



microCHIP

Mid-Hudson Computer User Group Inc.

Since 1977

www.mhcug.org

Volume 36, Issue 03 June 2011

What's New in Microsoft Office 2010?

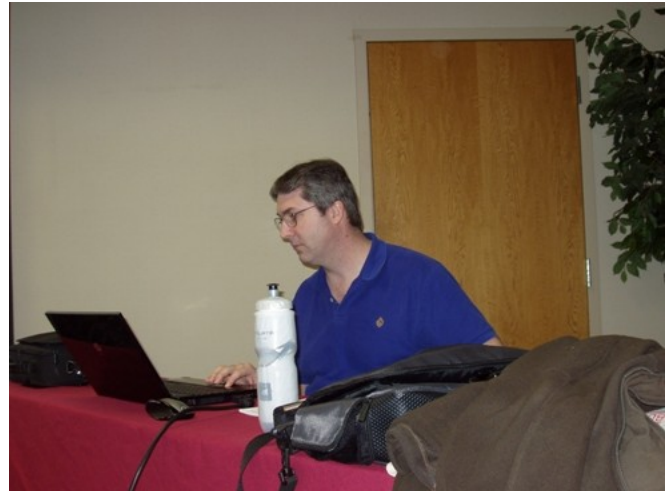
by Ron McDermott

April's General Meeting was highlighted by MHCUG President Jeff Dowley's very detailed presentation, "What's New in Microsoft Office 2010?" The physical demands of Office 2010 require a larger hard drive footprint (not quite double), but the ram memory requirements are very similar. Office 2010 can now save files in .pdf, as well as .odt formats.

Jeff started by pointing out the general features found throughout Office, chief among them being the next evolutionary step in the development of Office's new ergonomic interface, "The Ribbon". Found previously in Office 2007, the 2010 implementation is a context-sensitive banner of commands/features activated by selecting tabbed headings. "The Ribbon" has the virtue of grouping similar tools/capabilities physically as well as visually, and hovering the mouse over a tool/icon results, in many cases, in a preview of the output created by selecting that icon/tool. This preview feature is expanded from what was available in Office 2007. "The Ribbon" is user customizable; again, to a greater extent with Office 2010. As in Office 2007, there is a slider in the lower-right corner that allows for page magnification (or reduction), and hitting the 'Alt' key displays aids for employing shortcut keys to operate the visible tabs/commands. Brand new in Office 2010 is "Backstage View" which provides under-the-hood

information related to your document: available backups, metadata, etc. Also new, Office now has built-in photo editing options. Some Web-based software is also now included; SkyDrive, which allows for "cloud" storage, and elements of SharePoint, which enable augmented capabilities within Office for the purpose of multi-user collaboration.

Jeff went on to point out the new features found in individual components of Office.



MHCUG President Jeff Dowley

Word:

Word 2010 has expanded the capabilities of the outline view available in Word 2007 to include the Navigation Pane. In this expanded view, a document may be edited at outline level. Moving content around, re-ordering content, etc., can be done by simply moving the headings. This is much more efficient than doing block cut-and-paste operations over long documents.

This is also the view used for searches.

In addition to photo editing tools, Word now allows for Multi-photo overlay capabilities, so you can layer photos to produce a single image that incorporates multiple photos. These can also be added to the existing SmartArt capabilities.

Excel:

Sheets can be assigned trust privileges to avoid repetitive cautionary prompts.

Protected Mode viewing allows for visually scanning sheets without allowing program/command executions to take place. This offers some protection from malicious files. Cells can now contain graphics through the use of Sparklines. These can include charts, icons, etc. Excel natively supports multi-core chips.

PowerPivot is an extension that will handle very large data sets, and Excel 2010 now has expanded PivotTables capabilities. Included in Excel 2010 is the Solver add-in from Frontline Systems. This is not the same "solver" that old-timers may recall - TK Solver – but it has the same functional capability.

Outlook:

Outlook can be configured to clear prior content in e-mail threads, avoiding ever-growing responses in ongoing conversations. You can also use an "ignore button" if you've subscribed to a thread, but later decide you would like to abandon it. Subsequent messages are re-routed to trash (junk?). Calendar Groups can be used to access all the calendars for the members of a Team. Contact info can now be retrieved without exiting the message page. Voicemail can now be converted into e-mail.

We didn't have time to explore the new Powerpoint features.

Office 2010 has a large base of both expanded and new capabilities, a new and flexible interface, and there is a LOT to learn if you want to become an expert in its use. Jeff's presentation, however, showed that many of these changes have been made in order to make Office more intuitive, more easily configured, and to level out the learning curve. Jeff's presentation was well-received, and his PowerPoint presentation can be found at: : <http://www.mhcug.com/presentations/office2010.ppt>. □

Three Backup Programs

by Harry Elder

MHCUG club members Harry Elder, Peter Gum, and Bob Morales presented three free backup programs at our May main meeting.

I started off with a presentation of **Synctoy**. Synctoy is a popular free Microsoft download, whose main purpose is to keep two sets of folders updated to the latest level. For example, if you work on your documents partly on your desktop, and partly on your laptop, assuming that they're all the same set of documents, the two folders can get out of sync. Some of the files on your desk top can supersede those on your laptop, and vice-versa. Synctoy will update both folders to the latest levels.

So how does this accomplish backups? There are three options in Synctoy – 1) Synchronize (New and updated files are copied both ways.

Renames and deletes on either side are repeated on the other.); 2) Echo (New and updated files are copied left to right. Renames and deletes on the left are repeated on the right.); and 3) Contribute (New and updated files are copied left to right. Renames on the left are repeated on the right. No deletions.). The definitions are from Synctoy.



Harry Elder

The one you want for backup is 'Echo'. The danger with the 'Synchronize' option is that if you delete files or folders in your backup, those same files and folders will also be deleted in your main hard drive. Ouch!

If you chose 'Echo', your backup folder will always reflect your main folder. You could also chose 'Contribute', but your backup could increase in size to many times your that of your main folder. Most users will chose to backup the "Users" or "Documents and Settings" folder, and perhaps their username sub-folder. If you have other folders that are important to backup, choose those folders also.

Synctoy lets you create as many folder pairs as

you want. Synctoy designates the paired folders as 'left folder' and 'right folder'. For backups, consider the left folder to be your source, and the right folder as your destination. Be sure to backup to a separate hard drive. This may sound obvious, but if you don't do that, and your hard drive crashes, your backups are for naught.

Once you have your backups set up, and have tested them out a few times, set them to run automatically, on start-up, logon, or on a schedule, using Windows built-in task scheduler. Synctoy offers a full explanation on how to do that in its help section. Simply open Synctoy, then click 'help', then click 'Learn how to schedule Synctoy'. Find it at www.microsoft.com, click 'downloads', then search for Synctoy 2.1.

Peter Gum next presented **FreeFileSync**.



Peter Gum

Peter says "FreeFileSync is a free, open-source folder comparison and synchronization tool. In comparison with other similar tools it is relatively

simple to configure and easy to comprehend how the options work.” Judging from the comments section, it has enthusiastic support. Find it at <http://sourceforge.net/projects/freefilesync/> .

Bob Morales presented **Syncback Free**, from 2brightsparks. The company offers two other paid editions of SyncBack, but the free version may be all that you need. There is a well written User manual to download. The program offers a command line and a GUI version, and three operational modes – easy, expert, and runtime. Find it at <http://www.2brightsparks.com/>.



Bob Morales

So there you have a choice of three free backup programs to choose from. Hopefully one of them will be right for you. □



Upgrade and Repair

by Ray Polivka

On March 17, the monthly Upgrade and Repair group gathered. It was a full house with over 18 persons in attendance. While there were no sick computers this time, it was a lively meeting with much worthwhile information exchanged.

One attendee had a concern with Java. She could not get rid of the repeated Java upgrade messages. Our moderator took over her computer, brought the Java package up-to-date, and solved the message situation. In uninstalling the early version of Java and installing the most recent version, Java 6.24, several free application packages were discussed. Revo Uninstaller was used to uninstall the Java code. Revo Uninstaller is a replacement for the generic uninstaller code in Windows. It has four modes.

Mode 1 Run the uninstaller that comes with the application.

Mode 2 Uninstall without using the application's uninstall code base with only minimum disruption to the registry.

Mode 3 Use the Revo Uninstaller to do a thorough uninstall.

Mode 4 Do a forced uninstall to remove stubborn programs.

In this instance, Mode 3 was used since it created restore points as it proceeded; thus enabling backups. After Revo Uninstaller does the uninstall, it reports what it removed.

Even though Java was not managing itself, it is useful to keep it on your system. That led to the question of 'do we need to keep Java on our system?' - Yes, since it is a popular program for running applications on the web, even though it is not as popular as Flash. For example, both

Open Office and Libre Office use Java. You are often asked to install it to run a downloaded application if it were not there. After finishing installing the latest version of Java, JavaRa was used. This program checks to see if the computer has the latest version of Java Runtime Environment (JRE). If the latest version is not present, JavaRa will download and install the newer version by running Java's update program.

Could one use the Revo Uninstaller to uninstall Norton? The reply was not to use Revo Uninstaller, but rather use the Norton uninstalling software, Norton Eraser. It was also suggested that Norton Eraser be run before installing a new version of Norton. The general advice is to use the uninstalling software that comes with the product. Afterward, if things did not go well, use Revo Uninstaller or another outside product to do the uninstall. In Norton's case, it is called Symantec Removal Tool. The Norton Eraser runs through the computer and removes all Norton-related material. However, the Symantec Removal Tool will not remove all Norton-related software. Before using the Symantec Removal Tool, one should get the latest version. It is updated frequently. There is no version number related to any update. Each update goes by the same name. Finally, if you are going to install a new version of Norton, run the uninstall package first. Fortunately, with Norton's products, they will tell you in advance before installing a new product that some cleanup needs to be done.

One person reported that his computer is slowing down. If he turns it on early in the day it runs fine, but later in the day it doesn't. Originally, it was thought that Winlogon might be the problem. When it is running, nothing else is running. Winlogon is a basic part of the operating system. It is not removable. If it is not running correctly, nothing is likely to behave. It was felt that something is using up all the computer's resources.

Sometimes, restarting might help. The suggestion was made to do a screen capture of the processes that are running. Do this twice; once when the computer is running properly, and again when it is running poorly. Then a comparison can be made. There exists a built-in screen test in XP. With the PrtScn key, you can capture an image of the screen.

There exists a SysInternals Suite from Microsoft which will give you a lot of highly-detailed information about what is running on your computer. The author, Mark Russinovich, has bundled 68 of his utility programs into this suite. Process Explorer is one of the most popular. <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/>

One person reported that his CD/DVD drive doesn't work the way it should. On one of his computers, it will not start reading automatically. He has to take some explicit action. Also when he goes to the computer, he finds it is not listed there. The CD itself is not a problem since it can be recognized and run properly on another computer. At some point the CD drive is not being recognized. To confirm this, go to the control panel and click on administrative tools. From there, click in sequence the following:

Computer Management, System Tools, Device Manager, and then

DVD/CD - ROM drivers. There was a feeling that this CD problem may be caused by a prior virus problem that has not been cleared up.

In the course of discussing this problem, SFC (System File Checker) was mentioned. SFC is used to check whether the version of the operating system on this CD matches that on the hard drive. One must be careful using this program. For example, suppose the CD contains the original operating system used at installation time. If the CD is used to compare the operating system

upgraded with several service packs, SFC will return the operating system to its original installation status as it was on the CD. If you don't have an updated CD with the latest service pack, don't run SFC. Get help to avoid regressing to an earlier version of the operating system.

Windows had an update in February that changed the functionality of Autorun. Except for CDs, Autorun no longer has the ability to run from USB connected devices. The reason for this was to prevent viruses from getting into the system via a USB-attached device.

An interesting error situation was mentioned. Within a few minutes of turning on the computer, the error message "MSVCR80.DLL not found" came up. While one can continue running his computer, it is an annoying message and could later be a problem. Apparently, a DLL was corrupted. Another attendee recognized the message as one he had received too. In his case, installing AVG followed by Zone Alarm caused the same error message. When he installed Zone Alarm, followed by AVG, the error message did not occur. It is an AVG or a Zone Alarm problem. For DLL errors, the site [DLL - Error - Fixes.com](http://DLL-Error-Fixes.com) was recommended. This site addresses such DLL errors. Another good suggestion was made. Put the older DLL into the program folder and then put the newer DLL into the system folder. Windows always looks in the program folder first.

A brief discussion occurred concerning installing a SSHD (Solid State Hard Drive) on an older System. Installing a SSHD on an older system was not recommended. If one goes to StorageReview.com, one can find reviews on many such storage devices.

The issue of the performance of an older machine, lightly used was raised. Over time, it had slowed down significantly. While the questioner

had tried many different actions, none seem to improve the machine's performance. Many suggestions were forthcoming. Among the suggestions was to run ATF (Automatic Temporary File cleaner) and then the applications Malwarebytes and SuperAntiSpyware. It was further suggested to run these last two programs while disconnected from the Internet.

Our club's web site mhcug.org can give you access to ATF. Click on the links tab on the left sidebar. In the window that appears, click on "No Spyware -- MHCUG member site Perform Repairs now". This will bring up a window with a tab labeled, "Clean Up Now". Clicking on this tab will lead you to ATF.

In passing, Calibre, a free and open source item, was mentioned. It is e-book software that organizes, saves and manages e-books. It converts text files into the format of the device to be used. One comment made was that it is not an easy program to use.

Thus ended a very active evening. In conclusion, here is a summary of some applications mentioned in the course of the evening. This summary was provided to me by another attendee.

JaveRa

A utility which removes all old versions of Java; in particular, all versions of Java Runtime Environment (JRE). It is not supposed to remove or damage the current version. It can be run while Java is installing and running.

Revo Uninstaller

A utility to replace the native system function to "Add/Remove programs". It removes executables, DLLs and registry entries. The program is free, and downloaded from CNET. Warning: do not uninstall Norton with Revo; instead use Norton Eraser. It is also free.

Norton Eraser

It erases all Norton products (on the computer). It is not selective. At times, that may cause other applications to fail. Warning: Before running Norton Eraser back up your system in case it is damaged by this utility.

Sysinternals

This is a utility which provides more information about threads currently executing than you ever want to know. It was written by Mark Russinovich and Bryce Cogswell in the 90's. It was purchased by Microsoft and can be downloaded free. It is important to use the very latest version, as it changes frequently and is VERY sensitive to the internal structure of the OS.

SFC (System File Checker)

Use this only as a last resource and back up the system before using it!! It compares the files of the OS on the hard drive with files on a CD. If the CD is an earlier version than the installed system, this utility will roll back the level of the installed system to the level of the CD. The CD must have the latest version. For example, suppose that the current system on the hard drive is Windows XP SP3, and the CD contains just the base XP without any service packs. After running this utility, the installed system on the hard drive will be the base XP. □

Technology Update, April 2011

by Harry Elder

Parallel Processing

Gordon Sager treated us to an audio recording on the development and evolution of parallel computers. Interesting; thanks Gordon. We then discussed what operating systems and applications take advantage of parallelism. True parallel processing uses two or more separate CPUs, even if they are physically on one chip. The operating system controls what programs and processes run on each CPU. There is more overhead for the operating system to handle (over single CPU execution), but done right, parallelism can run circles around single-CPU machines.

Slip Streaming Away

Sam Patton wanted to know how to make a slip-streamed XP installation CD. This is where you make an install CD or DVD with all updates included, and perhaps include the latest drivers. With a slip-streamed CD, you install XP at the latest level, which is SP3. You are immediately less vulnerable to cyber attack when you connect to the Internet. There is a free utility called N-Lite that lets you easily build slip-streamed disks. <http://www.nliteos.com/index.html> There's also vLite for Vista on the same website. I found an excellent video on this in Scott Mueller's book "Upgrading and Repairing Windows". The video is on an included DVD that contains many useful and interesting topics. It's available from our local Mid-Hudson Library system.

Send in the Clones

Sam also had an issue cloning a hard drive from an older ThinkPad laptop using Apricorn software. He tried to clone the original 10 GB hard drive to a newer 60GB hard drive. The process

took over thirteen hours, but when he tried to boot from the cloned hard drive, he got a BIOS message that no hard drive was found. Ron McDermott thought that perhaps the 60 GB hard drive wasn't supported. A Google search yielded nothing. I asked if perhaps there was a thin boot partition on the original hard drive that might not have been cloned. Other possibilities mentioned were the drive's format – FAT, FAT32, and possible issues related to that. We couldn't come up with a good answer. Perhaps Acronis would work here.

Flash Software

Jeff Dowley told us that Microsoft now sells software that you download after buying, which you then install on your flash drive or CD/DVD. You make your media bootable using a special Microsoft utility. Download it from http://www.microsoftstore.com/store/msstore/html/pbPage.Help_Win7_usbdvd_dwnTool. Restrictions apply as to where the software can be installed, and the copies that you can make.

GOT JUNK E-MAIL??

Bob Morales has been getting a lot of junk e-mail alleging to be from Fed-Ex, DHL, UPS, etc., and also from banks, and they're all various types of spam and phish. Phish (phishing) e-mail tries to get you to give out your bank account numbers, passwords, etc., claiming to be from the actual banks or businesses themselves. They're 'fishing', and hope that you'll take the bait. Don't reply. Your real bank would never ask you to validate your information in an e-mail. The e-mail from the likes of Fed-Ex tell you that they have a package for you, or that they can't deliver, etc. They're also phishing for your personal data.

There be Dragons

In the fall of 2009 club member Ray Polivka gave us a presentation on Dragon Naturally Speaking, a popular voice recognition program from Nuance Software. Ray was now looking for the built-in Windows voice recognition program in Vista and Windows 7. The easiest way to find it is to type the word "speech" in the search area under the "Start" button. The list should show "Windows Speech Recognition" under the "programs" section of the search results. In Windows' own words, "Windows Speech Recognition in Windows ... empowers users to interact with their computers by voice. ... You can dictate documents and e-mails in mainstream applications using voice commands to start and switch between applications, control the operating system, and even fill out forms on the Web." Getting ready for another presentation for us Ray?

OCR

Ray also asked where to get a manual for OmniPage OCR. OCR stands for Optical Character Recognition, where scanned-in text is converted to type-able text. Typically OmniPage, or a competitor's OCR, comes with the purchase of a scanner or multi-function printer; usually a "light" version that just gets the job done. OmniPage is made by the same company that makes Dragon Naturally Speaking – Nuance Software. There is also paid version of OmniPage which is more robust.

Run-away Back Ups

Tom Townsend bought a one terabyte external hard drive for his backups. He partitioned it into four partitions. The problem he is having is that after backing up one computer to a partition, and then trying to backup a different computer to the 2nd partition, the external drive's software wants to also copy over the 1st partition's data to

the 2nd partition, and similarly for the 3rd and 4th partitions. This will max out his terabyte hard drive fast. The program wants to always backup the target computer plus all external devices attached to the computer, which in this case is the backup hard drive itself!

My Hero, Ubuntu

My turn. Once again, Ubuntu saved the day. A friend's RAID 1 system failed; reason unknown. Her son proceeded to re-install Windows 7 to only one of the hard drives, and then replace the User data from the 2nd hard drive. Problem was, the two hard drives were formatted as "dynamic" volumes. Huh? Normally for home computers, hard drives are formatted as "Simple Volumes". But as dynamic volumes, he couldn't see any data on the 2nd hard drive. My friend asked me to look at this. First, I attached the hard drive with an external adapter to Windows. Disk Management showed it as "foreign, unknown". Next, I booted up an Ubuntu Live CD, attached the "dynamic" hard drive as an external device, and voila! All the original Windows files and folders appeared, ready for me to copy to another external hard drive.

Linux is great at looking at NTFS (modern Windows) formatted hard drives, even though it's not the file system format that Linux uses. Ubuntu is the most popular distro of Linux available. Linux typically ignores Windows ownership and permissions, and lets you copy and modify nearly anything on a Windows volume. It's very powerful, but with power comes responsibility. You could overwrite folders and files if you're not careful.

Monitor Down

A new guest came to us with a problem. He had a dual monitor set-up for a laptop, where two monitors are configured as one to display in landscape mode. He claimed that after downloading

"Nook" software at Barnes and Noble, he was never able to get the second monitor to configure correctly. Various suggestions from other club members to look into his display settings were to no avail, he said that he tried them all with no resolution (no pun) to his problem. We were stumped here.

Acronis Issue

Rolf Nijhuis had a question regarding Acronis 2011 backups. When he went to backup his Windows 7 machine, Acronis showed him his main "C:" drive, and a small (16M) FAT partition. He wondered if he should backup both. In my experience, simply checking the entire hard drive is sufficient, it picks up all partitions. In Rolf's case, the extra partition is minuscule compared to the main partition. Jeff explained that sometimes a hard drive is formatted with unused, un-addressable space. Rolf can always select the 'sector by sector' option, although that consumes a lot more backup space. One definitive way to experiment would be to have an extra SATA hard drive to restore to, and test whether various backup options work correctly.

We ended at 9:00 PM. Our next meeting is on the 1st Thursday of each month, Guardian Storage, 3 Neptune Road, Town of Poughkeepsie, behind Red Lobster, at 7:00 PM. We're in conference room A23B. See you there.□



Results of the 2010 Dutchess County Regional Science Fair

by George Smith

Our User Group participated in the 52nd Annual Dutchess County Regional Science Fair held at Dutchess County Community College on April 2, 2011. 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 Engineering in particular, and to encourage interest in scientific thought: forming a hypothesis, and then experimenting and using data to test the validity of an idea.

Each participant was judged on the basis of the 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". The MHCUG also requires 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 results 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 Brian Lei from Arlington High School. He received our top award of \$50, a certificate, and a one-year MHCUG membership for his project entitled "Empirical Tests of Failure Modes of Different Methods of Preliminary Orbit Determination for Near-Earth Asteroids." Brian's project involved making observations of an Asteroid using a remote telescope, analyzing the data using programs he wrote that implemented different orbit determining algorithms, and evaluated the results, comparing them with those developed by professionals and noting the strengths and weaknesses of his approaches. Congratulations Brian!

Our second place award this year went to Luke Sendelbach of St. Mary (Fishkill) School. Luke received \$30, a certificate, and a one-year MHCUG membership for his project entitled "Accuracy of Gaseous PVT Equations of State." Luke analyzed measurements of gas pressure, volume, and temperature (PVT) and compared the results to the theoretical values. Congratulations Luke!

Our final award this year went to Hannah G. Bocker of St. Martin de Porres School. She received \$20, a certificate, and a one-year MHCUG membership for her project entitled "The Glass Armonica." Hannah used her computer to record the sounds produced by rubbing glasses that were partially filled with water and then analyzed the frequency spectrum of the results. Congratulations Hannah!

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

Upgrade and Repair

by Ray Polivka

The Upgrade and Repair Special Interest Group gathered once again on **May 19**. Once more it was a full house with over 18 attendees. One person had a restore problem. He tried four different restore points, but each failed. He got the message, "Your computer cannot be restored." Several questions were asked in trying to fathom the problem. Other persons also said that they encountered the problem. One said that hers was related to removing Firefox. The comment, "Never depend on a restore", was also mentioned.

One person reported being unable to download e-books with the Calibre program. Unfortunately, no one in attendance uses that program and therefore we were unable to provide any help. PowerPoint was the center of the next discussion. The goal is to be able to move quickly from one slide to another a good distance away, without stepping through the other slides in between. After much discussion, the conclusion was that there was not an easy, direct way. One suggested way was to come out of the slideshow. Then, with the sidebar showing all the slides, one could scroll to the desired slide and then return to the slideshow at that point. This was not satisfactory to the questioner since one would be bouncing in and out of the slideshow.

(Note: After the meeting, the questioner found a more satisfactory way. Without leaving the slideshow, one can do a right-click. This produces a listing of all of the slides. This enables the presenter to scroll and select the desired slide.)

One of the attendees had a 1986, wide-carriage printer malfunction. He needed it repaired, since he required it to print on double NCR paper. In running the rather ancient printer, he used a DOS

-based program, ENABLE, to do the printing. If you have a situation where you wish to use a rather old printer, he did recommend calling the printer manufacturer to find out what generic driver they recommended.

A rather unusual situation was reported. This person's cat ate the wire going into his laptop and it, of course, shorted out the system. He purchased a new power cord, but the system remained dead. One suggestion was to try running the laptop without the battery. However, that didn't work either. After some discussion, the final suggestion was to "take it to the shop".

Another person reported frequently getting an error message which ended with, "Continue?" If he continued, things went normally. He kept getting the same message every time he changed the screen. The suspicion was that there is a missing bit of code. Again, several persons reported getting the same message with Firefox. Ultimately he wanted to just get rid of that message. One suggestion was to write down in detail the message and then Google it.

What is a good registry cleaner? One person suggested Easy Cleaner. There was also a warning issued about using CCleaner. It is a powerful program; using it incorrectly can cause serious problems. A demonstration of Easy Cleaner followed. www.piriform.com/ccleaner

With that, the evening of exchanging information came to a close.

Technology Update May, 2011

by Harry Elder

Slow Internet Connection?

Neil Christiansen offered a suggestion for those with slow Internet response - switch your DNS to use Google's public DNS servers. Your DNS server is the first place that's checked to resolve URLs into IP addresses. It's sort of like getting an exact telephone number, including country code and area code, by using a person's name and address in a telephone directory. People understand "John Doe, Westfield, Ohio", but the phone system only understands numbers. Your DNS server is an Internet telephone book, and is typically set automatically by your ISP, but you can change it and hopefully improve your Internet response. Find out how, and read more about this, at <http://code.google.com/speed/public-dns/docs/using.html>. Another useful site to explore DNS metrics is Gibson Research's "Domain Name Speed Benchmark" at <https://www.grc.com/dns/benchmark.htm>.

Jeff Dowley points out another good reason to set up your DNS provider overtly. If you enter an incorrect web address, for example "www.nytimes.com", your ISP or DSN provider may have an agreement with certain companies to redirect you to sites that they think, or hope, you may want to click on. It's a tricky kind of advertising thrust on you when you go astray by not typing correctly. The way to avoid this exposure is to try various DNS servers yourself, and see if entering invalid URLs simply gives you a "404" message (web site not found), or some "choices" of other websites to pick from. You want to use the DNS that gives you a vanilla 404 message.

Whoa on Ubuntu 11.04

MHCUG president Jeff Dowley heard from the lo-

cal Linux Users Group that Ubuntu 11.04 is a bit "buggy". It seems that Ubuntu has a new windows manager that is quite different from the older versions. You may want to continue using Ubuntu 10.10 for a while. I noticed that Ubuntu now comes with "Libre Office", not "Open Office". Jeff said that Libre Office was forked away from Open Office by some of its developers, and is committed to remain free and open source. Open Office, recently acquired by Oracle when Oracle bought Sun, tried to make Open Office priced. That effort stalled, but Libre Office, under the aegis of "Document Foundation", will remain "open". Download it at <http://www.documentfoundation.org/>.

Regedit Perils

A guest asked about doing registry editing. It's rare that anyone needs to edit the registry; most applications make necessary changes for you silently. But if you do need to make a change, backup the registry first. I suggested that you create a restore point in System Restore. You can even recover restore points in the recovery console, that is, pre-boot up. Dan Sullivan said that System Restore can fail, he and others suggested using a more direct method of backing up and restoring the registry, such as the "import" and "export" functions in "regedit". What if you mess up your new registry so badly that you can't boot up or logon? Jeff says that there are advanced recovery options for this, but they're not trivial. A really big hammer (backup method) that you can use is Acronis backup and restore. That would backup your whole machine. Moral? Proceed carefully!

Bargains? Share the Wealth!

MHCUG club members can share bargain information with other members. Since deals and specials come and go quickly, we need a way to

get the information out ASAP. Active club members can sign up at <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/MHCUG-Deals/>.

Hot CPU

Ray Polivka told us that his friend's Dell mini-tower always shuts down after powering up. He suspected an issue with over-heating, because when he opened up the machine, it seemed like the CPU's heat sink had come loose. He wanted to know how to re-attach it. Most heat sinks are mechanically attached to the CPU, so you basically need to remove the old thermal paste from the top of the CPU and the bottom of the heat sink; reapply new compound, spread very thinly, and covering the full area of the CPU; then re-attach the heat sink and the heat sink fan. I'm not giving a full explanation of the process here, just a general idea. There are many good web sites that explain this in detail. If you want to know how hot, or cool, your CPU is running, download and install Speedfan - <http://www.almico.com/speedfan.php>. Yeah, it's free.

Time Out

Ray also asked us why his Vista screen "timed out" when he left his computer alone for a short while. We guessed that he had screen saver turned on, along with the option to present the login screen on resume. To fix that, right click an empty area of the desktop and then click 'personalize'. Change your screen saver settings and background; or set it to 'none'. You can also select 'power options' in the screen saver window; this will allow you to set the screen, or the whole machine, to sleep or shutdown after a set period of inactivity. This also applies to Windows 7 and XP.

Hey, You, Get Into Your Cloud

Dan Sullivan discussed Dropbox, a popular cloud

backup or file transfer service. When you sign up for Dropbox, you get a free 2GB account. 50GB costs \$99/year, 100GB is \$199/year. This is a great way to sync folders or files across two different computers, especially those located far away from each other. You can also use Dropbox to send large folders or files to someone else, where they're too large to attach in e-mail. If they fit into your Dropbox space, simply upload them, and then send your receiver an e-mail link to receive them. It's all password protected too. Dan told us that there's an iPod app that automatically runs Dropbox. Dan also uses Dropbox to manage his passwords. He keeps all of his passwords in "Keepass"; they're all encrypted there. He keeps his KeePass file in Dropbox, so that he always has his latest passwords available to him anywhere. Currently, there's a promotion where if you invite someone to Dropbox, the inviter and invitee each get an additional 250MB added to their accounts. <http://www.dropbox.com/>.

Bob Morales asked if there's a file size transfer limit in Dropbox. There isn't if you download and install Dropbox on your system; up to the size of your Dropbox. The upload limit is 300MB if you're only using the web application.

Dropbox concerns

Charlie Patterson heard on an Internet broadcast with Steve Gibson, of SpinRite fame, that there are issues with Dropbox's encryption, but there is a fix that you can use. We then got into a lively debate on security, and how important it is for the average user, relative to cloud computing.

Nothing But Blu-rays From Now On

How long can you trust CDs or DVDs that you create before they deteriorate? They can deteriorate over time, due to exposure, scratching,

and even to the quality of the disc itself. Bob Morales told us that he just talked to someone who does this professionally; that is, archives data to disc media. His friend is now advocating storing everything on Blu-ray DVDs. He claims that Blu-ray technology is far superior to ordinary DVD or CD media. One thing for certain is that Blu-rays can store a lot more data than DVDs can – between 25 to 50 GBs worth.

Our subsequent meetings are on the 1st Thursday of each month, Guardian Storage, Route 9, Town of Poughkeepsie, behind Red Lobster, at 7:00 PM. We're in conference room A23B. See you there.□

The Continuing Struggle

Ray Polivka

In the medical world, there is a continuing concern about superbugs that become resistant to most known antibiotics. The one that is currently of special concern is a superbug which produces an enzyme that gives the bacteria enhanced resistance to most known antibiotics. This enzyme, "New Delhi metallo-beta-lactamase", NDM-1 for short, is allowing bacteria to resist the antibiotics used in hospitals to fight off difficult infections. Its name derives from the fact that it was found widespread in New Delhi, India circulating through the sewage, drains, and tap water of the city. While currently it is found mainly on the Indian subcontinent, the World Health Organization is concerned that it may be spreading quite rapidly. It was recently found to have appeared in England too. Should it spread, it would have a serious effect on hospitals in their fight against infections after surgeries. This is further compounded in that there are fewer new classes of antibiotics appearing. In the last 30 years, only two new classes of antibiotics appeared. In con-

trast, in the previous 50 years, 11 new classes of antibiotics appeared. The lack of new antibiotics is a problem since antibiotics over time lose their effectiveness as bacteria evolve, mutate, and become resistant. Indeed, this is serious. Is there perhaps another way?

On April 4, the Wall Street Journal ran an interesting large article entitled "Big Blue's Tiny Bug Zapper". IBM, in cooperation with the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology in Singapore, developed a tiny drug called a nanoparticle. In test tube experiments, it was able to destroy the antibiotic resistant bacteria MRSA (Methicillin--Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) without destroying other bacteria. The nanoparticle, 50,000 times smaller than a human hair, is given a specific electrical charge. This charge is opposite to that charge on the membrane surrounding the MRSA bacteria. Thus as the nanoparticle is attracted to the MRSA bacteria it drills holes in its membrane and destroys the bacteria. In destroying the bacteria it makes it unlikely to develop a resistance to the attacking nanoparticle. This would appear to be a different way to develop drugs; fascinating. Of course, much more research needs to be done. It will be several years before it appears in common use. IBM is currently trying to interest a drug company.

So goes the continuing struggle between man and nature.□

Monthly MHCUG Meetings

Check mhcug.org for updates

1st Thursday, MHCUG Board meeting 6:00 PM
Guardian Storage Building

1st Thursday, Technology Workshop 7:00 PM
Guardian Storage

2nd Thursday, MHCUG General Meeting
6:30 PM Hudson Room, Clarion Hotel and Conference Center

3rd Thursday, Upgrade and Repair 7:00 p.m.
Guardian Storage Building

3rd Tuesday, Ulster Computing Workshop
7:00 PM Esopus Library - Canal Street, Port Ewen, NY

4th Thursday, Digital Media 7:00 p.m. Guardian Storage Building - except November and December

All meetings at Guardian Storage are in room A23B ☐

All submissions for the Micro-chip must be in the hands of the editor 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

You're Invited ! - to our monthly MHCUG Main Meeting.

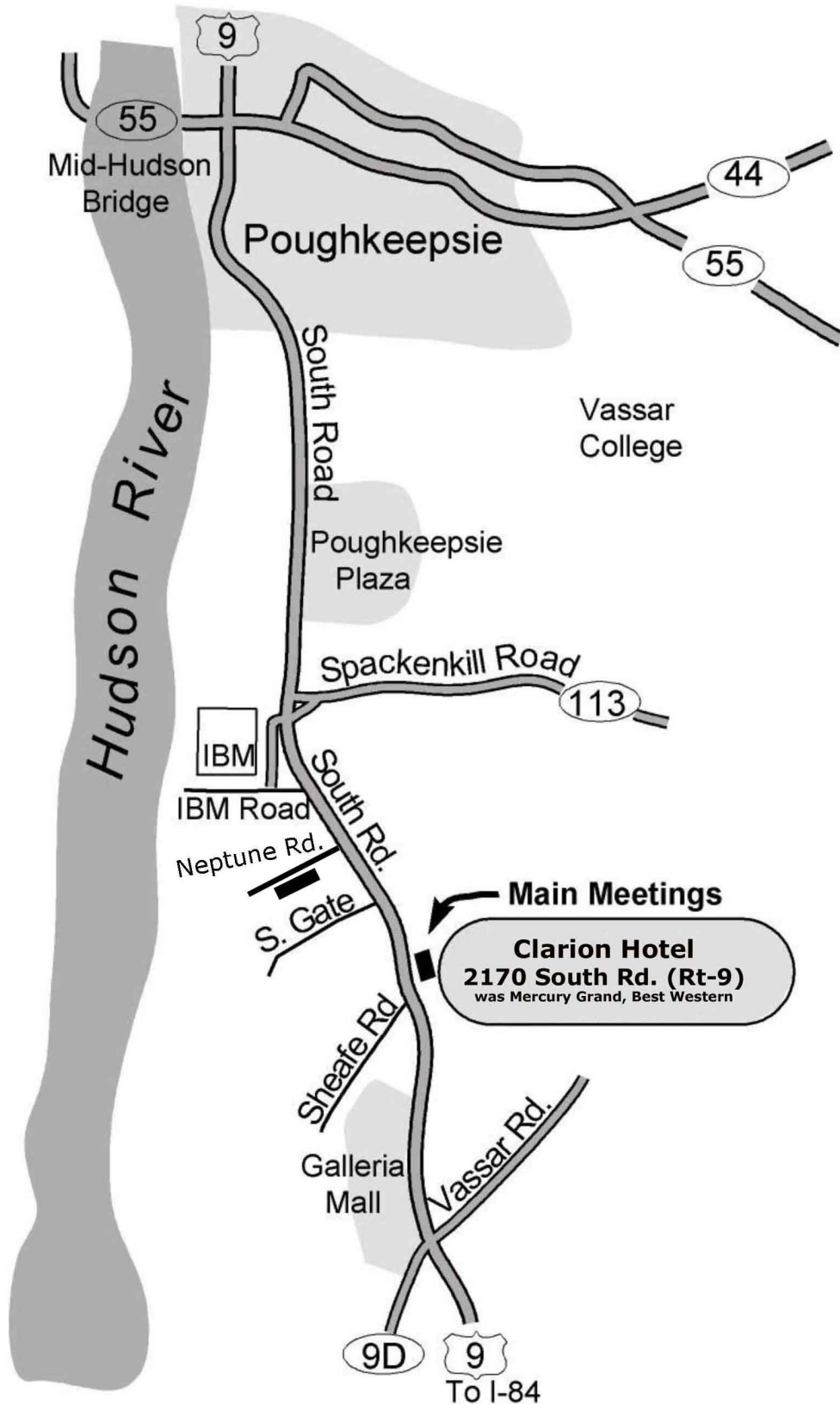
It's held at the newly renamed Clarion Hotel, formerly Mercury Grand Hotel, Rt 9, Town of Poughkeepsie. We meet in the Hudson Room on the 2nd floor. At 6:30 PM we have a Q&A session—bring your computer questions, or help us to answer them. At 7:00 PM we have a short business meeting, followed up by our feature presentation. It's always interesting and informative, and always free and open to the public. Bring a friend, or two, or more.

For a description of our upcoming main meeting presentation, see our 'new' section of mhcug.org. We try to post the information one week in advance, but check before coming for last minute changes.☐

See map on next page



MHCUG Main Meeting Locations



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

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

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

Technology Workshop

Leader: Dick Kranz

Tel: (845)297-1813 or (845) 265-4169 or e-mail: *dickkranz (at) Optonline.net*

Schedule: 1st Thursday 7:00 PM

Location: Guardian Storage (3 Neptune Road)
Room A23B

Ulster Computing Workshop

Leader: Robert Morales

Schedule: 3rd Tuesday 7:00 PM

Location: Esopus Library - Canal Street, Port Ewen NY

Upgrade/Repair

Leader: Jeff Dowley (845) 453-2754

e-mail: *j.dowley (at) hotmail.com*

Schedule: 3rd 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

POLICY AND LIABILITY WAIVER

COPYRIGHT, REPRODUCTION

This publication is produced and copyrighted by the Mid-Hudson Computer User Group, Inc. (MHCUG).

Reproduction of any material appearing in this publication is prohibited with the following exception: Permission is granted to nonprofit computer user groups to reprint in their newsletters material appearing in this publication.

Reprinted material must give credit to the author and the Mid-Hudson Computer User Group, and a copy of the newsletter in which it appears should be sent to:

MHCUG (Reprints), Mid-Hudson Computer User Group, Inc.; PO Box 1962 Poughkeepsie, NY 12601-0962

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the editors and authors; not necessarily those of the MHCUG. Mention of a product does not constitute an endorsement of the product by the MHCUG.

MHCUG, contributors, and the newsletter editor do not assume any liability for damages arising out of the publication or non-publication of any advertisement, article, or any other item in this newsletter

Advice given is for entertainment purposes only. The information is true at the time of publication to the best of our knowledge. Any computer usage or repair advice is based on the reader researching it sufficiently before using it.

Computer advice given is based on a general question on computers. Every computer is set up differently. Be sure to backup before making changes. MHCUG does not accept any responsibility for the use or misuse of the advice provided. □

Mid-Hudson Computer User Group, Inc.**PO Box 1962****Poughkeepsie, NY 12601-0962****2011 Officers**

President: Jeff Dowley

Vice President of-Programs - open

Vice President of-Activities - Dick Kranz

Secretary - open

Treasurer - Linda Ritch

Past President - Dan Sullivan

BoD members for 2011

Jerry Clark

Martin Feldberg

Bob Gieseler

Ron McDermott

Bob Morales

Rolf Nijhuis

Ray Polivka

Ed Terpstra

Standing Committees

WebSite: Jerry Clark

Database: Dan Sullivan 229-0241

Publicity: Edward Morzen 849-1231

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 unexpect-

edly.

microCHIP staff

Harry Elder, Editor, e-mail: editor (at) mhcug.org

Advertising

Peter Dowley, Ad Manager, e-mail: pdowley (at) junos.com * 889-4850

Ad Rate Sheet: www.mhcug.org/library.htm* **All area codes are 845 unless shown otherwise.****Website: www.mhcug.org**

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 _____