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Alice Page – 'A Dirty Woman'

by Harry Elder

The Mid Hudson Computer Users Group was privileged to a presentation by Alice Page at the club's main meeting in April. Alice expertly uses her combined artistic skills with her savvy technical skills to produce stunning designs for embroidery and heat transfer. Alice drove straight through from the Knoxville, Tennessee area, where she resides part time, to join us.

Alice's business name and truck logo, is 'A Dirty Woman', which obviously raises eyebrows, but also, interest. Alice runs her business in Middletown and Monticello NY.

Alice said that anyone can enter this business, all it takes is a lot of money (she's invested well over \$40,000 for software and computer operated sewing machines), plus incredible patience and the ability to live with uncertainty. It's obviously not for the faint of heart. Most geeks I know aren't artistic, except perhaps for some web developers. And most web developers, who work with modern programs like Dream Weaver, or directly with HTML, use graphic artists for the visual content.

Alice started her design work using Corel Draw in 1999, and still uses it, but does most of her work with Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop.

Many of Alice's customers belong to biker (motorcycle) groups, who can be quite demanding customers. All of the samples that Alice showed us were rejects (although most looked perfectly fine). Due to the high rate of of customer rejection, Alice takes a substantial, nonrefundable down payment before starting her projects. This protects her time, ensuring that only serious customers engage her services.



This shirt has 78,000 stitches, and took about three hours to sew (by machine), one at a time. Intervention is often necessary. She can produce about 50 shirts a week. This shirt cost about \$75 in a group, using about seven different color threads. She has over 480 colors to choose from.

To get a sense of the complexity of any one project, Alice describes the process of creating a heat transfer process as:

A customer brings her an image (photo, drawing, etc.).

Alice scans it using what she describes as a lowend (\$88) HP All-in-one scanner, producing a bitmap image, or directly into Corel.

Corel creates a 'vector' image, where the normally jagged, or pixilated, edges are smoothed out.

With Corel Draw, or transferring the image to Adobe Image or Photoshop, Alice will add her artistic touches. Adobe renders the image to a bitmap file at this stage. This is where the labor and artistry are most prominent. It's also at this stage that Alice needs to work closely with the customer.

The final image is then transferred to a Rolins X24 - a plotter with software. It's important here that the image is reversed, or mirrored, so that the final transferred image is correct.



For embroidery products, the initial stages are similar, but the final images from Corel or Adobe are sent to her \$10,000 embroidery software, made by an Australian company called Wilcom. Wilcom allows Alice to enlarge small images perfectly for embroidery (one of its many features).

Alice embroiders with two very expensive sewing machines from ZSK that cost her about \$20K each. Fortunately, repair on these machines is infrequent. If parts are needed, they are readily available. ZSK is an international company. Alice also has a friend in New Hampshire who helps her with repairs using the machine's software.

An important part of any transfer project is the lettering. The right font has to be used to convey the right emotion. For example, Alice may use a 'racing' font to denote action. There are thousands of fonts to choose from, and all download-able from http://www.dafont.com/.



`Alice Did It' shirt using a unique font called King's Things Calligraphy

Alice uses silk-screening for mass production. If she uses heat transfer, the 'transfer' process is critical. Alice transferred a popular comic figure called 'Lady Death' to the hood of a 1967 Corvette. She told us that work like that is very labor intensive since the car body is contoured. Alice recommends that if you're inexperienced; give this work to a pro.

If a customer doesn't have an image to use, Alice has access to a book of stock art that cost her about \$1000, and has pricey yearly updates.



Alice's women customers in Tennessee especially like this shirt and logo.

We were very fortunate to have Alice give us this presentation. I certainly have a better appreciation for the time, cost and effort it takes to transfer and manipulate an image to clothing or an article (such as a car). This was Alice's second presentation to our club, and we look forward in a few years to a return visit. \Box



An example of a heat transferred image using a `racing' font for action effect

The April Survey Says...

During the sign-in for the MHCUG General Meeting held April 08, 2010 the following question was asked:

1) Do you use Social Networking Sites on the internet?

2) If "yes", which ones?

Question 1)	Members:	Members:
	YES	NO
Do you use Social Networking Sites ?	27	73
Question 2)	Networking	#
	Sites	User
Names of Social Networking Sites visited	Facebook	5
	Twitter	1
	Ning	1

With 22 members signing-in, a little over ¼ of these indicated that they do use Social Networking sites. Three 3 different social sites were specified with the most popular, Facebook, having 5 users while Twitter and Ning had 1 each.

Submitted by Rolf Nijhuis□

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

MHCUG May Main Meeting

Computer Group presentation: Saving and Sharing Photo Memories with Digital Slideshows

The Mid-Hudson Computer User Group (MHCUG) will host a presentation by Jerry Greenberg at 7:30 PM on Thursday, May 13, at the Mercury Grand Hotel (formerly the Best Western Inn), 2170 South Rd. (Route 9) in Poughkeepsie.

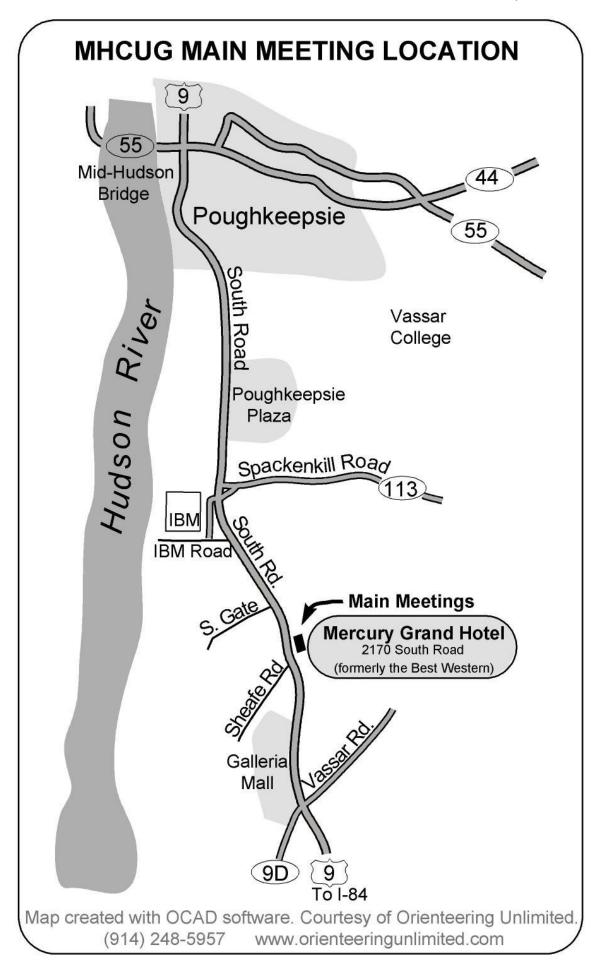
(see map next page)

Jerry will demonstrate and discuss a range of software applications and techniques that can be used to store and share digital photos.

There are many programs to create a DVD that displays still photos, but those that let you create sophisticated slideshows are either expensive, hard to learn, or both! Fortunately we'll be navigated through the rocky bits by the presenter's personal experience in making slide show and photo DVDs.

Mr. Greenberg will demonstrate popular freeware applications and methods for creating a slide show. On one end of the spectrum will be Microsoft's well known PowerPoint. Anyone can download the PowerPoint viewer for free. On the other end of the spectrum will be commercial software, often with an abundance of features (with price to match), such as Photodex ProShow. In-between these options are lower priced programs like Ashampoo Slideshow Studio. If time permits, we may discuss some of the software used to acquire and digitize slides and photos.

The presentation will be preceded by a questionand-answer session at 6:30 PM, followed by a short business meeting at 7 PM. Attendance is free and guests are welcome. The Group meets on the second Thursday of each month at the Mercury Grand Hotel. For more information, go to <u>www.mhcug.org</u> or e-mail Jeff Dowley at <u>president@mhcug.org</u>.□



Results of the 2010 Dutchess County Regional Science Fair

Submitted by George Smith

Our User Group participated in the 51st Annual Dutchess County Regional Science Fair held at Dutchess County Community College on April 10, 2010. The Science Fair brings together the winners of science fairs at local public, private, and parochial schools in Dutchess County, as well as home schooled students. The Mid-Hudson Computer User Group (MHCUG) awards prizes to reward and encourage young students' interest in Computer Science and related fields, Engineering in particular, and to encourage interest in scientific thought: forming a hypothesis, collecting data through experimentation, evaluating the collected data, and, finally, drawing conclusions as supported by the data.

Each participant was judged on the basis of 5 different criteria: scientific thought in the project, the creative ability shown while executing the project, the skills shown in implementing the project, the thoroughness of the project, and how clearly the student can present the project and respond to questions. Our group requires thought and analysis be done to award a prize, not just a "book report". We also require some use of computers or a relationship to computer science to award a prize. Entries are judged taking the grade level of the entrant into consideration, so that more is expected from a high school student than a 5th grader.

Not only does the project introduce students to the scientific process, but it also builds skills useful in all life areas: organizing a project, meeting deadlines, and presenting it to others. Many judges feel they learned as much from the students as the students learned from the experience. These were all great kids.

This year, our top award went to Rachel Perfecto, from Roy C. Ketcham High School. She received our top award of a certificate and a one year MHCUG family membership for her project entitled "Fractals and Fugues: Analyzing Music With Math." Rachel's project involved analyzing the spectral content of Fugues (a type of classical music). It turns out that Rachel also received an award from our group last year, though the judges didn't know that at the time. Congratulations Rachel!

Our second place award this year went to Nyatefe Mortoo of Holy Trinity School. Nyatefe received a certificate and a one year MHCUG family membership for his project entitled "Conway's Game of Life." Nyatefe wrote a Java program to implement Conway's game and explored results of known starting patterns, as well as generating and simulating random patterns. Congratulations Nyatefe!

Our final award this year went to Kyle Zier of John Jay High School. He received a certificate and a one year MHCUG family membership for his project entitled "Probability of Winning in Vegas." Kyle wrote Python programs to simulate craps and roulette and compared the outcomes with the theoretical results. Congratulations Kyle!

George Smith was chair of our User Group's participation. He was assisted in judging by Rolf Nijhuis, Ron McDermott, and Edward Morzen. Rolf also provided the elegant certificates for the winners. Many thanks to all who took part.□

Technology Workshop

-by Ray Polivka

The Technology Special Interest Group gathered together on April 1st with 19 people in attendance. While the early attendees waited for others to arrive, they discussed the Hubble telescope. Apparently, IMAX is creating a movie made regarding the Hubble repairs. IMAX is using a mile-long recording tape from Hubble.

One person, who was looking into buying a laptop, raised the issue of purchasing one with a 17-inch screen. In the ensuing discussion, several cautions were raised about getting a 17-inch screen. They use a lot of battery power such that a computer may not run for more than two hours on a battery alone. Some were concerned that a large screen may be more susceptible to damage. If this PC were to be used primarily at home, one suggestion was to look into plugging in a large screen monitor. That could be more microCHIP

cost effective. Moving on, the next person is interested in virtualization. He found it very easy to add operating systems and applications with virtualization. Of course he was talking about using desktops with plenty of memory.

Cisco is dropping the Linksys brand name for home router products. The new name will be Cisco Valet. The software is to be presented on a USB flash drive and not on a CD. The Linksys name is going to move to their commercial products.

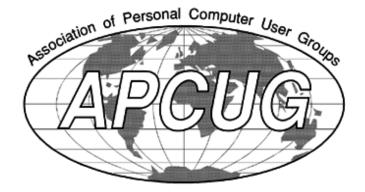
Two people seem to be having the same booting problem. The boot order seems to mysteriously change. Instead of going to the internal hard drive to boot, the computer went to either an attached external hard drive, a jump drive, or a CD/DVD. Naturally, the boot code was not there. Therefore it became necessary to do a Control -- Alt -- Delete to restart. Then, early on in the restarting process it was necessary to get to the boot order, perhaps using the F2 key. After changing the boot order and saving it, the affected machines start up correctly. Now the frustrating situation was that when you return the next day, the boot order was changed to what it had been before it was corrected. One of the persons observed after Windows did an automatic update that the boot order was changed. Some also felt that a BIOS problem might be the cause.

A discussion of freeware then followed. There apparently are a multitude of sources. Many were mentioned, among them were Kim Komando Download of the Day, Freeware Home with over 4500 freeware programs, and FreewareFiles with over 15,000 free software programs. You can get to a great deal more just by going to Google and typing 'Freeware'. Of course you have to be careful. On some of the freeware and trialware, there is an install process. In it there are little boxes with check marks already in them. These may install a new toolbar or other things as well. One suggestion was to do a custom install.

The Kaspersky Antivirus program was being offered with a rebate which made it free. The magazine Maximum PC was being offered for six dollars a year. It is a high-level user magazine which among other things ranks hardware and software. There was a disagreement among the group as to its value. Several thought it was quite good but another felt that their articles were shallow. Also, <u>slickdeals.net</u>, <u>dealnews.com</u>, and <u>fatwallet.com</u> were mentioned as good sources to look for good deals. One could also look for coupons sites, but be very careful on them. When rebates are offered, always be wary. On purchases over \$20, one person always orders swift delivery. Follow directions carefully, keep copies of everything you send, and expect that some will not respond until you check with them. With respect to rebates, sometimes the rebate may be disallowed. However, if you call and contest it with them a little bit they will probably allow it. Staples is quite good with its rebates.

One attendee related an interesting story. Last week he picked up a flash drive in a parking lot. He put it in his computer and found an address on it. He called the person to give it to him. He also asked when he had lost it. He replied that it was during the last big snow storm. That PNY flash drive did well.

The meeting concluded with a wide ranging, lively, and technical discussion on the nature of threads and the role of multiple cores in a computer. The performance of the newly available processors I3, I5, and I7 were discussed. They compared very favorably with their predecessors, and the dual and quad core processors.



Contrarian

- by Phil Van Itallie

Okay, I admit it.

I had no intention of using Vista. But my Windows 2000 system was going off support and I could not get my 2009 Income Tax software to run on my operating system. So I had to change.

Remember, this was cheap Phil. My options were to get a copy of Windows XP or Windows 7. Or so I thought. It was off to EBay to find what was available. Windows XP Pro was selling for \$80 to \$150, as was Windows 7 Pro. I took a look at Windows Vista Ultimate. That seemed to be going for \$60-\$150. It looked as if you could get a full working computer with XP Pro for the same price as a single copy.

In the meantime, I remembered that I had a working copy of Vista ultimate. So I started to use the Vista ultimate product. There was a second service pack and the reviewers were saying that Vista had solved the initial problems. Sure you could use Windows 7, but there were still some concerns about needing a service pack (rumored to be coming soon); but I had a Vista system installed.

After using Vista Ultimate with SP2 for about two months as of this writing, I can say that the problems have been small and the usability has been good. There are some glitches but on the whole, the learning curve has been much less than I had expected.

I was able to install Office 2003 and several products that I need for work without a problem. The antivirus and firewall products that I was familiar with are supported on Vista. The computer response time is good on 1.5 Gig of RAM on a 2.4 GHz single core with a hyper channel processor. The video card has 256 Meg of RAM, and I had used a pre-release version of Vista with a far less capable video card. For an office-type, nongamer, this was more than adequate for my needs.

I have found that IBM's Client Access software works but is more restrictive than on previous XP and Windows 2000 platforms. Copying screen images with ZapGrab is the only product that has not functioned -- the company wants a \$5 fee (almost free) to use their software with XP follow-ons. For now I have been using screen prints copied to Microsoft Word, with a little editing to get the images I want. I have gotten used to the interruptions asking for permission -- they don't seem as frequent as when I tried the Vista beta.

Recently I had a successful bid for a retail copy of Vista Ultimate on EBay for about \$60 including shipping. Thus I will be able to "play" with some of the hardware that I have, using the same operating system as my production system. I expect that the Windows 7 drivers will work with virtually the entire Vista 32-bit installations because the two systems were into wide spread use at nearly the same time. Also, the XP system is likely to have support dropped long before the Vista support comes to end of life. Who knows, the similarities of Vista and Windows 7 may make it so that Microsoft will consider both to be equivalent (to lower their support costs).

In summary, I found that using a consumerrejection, that got some quick fixes before a replacement could be developed, may turn out to be a better investment than the bleeding edge Windows 7, or the ten year old, and targeted-tobe-dropped, XP operating system.□



Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge - taken from Poets Walk, Red Hook, NY

Upgrade and Repair

-by Ray Polivka

On April 15th, 19 folks gathered for another meeting of the Upgrade and Repair gathering. Our meeting opened when one person showed off an interesting docking station with USB ports that was able to accept a variety of hard drives. Being able to accept a variety of hard drives as well as attaching up to three USB devices made this a versatile device.

One fellow, who in the past was having his boot order changed, reported that he found one cause, namely Microsoft. Immediately after Windows did an update, upon restarting the boot order was changed. Microsoft insisted on wanting to boot from a CD. Some also voiced a concern that the computer needed a bios upgrade. The issue of replacing one half of a Raid 1 hard drive came up. The question asked was "Are there stricter requirements for replacing one half of the Raid array?" other than matching the size. The general opinion was that unless one can match a good remaining hard drive exactly, getting a pair of drives would better. The problem is to have matching firmware. Of course, with two new hard drives, one must transfer information to the new drives. The nature or pattern of doing backup was discussed. One person suggested that you should adhere to the 3 - 2 - 1 pattern, which meant 3 backups on 2 different devices with 1 off site.

Another person brought in a portable 250 GB drive. He was not able to copy files to it even after formatting the drive. On the Seagate.com site, there is a diagnostic tool called Seatools that was recommended. This diagnostic tool is not limited to just Seagate drives. Another suggestion was to try a new USB port, and another cable. Also someone mentioned that one may need to get a special program from Seagate to format the hard drive. Apparently, if a hard drive is attached to the system via a USB port, a special program is necessary to format it. Someone did report that Acronis was able to format such hard drives.

One fellow reported that when he moved the soundcard from one PC to another, it did not work. Prior to doing the exchange, he backed up using Acronis version 2010, but Acronis could not do the restore. It said it could not read the backup it had made and validated. Yet he could see it. He was mystified. He had gone to the website to get the latest updates. It was suggested that he do another validate before doing the restore. Someone else reported a similar problem, but in his case it was a version issue; backing up with one version and attempting to restore with a different version. Several guestions and suggestions were made during the discussion of this problem. There was no resolution of the problem. One suggestion was to copy the archive material to another hard drive or device. This discussion led to the suggestion of using free or Pro 'Teracopy' - http:// www.codesector.com/teracopy.php, since it was

www.codesector.com/teracopy.pnp, since it was faster and does checking to guarantee a correct copy. One person noted that while it does a fine job, it does take over any copying function. Someone else said that there was a mode setting ability to change that. You right-click and choose options. In addition to being faster, Teracopy will continue to copy, if individual file copies fail, and later notify you which files were not copied.

Another person was concerned about the striping on the output of his fax machine. He was interested in knowing how to remove it. Considerable discussion occurred. During the discussion, Belkin http://www.belkin.com and Meritline http://www.belkin.com and Meritline http://www.belkin.com and a car cigarette lighter PC connection.

At the midpoint of the meeting, the moderator, using a Linux program called GParted, partitioned and formatted the hard drive that one of the persons had brought in earlier, which he had been unable to either format or copy to. The moderator then demonstrated with GParted copying to the hard drive. The 250 GB hard drive, to which one previously was not able to copy to, now could accept files. At the conclusion of the meeting, we certainly had one happy fellow. Yes we do fix hardware. A further discussion continued on partitioning and dual booting and the programs used to accomplish them. This was followed by a discussion of dual core, guad core, I3, I5, and I7 chips. There is a paper related to this material and their performances.

The suggestion was to put it and other material on the MHCUG forum.

One person using Vista Ultimate, who was listed as the administrator, still was not able to open his documents. The issue of when the files were created was raised. If they were not created under the current Vista system, he had to take ownership of them. Right-clicking on a file or folder, go to select properties. Then go to the security tab. There you can determine the nature of control on a file or folder. To get full control you need to click on the 'Advanced' button. This will bring up the permission tab where through editing, one may change access permission. This is true only for NTFS files.

Another person had a question on the SuperAntiSpyware program. He ran an update on it and then a full system check. It came back announcing that there were three file errors. He guarantined them and was told to reboot the system. But the system would not reboot; nothing worked. Ultimately, he was able to get to safe mode, do a system restore, and bring the operating system up again. He was curious as to whether this had happened to anyone else and why it happened. A discussion on the nature of this occurred. One of the most troublesome situations is where the malware attaches itself to a system file. One suggestion was to run the antispyware program again and note the names of the files. Now try another anti-spyware program. It may be that he had received a false positive.

How does a USB wireless adapter compare to a PCI wireless adapter? In the discussion of this question, the feeling was that a hardware PCI card was better.

Another person likes to plug hard drives into a media drive tray. However, he found that the hard drive produced a clicking sound when plugged into his media tray. Yet when the drive was connected directly to the PC, there was no clicking sound. He reported that the problem was that the voltage in the media tray was too low. It was noted that many businesses outlaw media trays because of their unreliability. A failed attempt to connect a PDA to Ubuntu was mentioned. This led to a discussion of Ubuntu and other packages.

If you ever received a message similar to ' we have detected a virus on your machine click on -- we can get rid of it.'. Don't click anywhere. It is really a virus. There are a number of programs out there claiming to help you get rid of a virus. But in fact, they are the viruses themselves. Also do not click on the X, because you will activate it. Rather get rid of it from your task manager. The discussion then related to the situation where you get a message that your email was rejected, even if you never sent an email. It is likely that such a situation occurred because you were picked off of some list. You were 'spoofed'. One suggestion was to set up in your address list a fake entry, like ICE (In Case of Emergency) which you never use. Now if it appears, you know it was fake.

One person could not get a fairly new HP printer to run on a somewhat older PC. The driver, which was downloaded from HP, would not run it. One suggestion was to download the driver again. Also check to see if the person trying to run this was labeled as the administrator. Then too, when downloading the driver one should also check to see on which operating system the driver could run. Once again, discard the current driver, get a copy of the new driver, and install it before turning on the printer.

Today when purchasing a system, rather than getting the backup CD, you get a boot partition or a rescue partition utility. HP and others say that you have exactly one time to run the utility that runs that partition allowing you to create a set of restore DVDs. Finally, note that Microsoft has two forms of updaters: Microsoft Updates and Windows Updates.

Again the evening ended with a goodly amount of help and information exchanged. \Box



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MHCUG Board Minutes April 1, 2010

A Meeting of the Mid-Hudson Computer User Group Board of Directors was called to order at 6:06 pm by President Jeff Dowley on 4/1/2010 in conference "A23B" at the Guardian Business Development Center, 3 Neptune Rd, Town of Poughkeepsie, NY. In attendance were: Ed Terpstra, Ray Polivka, Bob Morales, Linda Ritch, Jim Peabody, Rolf Nijhuis, Dan Sullivan, Jeff Dowley, Dick Kranz, Jerry Clark, Ron McDermott and Bob Geisler.

A motion was made by Jeff Dowley, and seconded by Dick Kranz, to delay the approval of the March Board Minutes until the May Board meeting. It was unanimously carried

Programs:

For the April 8, 2010 General Meeting, the following items are in place:

- The presenter will be Alice Page. She will be using both Adobe Photoshop and Corel software on her laptop computer to create complex graphics that she exports directly to her sewing machine.
- Q&A Moderator *might* be Lloyd Quick (Dick Kranz to verify) with Dan Sullivan as backup.
- The video recorder will be operated by Bob Morales.

For the May General Meeting, presenter Jerry Greenberg will demonstrate Pinnacle Software....possibly Digital Production and Color Profile.

A future program presentation on Virtualization on a PC was volunteered by new member, Kevin Donovan.

Membership:

Dan Sullivan reported that there are presently 72 paid-up MHCUG members of whom 10 expire at the end of the 1st quarter and 8 more expire at the end of the 2nd quarter. Bob Morales and Jeff Dowley each get 1 quarter's credit toward their membership for bringing in new members.

Dutchess County Science Fair 2010 for 5th thru

<u>12th grades</u>:

George Smith, Ron McDermott and Rolf Nijhuis will be Special Judges representing the MHCUG. Three awards will be presented by the MHCUG to the students with "the best use of computers" among the many science projects. Each Award will consist of a certificate plus a 1 year "family membership" to the MHCUG.

SIG reports for March 2010:

Technology... Q&A session with about 22 people attending

Upgrade/Repair... 19 people present

Digital Imaging... No Report

Ulster Computer... Was considering moving the meeting to the third Monday to accommodate two members but at least one member has to be at the library by 5:30 PM when the library closes. Until this is arranged, the meeting will remain on the third Tuesday.

At 7:00 pm, a motion was made by Jim Peabody, and seconded by Linda Ritch, to adjourn the Board Meeting. It was unanimously carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rolf Nijhuis \square

May MHCUG Meetings

Thursday, May 6, MHCUG Board meeting 5:30 p.m. Guardian Storage Building

Thursday, May 6, Technology Workshop 7:00 p.m. Guardian Storage -

Thursday, May 13 MHCUG General Meeting 6:30 p.m. Hudson Room, Mercury Grand Hotel-See page 2 for details

Thursday, May 20 , Upgrade and Repair 7:00 p.m. Guardian Storage Building

Thursday, May 27, Digital Media 7:00 p.m. Guardian Storage Building

All meetings at Guardian Storage are in room A23B \Box

Mid-Hudson Computer User Group, Inc.

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Vice President of-Programs - open

Vice President of-Activities - Dick Kranz

Secretary - open

Treasurer - Eli Cohen

Past President - Dan Sullivan

BoD members for 2010

Ron McDermott

Bob Morales

Ray Polivka

Ed Terpstra

Rolf Nijhuis

BoD members for 2010 and 2011

Bob Gieseler

Rolf Nijhuis

Jim Peabody

Linda Ritch

Standing Committees

WebSite: Jerry Clark

Database: Dan Sullivan 229-0241

Publicity: Edward Morzen 849-1231

SIG Chair: Jack Marsella 632-1478

Membership: Open

Monthly Meetings - Scheduled the second Thursday of every month. Check 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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