buy the CDs from under \$5 to more, and they can handle large orders as well.

Once you have your CD in your hot little hands, trying Ubuntu is as simple as placing it in your CD-ROM tray and rebooting your system. If system will boot from the CD and after a short moment you'll be greeted with the Ubuntu welcome screen.

If you want to "try before you buy," then you can choose the default "Try Ubuntu without any changes to your computer" and your hard drive will not be touched during your session unless you choose to. You don't even need a hard drive to select this option; you just will not be able to install it from the session.

If you are more certain or just daring then you can go straight into the installer and in about 60 minutes (45 minutes if you know what Different Strokes For Anybody Who Has Thought About Trying Linux by Drew Kwashnak you are doing) you're booting to your new Ubuntu installation.

Ubuntu will scan your hardware and load the modules and drivers necessary for your system. If you have hardware that has proprietary drivers available, Linux cannot include them in the CD for legal reasons. Ubuntu works around this by providing a Restricted Drivers tool that lists all such hardware found on your system and provides

the ability to download and install the necessary drivers in a click or two, legally.

Now that you have Ubuntu up and running on your system, what can you do? Plenty! Ubuntu brings you a full featured operating system complete with:

- Firefox 3.05 beta web browser
- OpenOffice.org 2.4 full featured office suite compatible with pre-Office 2007 Word, Excel, PowerPoint and some Access files.
- Evolution personal information manager for email and calendar goodness, a Microsoft Outlook user can feel comfortable with.

There is even plug-ins to allow Evolution to access existing Microsoft Exchange servers.

- Pidgin multi-protocol instant messenger including Yahoo, MSN, AIM, Jabber, IRC and more.

• Gimp (GNU Image Manipulation Program), a powerful Photoshop-like image editing program that includes filters, layers and a host of goodies.

• F-Spot image manager for categorizing and minor editing of all of your pictures as well as easily importing pictures from your digital camera.

- And much, MUCH more...

If Ubuntu doesn't come with a particular application, thousands of free applications are available from the Ubuntu online repository which are easily installed and updated from the Synaptic package manager.

When you decide to install Ubuntu onto your hard drive or virtual machine you only need to click the "Install" icon on the desktop to start the process. After seven or so easy questions the installer will copy the files over to the hard disk. Depending on your system's speed this could take about 60 minutes, more or less. It will even detect if you have Windows installed and offer to transfer over your files and compatible settings from your Windows accounts!

Of course, if the limitations of the LiveCD, such as settings are not saved from session to session, and you are hesitant to partition and install the full operating system on your hard drive Ubuntu offers yet another alternative called Wubi. Wubi is, from the Ubuntu website: "Wubi is an officially supported Ubuntu installer for Windows users that can bring you to the Linux world with a single click. Wubi allows you to install and uninstall Ubuntu as any other Windows application, in a simple and safe way.

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# Your Next Computer Will Be Green

By Marjie Tucker, Editor, Mountain Computer User Group, GA

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With Europe leading the way, the computer industry is decidedly becoming "green." The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (ROHS) directives went into effect earlier this year. These two directives state that certain electrical and electronic equipment must cut down on hazardous materials such as lead, mercury, and cadmium. They also give customers the right to return their equipment free of charge. Companies have several years to fully implement these directives, but the leaders have already started to make changes.

Dell, for example, is advertising Energy Smart workstations and notebooks that can reduce power consumption by as much as 78%. The Energy Smart configuration uses a default power setting that is designed to reduce consumption and energy costs right out of the box. In addition, the power supply, fan, and motherboard use significantly less energy to maintain cool internal temperatures.

HP is using 80 Plus power supplies to lower energy bills and AMD technology that reduces heat output and PC power consumption. In addition, they have already introduced an HP recycling program where you can trade-in or donate the products.

Government Initiatives Many U.S. government agencies have implemented standards and regulations to encourage green computing. The Environmental Protection Agency

launched an Energy Star program in 1992 and strengthened its requirements in 2006. In 2003 the California State Senate enacted the Electronic Waste Recycling Act and in 2007 President Bush issued Executive Order 13423 requiring all federal agencies

to use the Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool when purchasing computer systems. In addition, a global consortium called The Green Grid was founded in 2007 by AMD, APC, Dell, HP, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Rackable Systems, SprayCool, Sun and VMware.

Another initiative formed by a group of Global-minded IT executives, the Green Computing Impact Organization (GCIO), was created to be an active participant in transforming the IT community from an environmental liability to an Earth conscious example of responsibility. GCIO is a nonprofit organization that is based on environmental audit programs for consumers and small business homes with respect to general energy-efficiency programs (including lighting, heating, insulation, etc.). GCIO's mission is to educate and assist enterprise technology users in the design of environmentally aware and responsible information system operations. They help consumers become more environmentally responsible by reducing energy consumption and electronic waste in an effort to protect the Earth.

GCIO is sponsoring educational programs across the country and participating in a Green Computing Summit that will be held in Washington, DC on May 20th. The summit will address how public sector IT managers, procurement officials, and program managers public sector professionals can transform their IT and data center operations into more environmentally conscious yet efficient solutions. This conference will attract senior government IT professionals and their industry partners tasked with helping agencies become greener in the coming years. Attendees will represent federal, state and local governments, public policy organizations and suppliers to government. You can read more about this event at

[www.e-gov.com/EventOverview.aspx?Event=SGCS08](http://www.e-gov.com/EventOverview.aspx?Event=SGCS08).

## Features of Green Computing

Power management is the most popular method. The operating system of the computer can be set to directly control the power saving aspects of the hardware. It can automatically turn off the monitor or hard drive after a period of inactivity. Or, the entire system may hibernate, turning off most of the components such as even allow the user to manually adjust the voltages supplied to the CPU to reduce the electricity consumption and the amount of heat that is produced. As of July of 2007, all new Energy Star certified desktops must have a power supply that is at least 80% efficient.

Other features include using motherboard video output instead of a video card, hard disks that consume less power, flash based solid state drives that require fewer write cycles, and lower energy monitors. And, manufacturers of networking equipment are developing switches and routers that reduce energy costs.

## Recycling Materials

Obsolete computers can be reused for charities, non-profit organizations, and developing countries. Parts from really old systems can be recycled through some recycling centers. Some recycling charges can be passed back to the manufacturers.

Recycling this equipment keeps the lead, mercury, and chromium out of our landfills. In addition, computer supplies such as cartridges, paper, and batteries can be easily recycled.

## How Can We Work Greener?

Visit the website for Climate Savers Smart Computing at [sww.climatesaverscomputing.org](http://sww.climatesaverscomputing.org) to view a three step program to go green. Here are the basic steps that they suggest:

Step One - Turn on Power Management. Since the average desktop PC wastes nearly 50% of the energy it consumes as heat, it makes sense to use the power management features that are built into Windows XP and Vista. The benefits? You will reduce your

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electricity bills and your energy footprint will be lowered as you reduce your greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Savers organization predicts that the power management features on your computer can save nearly have a ton of CO<sub>2</sub> and more than \$60 a year in energy costs.

Step Two - Buy an energy efficient computer. Energy Star, the program designed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, specifies the standards that equipment and appliances must meet to wear the Energy Star badge. You can visit their website at [www.energystar.org](http://www.energystar.org) for specifics. Basically an Energy Star compliant PC uses 15

to 25 percent less energy. This program is expected to save U.S. consumers and businesses more than \$1.8 billion in energy costs over the next five years and prevent greenhouse gas emission equal to 2.7 million vehicles.

Step Three – Unplug from phantom power. As long as your computer is plugged in it still uses electricity, even while it is turned off or in standby mode. A computer that is turned off, but still plugged in, can use up to 10 watts. The Climate Savers estimate that you can reduce your electricity bills by as much as 10% by unplugging your appliances and electronics when they're not being used.

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## Viewing the Bigger Picture

*By Bonnie L. Snyder, P\*PCompAS, Colorado Springs, CO*

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At the risk of being the bearer of bad news, I have to say that none of us is getting any younger. User groups tend to be populated more by senior citizens than by any other age group. As we age, we find the need for more and more assistive aids, including those that will help us to use our computers more comfortably and efficiently.

Many of us will find, as time goes on, that our vision is not what it used to be. We may find that our eyes fatigue as we read information on the computer monitor, and we may find that some of the smaller fonts and graphics on the screen require us to squint and lean forward into the display.

In this article, I will discuss two screen enlargement programs that might help us minimize our visual difficulties as we use our computers.

The first program I want to talk about is called Magic Lens Max. I downloaded an older version of the program from [Giveawayoftheday.com](http://Giveawayoftheday.com) and was very impressed with what it could do. I e-mailed the program's author and told him what a terrific program it was and I have demonstrated it to various groups who provide services to the blind and visually impaired. Additionally, the cost of the program is only \$39.95. I went ahead and purchased a copy of the most recent edition and was even more pleased with what the author had added since my downloaded version.

Magic Lens Max provides a variety of ways to magnify the computer screen, from resizable moveable lenses, which magnify directly over where your mouse or cursor is working, to a full screen magnification option, which slows down the screen refresh very minimally. You have some color contrast options to choose from with this program as well as an invert colors option for light text on dark background. The magnification levels can be selected from 50% (which is non-magnification) up to pretty much infinity. Anything above 350% starts to blur a bit, although there are options to sharpen. Below is the Magic Lens Max option screen: <insert magic\_lens\_max>

The Magic Lens Max icon that resides in the system tray can be single-clicked to turn on or turn off the magnification.

This is an excellent program that is both useful and affordable. If you are interested in testing it out, go to [www.visionsuit.com](http://www.visionsuit.com). You can download a 30-day demo of the latest version. If you decide to purchase Magic Lens Max, once you have paid the \$39.95, you will be sent a registration code that can be entered into the demo, and it becomes fully functional.

The second program I evaluated for screen magnification allows for an additional option: speech along with the magnification. This program is called iZoom, and can be obtained from <http://www.issist.com/>. I really like the customizing options available in iZoom. These can be accessed from the initial menu when iZoom comes on, or once the menu is closed, you can reopen it quickly by clicking the mouse on the iZoom icon in the system tray. Here are the option screens: <insert izoom1 and izoom2>

iZoom allows for default or customizable hot keys, several sizes and colors of mouse pointers, color combinations supplied with the program, as well as custom color modes, several sizes and shapes of "locators" that help the user find the location of the mouse pointer, and a choice of several lens shapes, as well as full-screen magnification. iZoom magnifies from 1X to 32X.

The negatives I have found in iZoom are as follows: First, when using the lens mode, you have to place the lens first over what you want to interact with, and then move the mouse pointer within that lens. Second, from about the 3X magnification up, the display becomes more and more pixilated which can be a problem for some vision conditions, such as astigmatism, among others. Third, there is only one voice offered with the speech option and it is not a particularly pleasant one.

*continued on page 14*

*continued from page 13*

As you would expect, with additional options comes an additional cost. Again, you can download a 30-day demo of iZoom from the Website, and if you wish to purchase the program, the price is \$199.00. However, keep in mind that the two major commercial screen magnification programs, MAGic from Freedom Scientific and ZoomText Plus from AI Squared, both weigh in at from \$300.00 to \$550.00, depending on how many options you wish to have. So, if you feel the need to view the bigger picture, give the demos of the above programs a try, and see if they will be of use to you.

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## Uniblue Registry Booster 2

*By Terry Currier, Vice President & Webmaster, WINDOWS usERS (WINNERS), CA*

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*Tcurrier(at)aol.com*

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I've tested a number of programs on my secondary test computer over the years. I've also installed and uninstalled a number of programs. At start up the computer loads up my anti-virus, anti-spyware, firewall, UPS monitor, motherboard monitor, QuickTime, Intel graphics monitor, Maxtor storage monitor, printer software, TV software, and others. It takes a while for it to boot up. I turn it on when I need it, go away to do other things, and come back after it's ready.

Rebooting is even longer with it shutting down everything and restarting. So I thought Uniblue RegistryBooster 2 would be something good to try. Rebooting took 4 minutes 45 seconds. When I first ran RegistryBooster it found 459 Problems/Errors. The vast majority being Missing or Invalid Path.

The Windows Registry in a broad sense is a database of the hardware and software on your computer. It contains all your settings for windows and other software. Whenever you install new software it creates new settings in the registry. When you uninstall software it removes all those registry settings associated with the software, right? Well it does uninstall the programs, removing it from the hard drive. Most really do very little removal from the registry. So the software is removed, but the settings are still in the registry and you have a bunch of orphan links.

Even before I installed RegistryBooster 2 I did a backup, for safety sake. It also can create a backup of the registry before you have it do any repairs. It can create up to eight backups, keeping the most recent. Before running it my reboot time was 4 minutes 45 seconds. After running and fixing what it said were problems I also used it to defrag the registry. Using RegistryBooster 2 (twice) my reboot time was down to 3 minutes 39 seconds, saving 66 seconds. Okay that's great, but for a program like this you want to make sure there are no problems later. So I've used this for two months now and I can say I've had no problems. I've run it about ten times total. Each time I chose to trust the program with what it said was a problem.

### Conclusion

RegistryBooster 2 is very easy to use, and at \$29.95 it is a good value.

<http://www.liutilities.com/products/registrybooster/>

### Supported Systems

Windows 2000 Windows XP

Windows Vista 32-Bit

### Recommended Requirements:

Intel Pentium 4 1GHz or Equivalent processor

512 MB RAM

200 MB free hard disk space

Graphics mode 1024x768 true color (highest 32-bit)

Microsoft Windows 2000 / XP / Vista (32-bit)

Internet Explorer 6

Terry Currier is currently Vice-President & Editor of WINNERS – WINDOWS usERS which meets in Fountain Valley, California. He has been a member of computer user groups since 1984 (months before he even brought a computer.)

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

Minutes of the July 2008 MHCUG Board of Directors Meeting by Jim Walsh

The monthly MHCUG Board of Directors meeting which is held on the first Thursday of the month in Conference Room B of the Guardian Center at 3 Neptune Road, Poughkeepsie was called to order by Dick Kranz, President, at 7:02 p.m. Officers and Board members in attendance were: Eli Cohen, Dick Kranz, Rolf Nijhuis, Dan Sullivan, Ed Terpstra and Jim Walsh.

A sufficient number of the Board had not reviewed the Minutes of the June Board meeting, so voting on approval was deferred to the August meeting.

Eli Cohen, Treasurer, was surprised that the Treasurer's Report he had sent via email had not been received by the Board prior to the meeting. Though he described the overall financial status of the MHCUG and said there were only the usual monthly expenses, the Board deferred voting on the Treasurer's Report until the August meeting.

Dick Kranz, acting for VP/Programs, confirmed that Chris Novell had prepared Web 2.0 presentation for the upcoming general meeting. Dick stated that Les Muldorf had an Apple presentation on tap for August and that the September presentation was under negotiation.

Dick Kranz in his President's report stated that feedback on the APCUG 2008 Membership & Leadership Development Conference indicated that most attendees would go to the next such conference. Dick also suggested that all MHCUG members could benefit from viewing the many informative areas of the APCUG website, not only for its technical content but for information about user group interests and activities throughout the country.

Under Membership, Dan Sullivan arranged to receive assistance from Eli Cohen in adding some new functional capabilities to the membership database. He reported that the membership stood at 94 with 7 of 18 currently expiring memberships having already renewed. The Ulster Computing Workshop has already scheduled the next three meetings at the Port Ewen location. Bob Morales has contacted Ulster Community College requesting a return of the unused portion of the fee paid for meeting space at their site. Dan Sullivan reporting on the SIG's stated that they were well attended with the exception of the Digital Photography SIG which was most likely a consequence of the email announcement not having been sent.

Dick Kranz stated that there were no problems to report with either the Publicity or Website committees.

At 8:22 Rolf Nijhuis moved that the meeting be adjourned, Dan Sullivan seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved. ☐



*A view on the bridge by Les Muldorf*

# 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

## ☞ **Our Next Program** ☞

**How to find us on the night of the meeting Where:** **Best Western Inn & Conference Center**

Rt. 9, Poughkeepsie

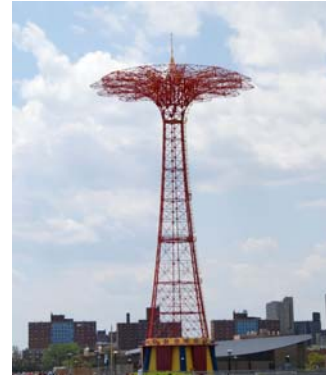
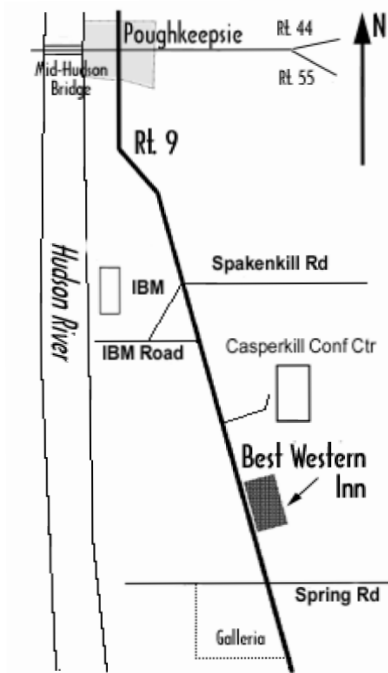
**When:** August 14th, 2008

6:30 – 7:00 Q&A Session: Questions from the floor

7:00 – 7:30 Regular Business Meeting

7:30 – 9:00 Program

**Program:** Les Muldorf will talk about the Mac experience



## **Coming Events August 2008**

### **First Thursday August 7th, MHCUG Board meeting**

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

### **Second Thursday August 14th MHCUG General Meeting**

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

### **Third Monday August 18th, Technology Workshop**

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

### **Third Thursday August 21st, Ulster Computing Workshop**

7:00 p.m. at Esopus Library

### **Fourth Monday August 25th, Upgrade and Repair**

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

### **Fourth Thursday August 28th, Digital Media**

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building