

# WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

**Computer Group** Nov-Dec 2010

## Some Simple Search Tricks

Do you need some important, up-to-date information in a hurry? Instead of taking the long way around, go directly to your web browser (e.g., Internet Explorer or Google Chrome), and get the information you need by just typing the following into the address box (i.e., the box which usually has `http://www.xxx.com`). These tricks let you skip the multistep clicking and sifting that is normally required. (No quotation marks are needed.)

**What's playing at the multiplex?** "Movies in" + ZIP code gets you the list.

**Where's my package?** If you have the UPS, FedEx, or office tracking code, type it in and you'll have your answer.

**Is it time to pick up Daughter at Philly Airport, or can I wrap another present?** Skip the unfriendly skies of an airline's site. Type in the airline and a flight number and get the status.

**Am I rich yet?** The stock-ticker symbol and "stock" brings up the price of a share.

**A pint is how many ounces?** A dollar is how many euros? Fifteen hundred yards is how many miles? "Pint in ounces," "dollar in euros," or "1,500 yards in miles" gets you the conversions you need.

**Do I need an umbrella or snowshoes?** "Weather" and your ZIP code tells you how to dress appropriately.

**Who won?** Type in the name of your baseball or football team and Google lets you know the score.

**What time is it in Paris?** "Paris time" tells you whether they are eating croissants at breakfast or croque-monsieurs at lunch. Or, pasta in Rome ("Rome time"), or lutefisk in Oslo ("Oslo time").

**Driving into Philadelphia or to New York?** "Schuylkill Expressway traffic" or "NJ Turnpike traffic" will help you to decide whether to take the train.

*Adapted from Dec 2010-Jan 2011 Reader's Digest*

## Another Teaser

Joe Spampinato



This issue's challenge results from a recent experience I had upgrading an WHV user from dialup to DSL internet service. She had purchased the Verizon DSL installation kit and asked me to hook it up for her. Although the hardware and software installation was perfunctory, getting the system to connect to the internet was another matter. Fixing this required a Verizon service call to change an outside telephone connection.

While the service call now provided the promised high speed internet connectivity and access to a Verizon email account, there remained another problem which stumped me for days: rather than Verizon's email, the user preferred maintaining her Outlook Express (OE), which contained her address book and was a familiar interface.

Despite following the detailed instructions for setting up the DSL account in OE, I couldn't get it to work properly. OE accepted incoming emails, but would not process outgoing messages. In multiple visits to the user, I tried everything I could think of to fix the problem, without success. My last visit and action finally resolved it.

*See page 5 for the resolution.*

## What You Need to Know When Buying a Notebook Computer

Laptop PC prices have continued to fall this year for all categories except the very cheapest netbooks. Meanwhile, performance and features have kept increasing, giving consumers incredible buying power and plenty of options .

**Four general classes of laptops remain on the market:**

**Netbooks** — Inexpensive and designed for tossing into a backpack or briefcase, netbooks typically have just enough power for checking the occasional e-mail or web page, and that's about it. Screen sizes are generally between 8 and 12 inches. *(Per Bob Curley, our November speaker, they are on the verge of being obsolete.)*

**Ultralights** — Many ultralights now pack as much power as mainstream machines while providing low weight, slim profile, and, in most cases, good looks, too. Screens run between 11 and 13 inches in size. However, prices are sky-high.

**Mainstream Notebooks** — The “mainstream” now includes a wide selection of laptops from 13 to 16 inches in size. Price and performance vary widely, but you will rarely pay more than \$1,000 for a solid mainstream notebook today, and often much less. *(I have purchased 4 laptops over the years; the latest two were under \$800. Microcenter in St. Davids has a wide selection of refurbished and new machines ranging from \$300 to \$600.)*



## Notebooks, continued.

**Desktop Replacements** — Relatively rare now, these 17-inch-and-up notebooks are designed to stay put rather than be toted around. Desktop replacements sacrifice low weight and trim size in order to pack as much power into the machine as possible, but prices can run two to 10 times that of a typical mainstream notebook.

### Key Laptop Features

So, how does one go about sifting through the mess of terms and acronyms to determine which laptop to buy? Here are some suggestions:

**Screen Size and Resolution** — The most important consideration in your buying decision. Only you know how much screen you need — *(Bob Curley recommends no smaller than 15 or 16 inches)*. Also pay close attention to the screen's resolution. A 1600 x 900-pixel screen can pack 37 percent more information on the screen than a 1366 x 768-pixel display, regardless of the physical size of the display.

**RAM** — No computer today should be without 3 GB of RAM minimum, and 4 GB is standard.

**CPU** — Intel's Core i3 processors work well for most purposes. AMD's latest releases of the Athlon II are roughly on par with the Core i3 and can save you \$100 or so. *(Bob Curley and I like AMD.)*

**Graphics** — Integrated graphics capability is adequate for most purposes. If you plan to play any game beyond Solitaire, or want to make use of Windows' niftier graphical tricks, you'll want discrete graphics. Both Nvidia or ATI chips work well.

**Optical Drive** — DVD with Read/Write is generally standard and recommended.

**Hard Drive** — 320 GB has been the standard this year, and 500 GB is quickly taking over. There's little need for most users to upgrade from there.

**Web Camera** — If you anticipate using the laptop for Skype messaging with video, getting one with a built-in webcam is recommended.

**Memory Card Reader** — If you travel with your laptop and want to email some of your digital pictures back home, the inclusion of a built-in memory card reader will eliminate the need to carry an extra USB cable for your camera.

*Adapted from WIRED Online, November 23, 2010*



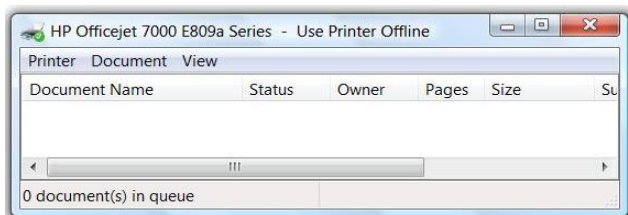
## Addressing Printing Problems

How Gregg

**Don't Touch That Print Button** when the printer doesn't start printing something you've sent to it. Instead, look at the printer to see if it jammed or doesn't have paper. Check the printer connections. Usually a light flashes on the printer if something is wrong. If you keep hitting the print button without fixing the printer, all that happens is you get another copy of the same thing sitting in the Print Queue waiting to be printed. When you correct the printer problem, they will all print, one after the other until the queue is empty.

So, check the **Print Queue** to see if there are multiple copies of the same thing sitting in it first. If there are, here's what to do to get rid of them before you print:

- Click on **Start** then Click on **Control Panel**
- In the window that Opens, Select **Printers**
- Left Click on the **Printer Icon** and a **Queue Window** (see below) opens



Queue Window

- Look at the **Document Name** in the queue window to see if you have more than one of the same document in it
- If you do have multiple copies. Click on the word **Printer**, then click on **Cancel All Documents**
- When they all disappear (and this can take a while), close the window
- Then, fix the printer and press on the **Print Button** to print a single copy.

## Dropbox: File Synching and Sharing Made Easy

Every once in a while some product — or service, in this case — comes along that we soon find we can't live without. Dropbox, an online file-synchronization, -sharing, and -backup service, fits that category. Dropbox is one of those simple applications that, once installed, quickly become an indispensable part of your computing process.

Keeping files synched between PCs has always been a bit of a drag — not as in drag-and-drop, but as in multistep tedium. Now that nearly every PC user has access to the internet, file sharing has moved into the cloud — and added collaboration and file backup as new services. There is a horde of these sites. Alas, most involve signing onto a password-protected entry site to accomplish anything. But not Dropbox — a small application that saves you immense amounts of time and effort.

Once set up, Dropbox becomes just another folder on your PC — or your Mac, iPad, smartphone, or other computing device that can display documents. Your files are stored both locally in your Dropbox folder and online on the service's servers. You can back up, share, and synch any file merely by dragging the file into the Dropbox folder on your desktop. Any changes made to files in Dropbox are automatically updated in all other linked Dropbox folders in other devices, as long as you are connected (or when you reconnect) to the Internet.

One nice feature: Dropbox let's you transfer photos from your iPhone to your PC without the hassle of connecting the phone to the computer.

Dropbox works with all versions of Windows, but interestingly its folder retains the classic Windows XP Explorer look. (And its help screens default to Windows XP instructions.)

The free Dropbox Basic lets you store up to 2GB of data in the cloud. Pro50 provides 50GB of storage for \$10 per month or \$99 per year, and Pro100 is \$20 per month or \$199 per year.

Thanks to Michael Lasky at Windows Secrets.com

### Notable Quotes

*Good writing is the hardest form of thinking. It involves the agony of turning profoundly difficult thoughts into lucid form, then forcing them into the tight-fitting uniform of language, making them visible and clear.*

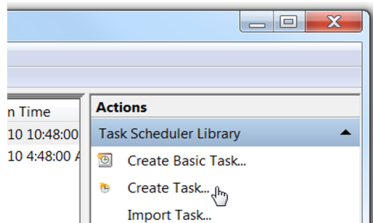
**Pat Conroy - My Reading Life**

# How to Automate Your Computer Shut-down

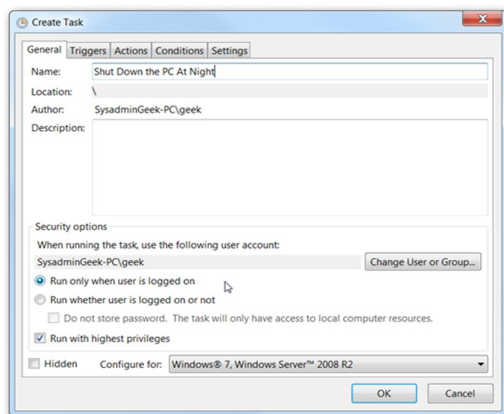
If you normally like to power off your PC when you're not using it, do you ever forget and leave it on? Here's how to configure Windows to automatically power down at night, but only if you're not using the PC at the time. These step-by-step instructions make a seemingly complicated task simple.

To accomplish this, we'll setup a Task Scheduler job that tells the computer to shut down, and make sure to configure the rules so that it doesn't kick in if you are up late using the PC.

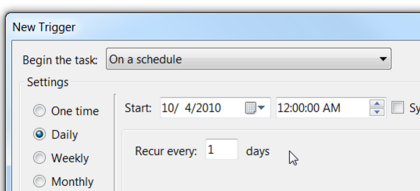
1. Find Task Scheduler under All Programs/ Accessories/System Tools and open it. Click the Create Task link on the right-hand side.



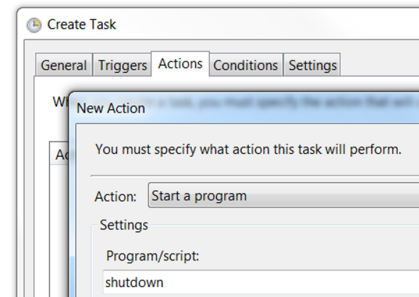
2. Give the task a name ("Shut down the PC At Night"), and make sure to check the box for "Run with highest privileges", since the shutdown utility requires administrator access. The *Author* and *User* boxes will automatically have the right entries.



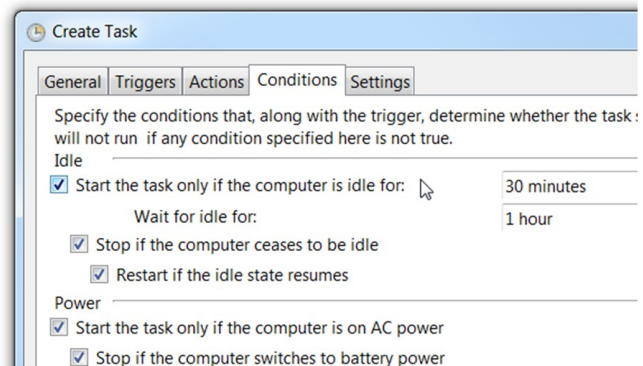
3. Switch to the Triggers tab, click New, and set up a schedule that makes sense for you, like every night at midnight.



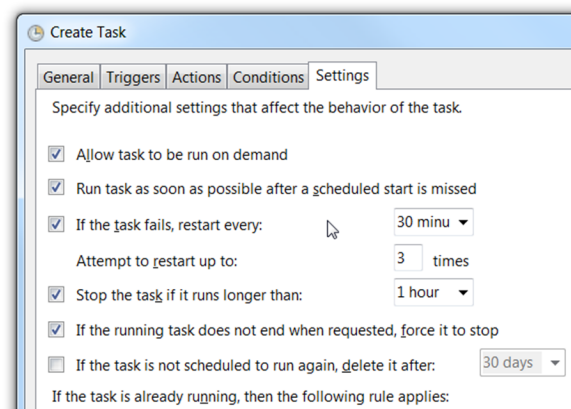
3. Now go to the Actions tab, click New, and then enter shutdown into the Program box, and /S into the parameters box. If you want to force a shutdown and kill every application, you can use /S /F to force it to happen right away.



4. Next head to the Conditions tab, and make sure to check the box to only start the task if the computer is idle for more than x minutes. You can also choose to stop the task if the PC isn't idle to make sure it doesn't kick in if you are on the PC.



5. Lastly, head to the Settings tab, and you can choose to restart the task every 30 minutes if the task fails—that way, if you are on the PC for a while past the normal time, the job will start up later on and shut down the PC.



Once you're done, your PC will shut down automatically when you want it to. Enjoy!

Thanks to [Howtogeek.com](http://Howtogeek.com)

## A Nifty Tool for Tracking Airline Flights

Joe Spampinato

Is a friend or relative arriving by plane, and you are planning to pick them up at the airport? A friend told me about this great site that goes beyond the usual arrival information from the airlines, but also gives you up-to-the-minute, real-time flight path tracking and projected arrival time, as well as arrival gate, flight history, and average flight durations based on past days' flights.

It is called *FlightAware.com*, and is very easy to use. After bringing up the site, all you have to enter is the airline name and the flight number, and a map showing the departure and arrival sites, past and projected flight path, and current plane location, with current altitude, flight speed, and outside temperature. In addition, it shows the entire flight itinerary and history, including past and future landing site information for that day.

The FlightAware screen shot below shows the in-flight status of the Boston flight of our daughter and her husband on Thanksgiving Day. We used it to get to the airport in plenty of time to pick them up.

The screenshot shows the FlightAware website interface. At the top, it says "Live Flight Tracking" and "FlightAware - Live Flight Tracker - Southwest Airlines #411". Below this is a map showing the flight path from Philadelphia to Boston. To the right of the map, there are details for flight SW411, including the aircraft type (Boeing 737-700), origin (Gate E16), destination (Gate E15), and scheduled arrival time (09:34AM EST). At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a table with the following data:

Date	Aircraft	Origin	Destination	Departure	Arrival	Duration
25-Nov-2010	B73770	Philadelphia Int'l (PHL)	McCarran Int'l (LAS)	10:44AM EST	01:06PM PST	Scheduled

For those really interested in following the flight, another site, *www.atc.net*, allows you to listen the air traffic controller/pilot conversations as they leave and approach their takeoff and landing sites.

## MORE IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR WEBSITE!

How Gregg

Go to the WHV Residents Homepage at:

**www.whitehorsevillage.net**

Click on the **WHV Computer Group** icon

For

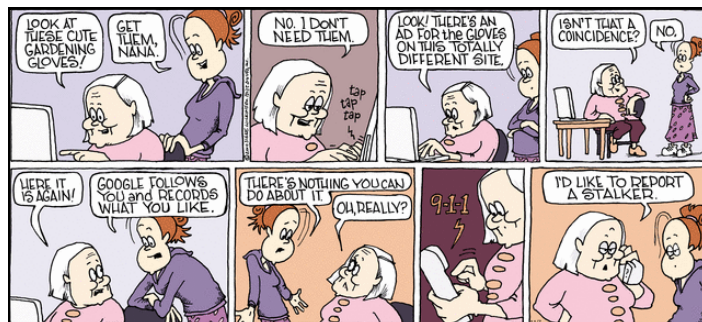
Past Newsletter issues, Tutorials and Information and Communications Tools

And

Click on the **WHV TV Channel 14** icon

For

The Channel 14 Program Guide and Online Programs

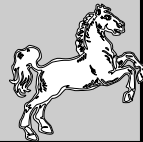


Thanks to Signe Wilkenson & Philadelphia Daily News

### Answer to Teaser on Page 1

According to Verizon one of the most obvious causes for this email sending problem is their blocking of the outgoing email port to discourage spammers. Changing the port from 25 to 587 was supposed to resolve the issue; to my frustration, it was not the answer for this case. After several unsuccessful repair attempts and scouring the internet, I finally found the answer buried in one of the responses to another user's identical problem. It turns out that just changing the OE email account settings from the dialup ISP to Verizon was not enough. The old dialup account had to be removed completely, and a new account with all the DSL settings had to be established. Once this was done, our WHV user could fully enjoy her high-speed access with complete use of OE.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you do not wish to receive this Newsletter, or if you know others who would like to receive it, please tell me at [joenpat40@comcast.net](mailto:joenpat40@comcast.net) or leave a message at 484 422-8195. The latest and preceding newsletters are available on our website. If someone you know at WHV has difficulty in accessing this online version, please let me know so that we can provide assistance.



# WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

## Computer Group

### MONTHLY MEETINGS All are welcome!

December: NO MEETING

Tue Jan 25th : Brandon Miniman — All about smartphones, pads and tablets

Tue Feb 22nd: Q & A — with How and Joe

Tue Mar 22nd: Helen Subbio — downloading e-books and money market data

### ALL MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN THE WHV AUDITORIUM AT 10:30 am

Note: If there is some particular computer subject you would like us to cover at our monthly meetings, please let us know and we will try to accommodate it. Notify How Gregg at [howgregg@verizon.net](mailto:howgregg@verizon.net) or Joe Spampinato at [joenpat40@comcast.net](mailto:joenpat40@comcast.net).

### Our HELP! Committee needs Help

One of our objectives has always been to have our members spread around the campus so that all computer users have a nearby helper. You can see from the listing of HELP! Committee members below that while most of the Villas are well represented **we are seriously short of helpers in Gardens, Kelso, Ascot and Belmont.** The more helpers we have the less of a burden for each of us.

Please contact Joe Spampinato at 484-422-8195

## NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor Emeritus: Euan Hooper

Editor Pro-Tem & HELP! Committee:

Joe Spampinato

HELP! Activities: Arlene Flick

Publicity & Meetings: Marty Shane

Distribution: Joe Spampinato

Please send material for the newsletter to:  
[joenpat40@comcast.net](mailto:joenpat40@comcast.net)

and visit our Website at:

[www.whitehorsevillage.net/](http://www.whitehorsevillage.net/)



### HELP ACTIVITIES Arlene Flick

#### Recent HELP activities included:

ANN EMMONS – changed email address and solved Outlook Express outgoing email problem

BERNICE BRADY - resolved Outlook email problem

JIM NANNOS - resolved printer problem

LEE GILBERT - assisted with email attachments

JANE WILSON - installed new printer on MAC

FAY WEEKS - fixed internet connection problem

JOE GORMLEY - installed wireless router

MARSH NELSON - helped fix Ink corruption problem

TONY POTTS - helped use EXCEL data plotting function

PAT KARVOUNIS - helped get her wireless network and printer back on line.

PAUL MANGELSDORF - with some word processing

## The HELP! Committee, Chair Joe Spampinato

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	Jim Calkins	V159 Alydar	6862	<a href="mailto:jbcalkins@verizon.net">jbcalkins@verizon.net</a>
	BettyJo McCarthy	V161 Danzig	4940	<a href="mailto:dbjmcarthy@verizon.net">dbjmcarthy@verizon.net</a>
	Arlene Flick	V168 Danzig	0732	<a href="mailto:ajafk@verizon.net">ajafk@verizon.net</a>
	Pete Lee	V188 Danzig	0130	<a href="mailto:cpetelee31@comcast.net">cpetelee31@comcast.net</a>
	Pete Thompson (MAC)	V197 Damascus	2167	<a href="mailto:pthomps1@swarthmore.edu">pthomps1@swarthmore.edu</a>
	<b>Gardens</b>	Martin Myers	G127 Garden	1809
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<b>Woodlands</b>	Joe Spampinato (CHAIR)	W116 Woodlands	484-422-8195	<a href="mailto:joenpat40@comcast.net">joenpat40@comcast.net</a>