



# microCHIP

the Newsletter of the **Mid-Hudson Computer User Group Inc.**

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## A Digital Photo Workshop

by Ray Polivka

"Shoot and Edit Like A Pro" was the title that Lesa Snider gave her her June 11th presentation to the Mid-Hudson Computer User Group. As the title implied, the presentation was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of tips to help one get better shots. In this part she presented 10 tips.

1. Learn the settings on your camera.

Now this is pretty obvious; isn't it? But many of us take our new camera and go out and take pic-



**LESA SNIDER**

tures. Read the user's guide -- later maybe. She pointed out that cameras have scene modes that automatically establish the proper camera settings for a chosen situation. All cameras should have portrait, landscape, close-up, and action scene modes. Throughout her presentation she used excellent illustrations to make her points. When asked from the floor what changes these scene modes made, she replied that they change the basic characteristics of the camera such as depth of field, aperture, ISO, and color.

2. Better Composition

In taking a picture she offered a very simple rule which can improve the picture. It is the "Rule of Thirds". The object is to avoid putting the subject of the photo "right smack dab" in the middle of the picture. Placing the subject of the picture off-center usually results in a much better picture. She suggested imagining a tic-tac-toe grid on the view of your subject. Then place your main subject at one of the intersections in this grid space, or along one of the lines of the imaginary grid.

3. Experiment with Vertical Shots

Horizontal pictures often get more in the picture than was desired. Turning the camera to take a vertical picture may help eliminate superfluous material. But again, do not put the horizon in the middle of the photo. Also note that an odd number of objects in a picture appear more visually pleasing. This may be easier to accomplish with a vertical shot.

4. Crop with your feet

She urged us where possible to move closer to the subject. "When you think you are close enough to the subject, take three more steps."

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

was how she said it.

#### 5. Shoot from different perspectives

Don't just stand there and take the picture. Rather shoot up, or get down. Try a different angle.

#### 6. Look behind you

Don't focus on just the scene before you. There may be some memorable material behind you as well. Lesa illustrated the suggestion very dramatically with the picture she took while in the gondola of a balloon. Of course, it's not just "behind". Rather, this comment implies being aware of what is happening on your left or right as well.

#### 7. Add depth

Give a picture an impression of depth by including some foreground or background.

#### 8. Use Image-Editing Software

There is much power in the software photo editing programs. Of course, this may lead you to read the user's guide material. She pointed out that there are two forms of editing software: photo editing and pixel editing. Photoshop Elements is a pixel editor. Picasa is a photo editor. A photo editor can change the whole picture, but it cannot change only a portion of it.

#### 9. Use a Card Reader

Download your picture to your camera via a memory card reader. It is much faster than running a cable from the camera directly to the computer.

#### 10. Do Naming and Keywording

It does not take long for you to take a lot of pictures. They will all eventually end up on auxiliary storage, external hard drives, CD/DVDs, or jump drives. As time passes, finding a specific picture can involve a lot of searching. For this reason, name your pictures as soon as you can. Some cameras even have a built-in microphone into which you may speak your title as soon as you take the picture.

After introducing her 10 points, she moved to the second part of her presentation to discuss editing techniques. She made her presentation based on Photoshop Elements. While her illustrations used Photoshop Elements Version 6 on an Apple laptop, she assured us that the material she illustrated was also applicable to the PC using the latest version of Photoshop Elements, Version 7. It is difficult to discuss her editing suggestions without actually illustrating them. However, she gave us her webpage, <http://graphicreporter.com>. You may wish to visit her Web page. If you do, you will find 5 tabs across her first page. Two of them, entitled

"Tutorials and Quick Tips" and "Hot Picks and Tips", are especially interesting. If you click on "Tutorials and quick tips" you get a single page. On its left side is a listing of items providing a categorical listing of areas in which tutorials exist. When you click on "Photoshop Elements", you get a list of 52 Photoshop Element tutorials. Also if you click on "Practical Photoshop Elements" in her prose it will take you to the Kelby-training.com webpage. You will get two of Ms. Snider's tutorials, "Practice Photoshop Elements" and "From Photo to Graphic Art". Apparently, to step through all the 23 audio/visual lessons in each tutorial you need to subscribe to an online subscription service. However, you are able to hear and view the 1st 3 lessons without subscribing. Try them. They are informative.

Also, as a special bonus Lesa gave us a PDF copy of the slides she used in her presentation. They may be viewed on our website. Have a look and view the pictures she used to illustrate her points. In addition, video tapes of her presentation will also be available on our website.

In summary, Ms. Snider provided many suggestions and illustrations that were worthwhile to both the casual and the near professional photographer. It was an entertaining and informative evening presented in a professional manner.

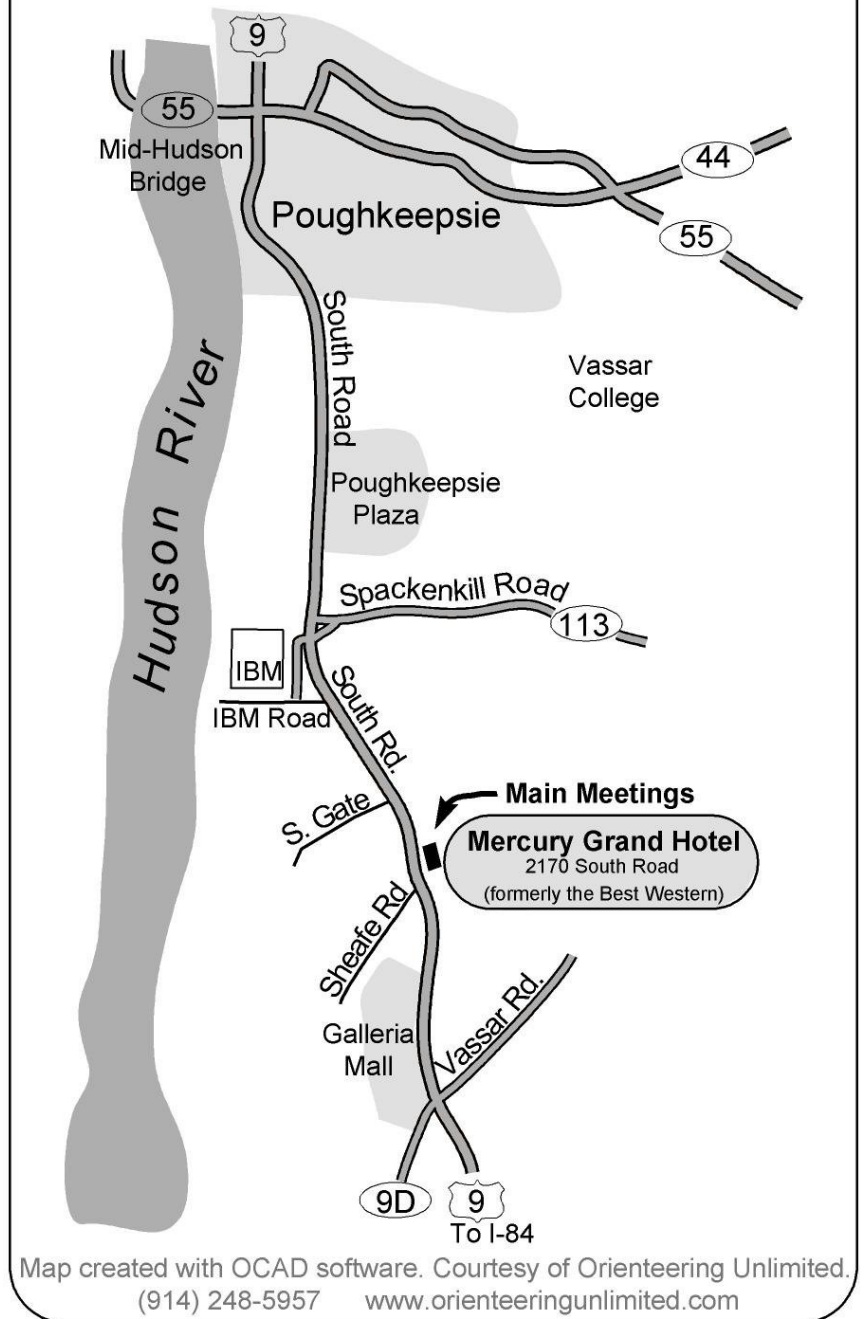
## Upcoming July Meeting

Mid-Hudson Computer User Group will host a Webinar, "Backing up Your Hard Drive" using Acronis True Image Home 2009 by Gene Barlow, 7:00 p.m. Thursday, July 9 at Mercury Grand Hotel (formerly Best Western Inn) 2170 South Rd., town of Poughkeepsie, NY.

Gene Barlow has been a presenter in the user group community for 25 years. Now, thanks to online innovative communications, Gene will be presenting a free live Webinar open to the public at our next general meeting. The Webinar will provide you with an active view of his presentation, allowing you to see and hear his slide presentation, see his software products demonstrated live, and ask questions and receive live answers at the meeting.

Gene's topic, "Backing Up Your Hard Drive" using Acronis True Image Home 2009 will help you make sure you are adequately protected and can recover from any unforeseen events such as viruses, unstable software downloads, and hard drive failures by having a well thought-out backup plan. Having a good backup system is essential in order to put your system back together again in a few minutes, not days or weeks. This is an important topic that every PC User should implement on his or her computer. Don't miss this meeting and please bring a friend. Contact Dick Kranz, VP-Programs for further information at 845.896.7376.

## MHCUG MAIN MEETING LOCATION



## **Minutes of the June 2009 MHCUG Board of Directors Meeting**

By Ed Terpstra

Dan Sullivan, President, called the meeting to order at 7:13 PM on June 6. This meeting was held at the Poughkeepsie United Methodist Church which is located at 2381 New Hackensack Rd, (Route 376), Poughkeepsie, New York in Classroom 33. This location is being investigated as an alternative meeting location.

Officers and Board members in attendance were: Dan Sullivan, Ron McDermott, Rolf Nijhuis, Dick Kranz, Linda Ritch, Ray Polivka, Jim Peabody and Ed Terpstra.

The May Minutes were discussed. Ray Polivka made a motion to accept the Minutes as submitted., seconded by Ron McDermott. The motion carried unanimously.

Ed Terpstra reported that the Poughkeepsie United Methodist Church has suggested an \$18.00 fee for each meeting which includes internet connection.

Eli Cohen, Treasurer, was not present and no financial report was offered. It will be included in the July Minutes.

Linda Ritch, VP/ Activities, reported that the Flea Market/Auction is a Work in Progress. She will contact Bob Morales and Jack Marsella to firm up plans. She will submit an update at the July meeting. Rolf Nijhuis has a scanner, printer and external hard drive left over from raffles which can be added to the offerings.

Dick Kranz, VP/ Programs, reported that Lesa Snider will present Photoshop Elements at the June General Meeting. She will teach us "How to Shoot and Edit Like a Pro". The July presenter will be Gene Barlow. Gene has a website offering discounted software to user groups. Gene will make his presentation remotely in what is termed a "webinar" which will be interactive. Smart Computing Magazine is the presenter for the August meeting.

The concern remains that the wireless microphone does not work in the lower level meeting room at the Mercury Grand Hotel. Dick Kranz and Dan Sullivan will attempt to resolve the problem.

Dragon Naturally Speaking and Audacity were suggested as possible backup presentations in the event of inability of a presenter to attend, or possibly as presentations in their own right.

Rolf Nijhuis will be away from July through October. Linda Ritch volunteered to handle the sign up sheet and raffle duties which Rolf normally performs.

Lloyd Quick will continue to moderate the Q & A at the General meetings with Jeff Dowley as backup.

Ray Polivka has offered to bring his recorder as backup for the General Meetings.

Harry Elder, microCHIP Editor, has requested that members of the Digital Media SIG provide photos for inclusion in the microCHIP newsletter. A volunteer is badly needed to act as lead story writer. Ray Polivka volunteered to get his feet wet and give it a try. It was suggested that the story be available a week after the General Meeting .

Jeff Dowley, Membership, was not in attendance. A short discussion was held regarding recruiting new members.

The Technology and Upgrade SIGs are well attended. The Digital Media SIG is not well attended.

Jerry Clark, Webmaster, was not in attendance, but had previously stated he had nothing to report. Ed Terpstra has had intermittent problems logging on to the Forum for a substantial period of time.

Bob Morales, Ulster Computing Group, was not present so there was no report.

## Technology Work Shop

By Harry Elder

It's June, I had expected a turnout somewhat lower than the colder months when people prefer indoor activities, but by 7:00 PM we were at full capacity, and still had late arrivals. That's a testament to the interest this group draws.

Fred Miller told us about a new Panasonic KX-TG64xx cordless phone set he purchased, where 'xx' ranges from 31 to 45 depending on whether you choose 1 or five handsets. Fred chose five for optimal convenience. As Fred tells us, "<the> best feature for me includes the central, scrollable phonebook for auto dialing. All phones have access to it without additional effort on the part of data entry person. But only one phone can access it a time. It also provides for either a direct connection to your voice mail system and/or provides its own answering system. You can also either add a caller or block a caller and it notifies you with a list of your missed calls."

Alex Kurylo raised general questions regarding the Task Bar, System Tray and Quick Launch area. We also got into discussion on how best to control programs that automatically launch at startup.

I've been listening to a lot of my old favorite songs on GrooveShark - [www.grooveshark.com](http://www.grooveshark.com). This site is simple: enter your favorite song title, artist, genre, etc. A list with multiple suggestions comes up; find the exact song you're looking for and press the 'play' arrow - you've got your song playing on your PC. Keep your quarter in your pocket.

Chuck Wolfe has an XP machine that he may want to revert back to Windows 98 SE, and wondered if he could keep his personal folders and files when doing this. In theory, yes, but it would have to be done manually. The main con-

sideration is that XP uses the NTFS file system, and Windows 98 only recognizes FAT and FAT32. XP does read and write FAT and FAT32 files, so Chuck would have to copy his personal data from the XP machine (while it still exists) to external FAT32 media, take his XP machine back to Windows 98 with a re-install of the entire OS, and then copy his personal data back in. We also discussed the pros and cons of Chuck using Ubuntu 9.04 instead of Windows 98. Ubuntu recognizes both FAT32 and NTFS files.

Bob Gieseler wants to know if cloud computing affects mere mortals like us. Cloud computing is chosen by choice, and its main target right now is businesses. Many of us are already using aspects of cloud computing. When we store our pictures online, or use online backup and restore programs that's 'in the cloud'.

Jeff Dowley told us that MicroSoft Money is discontinued. Wikipedia says 'On 10 June 2009, Microsoft announced that it would discontinue sales of the software from 30 June 2009.'

Ron McDermott found a great deal on an external SATA hard drive and enclosure. Ron says 'The hard drive was the Hitachi Travelstar, 7200 rpm, 2.5", SATA, 320GB, which was purchased at TigerDirect for \$70 with a \$20 rebate (at the time). I grabbed two of them; one went into my ThinkPad laptop - Couldn't beat that price with a stick.'

'The enclosure was purchased at NewEgg for \$23 with free shipping. Model is: EAGLE ET-CS2PESU2-BK 2.5" Black USB2.0 & eSATA. Aluminum (good heat dissipation), takes a 2.5" SATA drive. External ports are USB 2.0 and e-SATA, one USB cable built-in. Requires no power adapter (works off of the USB ports; two USB cables will power the e-SATA connection), ALL three cables included (e-SATA, USB, built-in

USB); not generally the case. Spectacular value, IMO!!!'

Finally, Gordon Sager gave us a talk and hands-on exercises in 'Barker codes'. Barker codes are used to transmit data subject to loss – wireless internet, telephony, etc. Take along an experienced guide when you go there. We did exercises where we 'exclusive – or'd' bits, added bit sums, and checked bits. Some of us caught on a bit. All in all, it was quite interesting to see the 'inner workings' of data manipulation. Thanks Gordon.

Thanks to all club members for a great meeting. Please join us at our next MHCUG Technology Workshop on the third Monday, June 15, 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.

**JACK MARSELLA (LEFT) AND  
RON MCDERMOTT (RIGHT)  
TRYING INTERESTING PC RE-  
PAIR 'TECHNIQUES' AT OUR  
LAST UPGRADE AND REPAIR  
SIG. DID IT FIX THE PROBLEM?**



## From the President

By Dan Sullivan

PC Backups (BU):

Our July main meeting to be presented by Gene Barlow will address backing up your PC. What tools are available, what should your BU media be, on site or off, how often, data or System, Clone or Image, and if Image - full BU plus incremental or differential? These are the questions that come immediately to my mind. Hopefully, Gene will be addressing these and any other questions you may have. This will be our first presentation using the Internet for teleporting ( Webinar ). I would guess that more presentations will be offered this way as a less expensive a way of reaching Computer User Groups such as ourselves.

OK, you've backed up your PC ( you are making back ups aren't you?); what are you doing to organize all those thousands of files and reduce or eliminate the duplicates? Maybe a topic for another meeting.

Operating Systems and Software:  
Windows 7 is now due to hit the stores in October. Are you going to rush out and buy a copy? Do you want another presentation maybe about six months later just to see if you are missing something? Do you wonder what Operating System Microsoft is working on for the Windows 7 follow on? They are in business to make money, aren't they? Are you beginning to think about the FREE Open Source software that you have been hearing about and the FREE Cloud applications that are now available on the WEB?

If you have all, well maybe just some of, the answers, maybe you would like to make a presentation!! See Dick Kranz or myself.

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eral and SIG meetings. Local radio stations will be advised if a meeting is cancelled unexpectedly.

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## The Disintegration of Service

Written by Jerry Goldstein, Vice President and Newsletter Editor, The PC Users Group of Connecticut

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Want to make a free oversea calls to India? Just call for technical support on your computer, Internet service, or cable service. You are likely to be routed overseas to India. You then get the pleasure of talking to the "well trained" script readers. About the only thing they are trained for is to tell you: "Yes, very much I can help you". You hear this phrase whenever you call for tech support. The techs use that phrase to hide the fact that they are spending that time to check their index sheets for key words in what you told them was your problem. They then turn to that page in their script book and start reading off a page that is supposed to match your problem. The key word is "supposed". Reality is far from tech support fantasy.

Tech support used to mean reaching a person knowledgeable in the problem you were calling about. Now it is a means the manufacturers and utility suppliers use to avoid dealing with customers. There was a time when the support staff knew and understood computers. But then the corporations came up with the idea of making support calls difficult. They figured we would be less likely to complain if doing so was difficult. It is not bad enough instructions are written by non-English speaking people. Now we have to get the instructions interpreted by someone who failed a course in English as a second language. Which is pretty tough to do in India, a country where English, along with Hindi, is the official language. (I won't even go into how all those people in India suddenly have American names like Jack and John when they join tech support.)

I know my patience has a limit. I test it regularly when I call for Tech Support. Thanks to the service quality of my utility, cable, and Internet providers I get to test my patience all too often.

Tech support did get smarter, though not for the better or to the benefit of the consumer. Used to be you could ask for a supervisor and be moved up to someone in the states. Now tech support in India has their own supervisors who are as good as the base level worker at helping. Pretty much no help at all.

If you are lucky enough to be moved up the ladder to what is often called the "corporate escalation department" you will find your anger escalate as well. Corporate only works business hours and Monday through Friday, sometimes. Holidays or any other excuse, means you won't reach corporate help. What will corporate escalation do when you get there? Route you to the technical support staff in the states you needed from the beginning. But first you need to wait 24 hours for a return contact. Oy\*

How do I know so well how tech support fails to work? I am my family and business's IT person. That means I am often on the phone with tech support. I recently spent five days without Internet service thanks to Earthlink's outsourcing its tech support to India. After days of trying to get Earthlink to fix the problem I called the line provider that Earthlink uses and had them fix the problem myself. Total outsourcing.

Is there a way to avoid all this? There are less chances everyday as corporate America outsources its human interface with its customers. Can we do anything about it? Sure. When looking at what to buy, or a service to use, take into consideration how the manufacturer or provider will support its product. Use products and services that support you as a human and not as a joke.

\* = For those few unfamiliar with "Oy" please click [HERE](#)



# Coming Events July 2009

## First Thursday July 2 MHCUG Board meeting

7:00 p.m. at (trial location) : Poughkeepsie United Methodist Church, 2381 New Hackensack Rd. 12603

## Second Thursday July 9 MHCUG General Meeting

6:30 p.m. at Mercury Grand Hotel (formerly Best Western)

## Third Monday July 20, Technology Workshop

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

## Third Thursday July 16, Ulster Computing Workshop

7:00 p.m. at Town of Esopus Library, Canal St.

Port Ewen, NY

## Fourth Monday July 27, Upgrade and Repair

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

## Fourth Thursday July 23 Digital Media

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

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.  
E-mail editor (at) mhcug.org

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