Saving and Sharing Photo Memories with Digital Slideshows

by Ron McDermott

Taking pictures is a lot easier these days. It seems like everyone has a digital camera, and, as a result, we tend to accumulate a lot of photos. The question is, "What do we do with them"? On Thursday, May 13th, we got some answers at the May General Meeting presentation, "Saving and Sharing Photo Memories with Digital Slideshows", presented by former member, Jerry Greenberg.

Jerry opened by making recommendations about the storage of photos. Of course, there are lots of options for this, but Jerry made a very persuasive argument in favor of using external hard drives. As cameras have evolved, the images they take have been growing in size. This requires that the storage devices for these photos must also grow, and continue to grow in the future. The burgeoning number of photos being taken simply adds to that necessary growth. Of our options, hard drives seem the only one that has the sheer size and growth potential to deal with the space demands. Jerry noted that one can set a price point of under $100, and within two years, the available storage space at that price point will at least double. Right now, less than $100 will get you a 1 terabyte drive at minimum, with 1.5 and 2 terabyte drives occasionally falling into that range. Such drives will easily hold thousands of photos. Besides the storage space available on hard drives, they also have, through folders/directories, built-in organizational and search capability. Add to that their considerable speed advantage over other storage options, and you have a winning combination of speed, convenience, and affordability.

He recommended that you keep TWO hard drives; one as a backup in case of failure. Although, as he said, a stored hard drive seldom wears out, it is prudent to plan for failure.

Jerry Greenberg

There are several options for external drives. Jerry recommended devices that have plug-in capability. There are external docks that allow you to plug in an assortment of drives; changing seamlessly from one to another in seconds. These external docks can be found with USB and/or E-SATA connections. An additional option would be to use docks that are installed directly into a bay in your case, in the same way as one installs a CD or DVD drive. Not only does this approach allow you to exchange drives, but you can also set up the drives to be bootable, so you can easily change the operation of your computer to suit specific needs. Jerry noted, for example, that the UBUNTU operating system, based on LINUX, is a wonderful environment for graphics; one that includes all your basic needs for free! You could easily set up a hard drive to boot UBUNTU, plug it in, and run

UBUNTU whenever you felt the need. Jerry recommended a website, WWW.DEALEXTREME.COM, as a reliable source for all things computer, including a wide variety of hard drive docks. Give it a look!

Ok, so we have our photos; we've stored them safely; we've backed them up – Now what do we do with them? Well, Jerry suggests we make slideshows out of them and share them with others! It turns out that it is pretty easy to set up a slideshow. PowerPoint (or free OpenOffice) will do it for you, for example. Depending on the version you have, you look for "slideshow" and find an option to use a photo album. Point the program to the photos you want to use, and it will create a set of slides with those photos. You can then add whatever effects you may want to the show. The show can then be sent to others via email, etc, and the recipient can then use PowerPoint (or OpenOffice) to view it, download the free PowerPoint viewer, or you could "package" your slideshow presentation, which would then include the viewer with the presentation itself, requiring no action on the part of the recipient.

Jerry spent some time, however, showing us a free program, FASTSTONE VIEWER, which he referred to as, "The Swiss army knife of viewers". Included in its capabilities is the creation of slideshows which would be packaged as EXE files and which would contain a built-in viewer. Note that some email accounts will not appreciate you trying to send EXE files, so there may be an additional step required to convert the file to a ZIP file (and then the recipient must UN-zip the file at his/her end).

Jerry finished his presentation by showing us how to set up the slideshow and process it onto a DVD, both for ease of usage, and to make the slideshow more available to those who may not have (or appreciate) computers, or those who would wish to see the results on a large screen, such as on a television. He showed us, briefly, a commercial program, ProShow Producer by Photodex, price about $250. This program is often used to produce products for commercial usage, TV broadcast, etc.

Alternatively, there is a very inexpensive alternative that will do most of what a casual user might require

called, ASHAMPOO SLIDESHOW STUDIO HD, price $20 (sometimes on sale for $10). As with ProShow Producer, you set up a folder with your images, point the program to that folder, and the program will set up the slides. Add music (optional), set the timing (to match music, perhaps), choose transition effects (which are applied randomly), and save as a DVD. Throw it in a DVD player, and instant slideshow! If you want to view it on a computer, you can use something like the free VLC Media Player to play it.
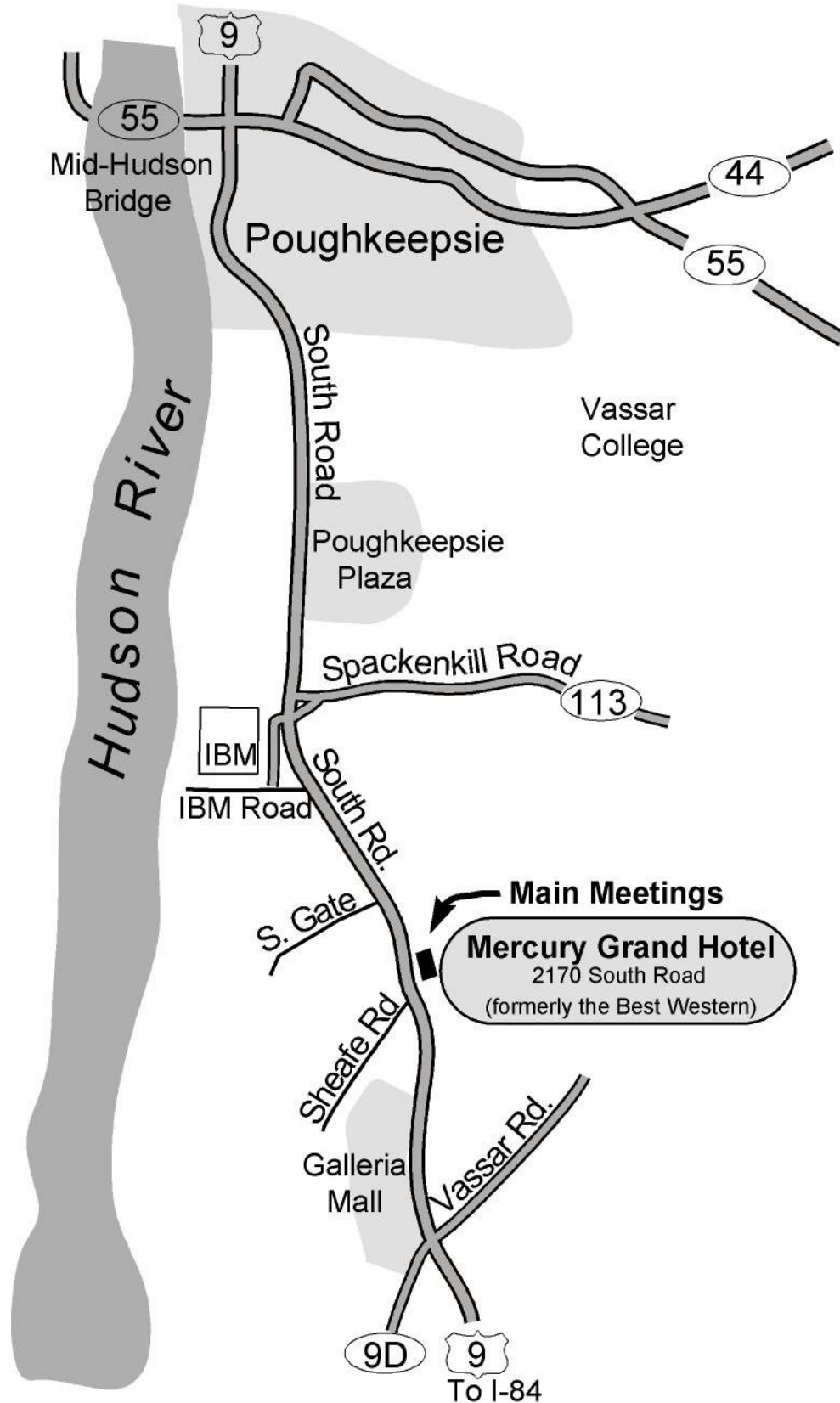
Overall, Jerry's presentation was well-received, and we all learned a lot about how we might use our photos to bring pleasure to others. Hopefully, we'll get a follow-up that focuses more on using the various programs themselves, as we barely scratched the surface of those capabilities. Wonderful stuff; thanks, Jerry, for a very enjoyable and informative presentation!□

Your 21st Century Library –More Than Just Books!

The Mid Hudson Computer User Group is proud to present speaker Faith Johnson, Director of the Town of Ulster Public Library. Faith will show us many of the computer related services and offerings of most Mid-Hudson libraries. You can do an extensive job search, create a resume, order current or older DVDs (chuck your Netflix account?), learn a foreign language online, repair you car with Chilton's auto repair manuals, request materials from any of over 60 member libraries, and so much more, and all from your home PC too! Most libraries offer free use of computers, and free wireless access for your laptop.

If you haven't been to your library in a while, now is the time to see what you're missing. Remember, your tax dollars fund the libraries, so reap your rewards! **See map on next page.**□

MHCUG MAIN MEETING LOCATION

9

55
Mid-Hudson
Bridge

Poughkeepsie

44

55

Hudson River

South Road

Vassar
College

Poughkeepsie
Plaza

Spackenkill Road

113

IBM

IBM Road

South Rd.

S. Gate

Main Meetings

Mercury Grand Hotel
2170 South Road
(formerly the Best Western)

Sheafe Rd.

Galleria
Mall

Vassar Rd.

9D   9
To I-84

Map created with OCAD software. Courtesy of Orienteering Unlimited.
(914) 248-5957   www.orienteeringunlimited.com

Technology Workshop

by Harry Elder

Our meeting on led May 6, 2010 was led by Dick Kranz.

Keep Out – Access Denied

Martin Feldberg had a file access issue. He was getting an 'access denied' message on Vista, where he was logged on as an administrator.   This often happens when user data is transferred from one machine to another.   Jeff Dowley attempted to demonstrate the manipulation of file and folder securities and permissions tabs. This can be tricky, but be patient. Windows does not want to make file access to non-locally owned files and folders easy; that would defeat the value of access controls. The solution is to start with properties for that folder or file by right clicking the icon. From there, you manipulate the security settings. You need to set yourself as an owner, and then set the access level you need, 'full' being the highest level.   I'm giving you a high level description, the devil is in the details (but so is the solution!).

Later in the evening Jim Peabody showed us his dual boot laptop. From Windows 7 he got an 'access denied' message when attempting to access data on the XP partition.   Rebooting to XP, Jeff showed us that the wired network connection for this machine is called 'local area connection 3'. There is an advanced tab under TCP/IP where you enable NetBIOS over TCP/IP, which will make the XP system visible from Windows 7. This is all under the properties of the NIC (Ethernet) card.

Now that the XP machine can be seen from Windows 7 (or Vista), you still have to share the files on the XP machine, in whole or part. Jeff chose to share the entire drive, which immediately prompted a cautionary note from Windows. Jeff also suggested to Marty that he disable 'simple file sharing' in Windows explorer.

By manipulating shares and permissions, along with User Groups in the control panel, you can get the desired combinations of access rights.   Jeff went into a lengthy, detailed explanation of access rights, ownership, etc. Dick Kranz quipped that I'll have some fun writing this!

Well, I have had successes with access controls, but I'm in no way an expert. There are plenty of resources on the Microsoft websites and others to help you out here.

Wants to Convert

Ray Polivka had some text files created with an older version of Lotus Word Pro, and asked if anyone knew how to convert the files to '.doc' the Microsoft Word format.   Open Office was suggested, but Ray said that that didn't work. Jack Marsella suggested using 'Disk Jockey File Viewer', from www.clear-simple.com.   There's a 30 day free trial. It will read almost any viewable file; perhaps it will read Lotus files?   It was also suggested that he type in the Lotus file type extension 'lwp' and the word 'reader' in Google.   Bob Morales uses a similar, free program called 'Power Desk'.   Jack Marsella recommends Power Desk Pro.

Blue Best Buy turns Green

Tom Townsend said that Best Buy will recycle almost any and all computer products, up to three items per day.   Hard drives must be removed first. There is a ten dollar charge for monitors (CRT?), but you get a ten dollar Best Buy store voucher. Details vary by state – see www.bestbuy.com/site/null/Recycling-Electronics/pcmcat149900050025.c?id=pcmcat149900050025.

Dick Kranz said that the Good Will store in Wappinger's Falls will recycle all of the PCs you have for free.   And Jeff Dowley said that Dell will recycle all Dell branded products.   Finally, Dick said that Dell buys all of the items recycled at Good Will.

Cloning Around

One attendee was installing Windows 7 Pro, and had questions on what disk cloning is. He asked if a new cloned hard drive will boot up as the original C: drive did. It should, but be careful. I recently cloned a hard drive for a friend, afterwards his copy of Auto-CAD wouldn't start, until he connected to the Inter-

net. It seems that some vendor's software registration is tied to particular computer real estate, like the CPU and hard drive descriptors. Obviously this is to prevent piracy. If you are replacing a hard drive by cloning or disk image backup and restore, check with your software vendors for licensing and recertification requirements first.

  Dan Sullivan suggested using Acronis True Image 2010, which backs up your entire OS and all data, either as a clone or disk image.   A clone is a true sector by sector copy of one hard drive to another. Ideally the hard drives are identical, but this is seldom the case. Ordinary cloning software will copy a hard drive of equal-to or greater than size, but superior cloning software, like Acronis, will let you clone to a smaller hard drive if all the data fits. The target partition size is adjusted, either manually or automatically. By contrast, a hard drive image creator will take all of the data, programs, registry, etc., of a hard drive and save it to a file, usually external. The image file is later used to recreate the original full hard drive on another physical drive, and it should be bootable if the source was an OS. The advantage of a hard drive image over a clone is that the image file is generally much smaller than the physical drive it represents, and it's very portable.   If you are cloning or imaging a dual boot system, you may have to do both at the same time, unless you have a separate boot loader.

A cloning tool Jack Marsella recommends is Easeus - www.easeus.com.   This is a free cloning, backup and recovery program. It also has other nice features, such as being able to find and recover deleted files that are not in the Windows recycle bin or trash folder. Easeus also has two premium products.

What's That hole?

This same attendee also wanted to know why his Blue Ray DVD player has an RJ45 port. Jeff Dowley says that it's for an Internet connection.   Ron McDermott thought that it may be for web sites like Netflix.

Runaway Mouse

Another attendee couldn't slow down the cursor speed of an optical wireless mouse for a laptop by changing the control panel mouse settings.   Jerry Clark said

that often there are two mouse drivers, the default driver, and the Synaptic driver.   You may have to look further in the mouse settings, such as 'advanced', for the Synaptic mouse drivers. Jeff Dowley said that there are touchpad settings for Synaptic touch pads, which are common on laptops, and that these drivers are often 'hidden' by the default Microsoft drivers. Either way, when you uncover the Synaptic settings, there are more advanced controls for the mouse and touchpad.

I've run out of time and space with this article. Many more interesting topics were discussed, hope you were there. If not, please join us at our next Technology Workshop. We meet at 7:00 PM on the first Thursday of each month, in room A23B of the Guardian Storage Building, Neptune Road in the Town of Poughkeepsie (behind Red Lobster).☐

The May 2010 Survey Says…

During the sign-in for the MHCUG's General Meeting held May 10, 2010 the following questions were asked:

1) *Have you ever used your computer to control unusual hardware (other than printers, scanners, etc?)*

Question 1)	Members: YES (%)	Members: NO (%)
Used Computer to control unusual hardware:	11	89

2) If "yes", what type?

Question 2)	Types of uses	# Members
If "yes":	Voice Control	1
	Data Collection	1
	GPS	1

With 28 members present, about 3 members or 11% of these indicated that they have used a computer to control unusual hardware. Three 3 different techniques were employed: Voice Control, Data Collection and GPS. ☐

All submissions for the Micro-chip 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

Minutes of the May 2010 MHCUG Board of Directors Meeting

The May 6th meeting of the MHCUG Board of Directors was called to order at 6:03 PM by Jeff Dowley, MHCUG President. This meeting is regularly held on the first Thursday of the month in Conference Room A23B of the Guardian Center which is located at 3 Neptune Road in Poughkeepsie. All Board meetings are open to the public.

Officers and Board members attending were Jeff Dowley, Dick Kranz, Eli Cohen, Bob Morales, Ron McDermott, Rolf Nijhuis, Jim Peabody, Ray Polivka, Linda Ritch, Dan Sullivan, Bob Gieseler and Ed Terpstra. Guest Peter Gum also attended.

A motion to approve the minutes of the March Board meeting was made by Rolf Nijhuis and seconded by Bob Morales. The motion was unanimously carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the amended April Board was made by Ray Polivka and seconded by Ron McDermott. The motion was unanimously approved. The spelling of Linda Ritch's last name was corrected

Treasurer Eli Cohen delivered the financial reports for March and April.

The positions of VP-Programs and Secretary remain unfilled.

Lloyd Quick will moderate the Q&A session at 6:30 PM preceding the presentation for the May General Meeting. Jerry Greenberg will make a presentation on saving and sharing photos.

Lead Story and Technology writers are needed.

Peter Gum is asking MHCUG to become involved with offering computer support to an organization of senior citizens. Peter will offer more information in the future.

A motion was made by Jim Peabody and seconded by Rolf Nijhuis to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Ed Terpstra

June MHCUG Meetings

Thursday, June 3, MHCUG Board meeting
5:30 p.m.   Guardian Storage Building

Thursday, June 3, Technology Workshop
7:00 p.m. Guardian Storage -

Thursday, June 10 MHCUG General Meeting
6:30 p.m. Hudson Room, Mercury Grand Hotel- See page 2 for details

Thursday, June 17 , Upgrade and Repair
7:00 p.m.   Guardian Storage Building

Thursday, June 24, Digital Media 7:00 p.m. Guardian Storage Building

All meetings at Guardian Storage are in room A23B □

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Special Interest Groups are for people with common computer interests—novice through expert. Call the group leader to verify schedule.

Upgrade/Repair

Leader: Dan Sullivan (845) 229-0241

e-mail: *dansull@optonline.net*

Schedule: 3rd Thursday 7:00 PM

Location: Guardian Storage (Neptune Road)

Room A23B

Technology Workshop

Leader: Dick Kranz

Tel: (845)297-1813, (845) 896-7376 or

(845) 265-4169 or e-mail:

dickkranz@optonline.net

Schedule: 1st Thursday , 7:00 PM

Location: Guardian Storage (Neptune Road)

Room A23B

Digital Photography

Schedule: 4th Thurs. 7:00 PM

Location: Guardian Storage (Neptune Road)

Room A23B

Ulster Computing Workshop

Leader: Robert Morales

Schedule: 3rd Thurs. 7:00 PM

Location: Esopus Library - Canal Street, Port Ewen NY

Interested in starting a Special

Interest Group?

Contact Jack Marsella

The MHCUG is a non-profit 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 (required) _____

I am enclosing a check for ‰ 1 ‰ 2 ‰ 3 yrs

(Students renew yearly)

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

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 _____

Mid-Hudson Computer User Group, Inc.

PO Box 1962

Poughkeepsie, NY 12601-0962

2010 Officers

President: Jeff Dowley

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.

microCHIP **staff**

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* **All area codes are 845 unless shown otherwise.**

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