

# Genesee Valley SAS Users Group

## Newsletter Spring 2006

<b>What:</b>	Genesee Valley SAS Users Group Spring Meeting
<b>When:</b>	Wednesday, April 5, 2006, 3:00 – 6:00
<b>Who:</b>	All SAS Users
<b>Where:</b>	RIT Inn Conference Center (See Map on Page 7)
<b>Cost:</b>	GVSUG members – Free (\$15 to renew membership) Non-members - \$10
<b>Register:</b>	<a href="http://www.gvsug.org">www.gvsug.org</a>

The **Genesee Valley SAS Users Group (GVSUG)** cordially invites you and your colleagues to join us for an afternoon and evening of informative SAS® talks, networking with colleagues across upstate New York, and good food and fun at our annual spring meeting.

Our guest speaker, joining us all the way from SAS Institute, is **Vincent DelGobbo**. Vincent's talk is titled **Moving Data and Analytical Results between SAS and Microsoft Office**, and explains the use of XML and HTML for moving data and output between SAS and Microsoft Word and Excel. *More information about Vincent and his talk, as well as the other speakers is located on the next few pages...*

### Meeting Agenda

- Introduction and announcements
- Ice Breaker
- **Key Note Presentation:**  
SAS and Microsoft – *Vincent DelGobbo*
- Break / Networking Session
- Use of SAS GRAPH to Illustrate PMPM, Average Utilization and Average Cost for Healthcare Services  
*Nancy Farden*
- Tips and Tricks  
*Various GVSUG Members*
- SAS 'n SUDS  
*Informal Get Together After the Talks*

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# Meeting Highlights

## Keynote Presentation

Transferring data between SAS and Microsoft Office can be difficult, especially when SAS is not installed on a Windows platform. This talk discusses using the HTML and XML support in Base SAS software to move data between SAS and Microsoft Office (versions 2002 and later). You can use the techniques described here regardless of the platform on which SAS software is installed (including a mainframe). See also, <http://support.sas.com/news/feature/05jul/office.html>

Vince DelGobbo is a Senior Systems Developer in the Web Tools group at SAS. This group is responsible for developing the SAS/IntrNet Application Dispatcher and SAS Stored Processes. He is the developer for the HTML Formatting Tools and the SAS Design-

Time Controls, and is developing other new Web- and server-based technologies, as well as integrating SAS output with Microsoft Office. He is also involved in the development of the ExcelXP ODS tagset. Vince has been a SAS Software user since 1982, and joined SAS in 1992.

## Use of SAS GRAPH to Illustrate PMPM, Average Utilization and Average Cost for Healthcare Services

SAS GRAPH is used to illustrate per member per month costs (PMPM), average utilization and average cost for services on one plot. By including data for various time periods, plans and lines of business, the plot gives a visual display of performance at a glance. Most of the SAS GRAPH capabilities are used, including PROC ANNOTATE.

Nancy Farden has a PhD in Statistics from Colorado State University.

## Networking Session

Our networking sessions will be taking on a different flavor than what we've done in the past. Take this opportunity to meet and chat with colleagues in your line of work. Industry-specific networking groups will include the following:

- Finance
- Health Care / Pharmaceutical
- Education
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Other

*Make sure to indicate your choice when you register.*

## Tips 'n Tricks

Everyone has a special trick they like to pull out of their bag to get them through certain programming situations. In this section, various SAS users will share with you their favorites and answer questions and comments about them.

## SAS 'n Suds

Make sure to join us afterward for food, beverages, and fun at the hotel restaurant.

## *Speaker Talk – A conversation with Vince DelGobbo*

***Vince, welcome to Rochester and to GVSUG! Tell us a little about yourself and your work experience at SAS.***

**Vince:** I first started using SAS® in 1982 as an undergraduate in the Chemical Engineering department at the University of Connecticut. Initially, I sneered at the product. After all, I was an engineer doing research in molecular modeling, using an 80,000-card FORTRAN program on an IBM mainframe computer. Who needed "canned" programs from SAS?!? Let's just say that I quickly saw the error in my way, and now I think that you can do just about anything with SAS. I continued using SAS throughout graduate school, and then in the workforce in various software development positions.

I've been at SAS since 1992, and I can honestly say that it is a fantastic place to work. My primary role is as a developer in the Web Tools group, which is responsible for SAS/IntrNet® software and SAS® Stored Processes. I also work very closely with Eric Gebhart (ODS R&D) on the development of the ExcelXP tagset.

***What has been your proudest accomplishment so far while working for SAS?***

**Vince:** Well, the "latest" thing is always the "best" thing. But thinking back, I would have to pick two accomplishments: The HTML Formatting Tools and the work I have done with integrating SAS output with Microsoft Office applications. I chose the HTML Formatting Tools because, I believe, they were the first mechanism to get any type of SAS output into HTML format (starting in SAS Release 6.10). And they were critical to the success of the SAS/IntrNet Application Dispatcher.

It seems like *everyone* needs to get their SAS output into Microsoft Excel or Word. I started developing my techniques in the fall of 1999, combining SAS/IntrNet and the SAS Design-Time Controls (DTC) with Excel and Word. The Design-Time Controls are windows "widgets" that run inside of Web page development tools, such as Microsoft FrontPage. They collect input from you, run SAS code using the SAS/IntrNet Application Dispatcher, and place the SAS output into

your document. Another developer and I came up with a way to run these controls inside Excel and Word, and received a patent for that work. Although we never promoted using the DTCs in Excel and Word, that work paved the way for the development of the SAS® Add-In for Microsoft Office, which is part of our Business Intelligence offering.

***The topic you are presenting here has proven to be hugely popular. What's your take on why this is?***

**Vince:** You must be referring to the article found at <http://support.sas.com/news/feature/05jul/office.html>. I usually start my talks by stating that my goal is simple: to give attendees something that they can use today, to make their jobs easier. Although it has been a little while since I "walked in your shoes", I still remember what it is like to be a SAS user. All of my talks are developed with these things in mind. And it doesn't hurt choosing a topic that is within everyone's interest and reach. I love to talk about SAS/IntrNet and SAS Stored Processes, but seldom receive invitations for these topics (hint, hint). Merging Office integration with SAS/IntrNet is especially powerful, and I mention it in most of my papers.

***Your recent papers will have sent you out on road at least a dozen times in the last year. How is that going and how are you holding up?***

**Vince:** First let me say that I consider it the highest honor to be asked to speak at a SAS user group meeting. All of my talks are by invitation from the user group, and it is humbling to know that what I have to offer is so highly valued by the user community. We have a very good travel department that helps with the logistics, and the hospitality shown by the user groups makes it all worthwhile. Much of the paper writing and presentation preparation happens in the evenings and on weekends, in order to reduce the impact on my R&D responsibilities. I wouldn't exactly say I'm burning the candle at both ends; it's more like I'm burning one of those big candles with 6 or 7 wicks! I have been at SAS for almost 14 years and I'm still looking for the mythical 35-hour work week.

**What are the best resources for novice SAS users who are looking for information on working with SAS and Microsoft Office?**

**Vince:** I think the key is to keep it simple, and don't make things harder than they need to be (unless you enjoy the challenge). If you have licensed the SAS/ACCESS® for PC Files software, I would start there, as it often provides the easiest way to interface with Office. The next easiest thing to do is to use ODS to generate CSV, HTML, RTF, or XML files that can be consumed by Excel and Word. These techniques probably cover 80-90% of the cases you will encounter. For the remaining 10% or so, you can investigate DDE (Dynamic Data Exchange) or SYLK (Symbolic Link). A few years ago (SUGI 27) I wrote a "review" type paper that highlights many of these techniques. Searching the SUGI proceedings and support.sas.com will provide a great wealth of resources on the topic.

**Have you seen interest out there in moving SAS data and results to other programs such as OpenOffice?**

**Vince:** In the past, we have not had too many customer requests for integration with the OpenOffice product suite, but there seems to be an up tick. Eric Gebhart had considered developing a tagset to support

the spreadsheet program, but because our resources are limited, we decided to focus on Excel, which has a huge customer base.

Honestly, I don't know a whole lot about the data structure of the OpenOffice spreadsheet program, but I think it is *very* similar to what Microsoft is considering for future versions of Excel. If that is the case, we will likely revisit OpenOffice support when we develop a tagset for the new version of Excel. And I believe that OpenOffice can open the XML file created by the ExcelXP tagset.

I think I'll stop here, because as Mark Twain once said, "It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt".

**Thanks for taking the time to answer these questions. Is there anything else that you might want our members to know?**

**Vince:** After completing my master's degree, I applied for a job at Kodak here in Rochester, but they didn't want me. I thought that it would be a good idea to try to put those Chemical Engineering degrees to work, but it never panned out. Instead, I decided to use my SAS skills. It's a good thing, otherwise I may not have landed the "dream job" that I have now

**Upcoming NESUG Conferences**



<b>NESUG '06</b>	Philadelphia, PA - Wyndham Philadelphia at Franklin Plaza	September 17-20 2006
<b>NESUG '07</b>	Baltimore, MD - Renaissance Harborplace Hotel	November 11-14 2007
<b>NESUG '08</b>	Pittsburgh Hilton	September 14-16 2008

## Member News

### GVSUG at SUGI

Headed to San Francisco for SUGI? Be sure to check out presentations and posters by these GVSUG members.

*William Murphy*

*Coder's Corner*

Squeezing Information Out Of Data

*Ken Borowiak*

*Posters*

Using Data Set Options In PROC SQL

*Michael Molter*

*Tutorials*

Reading between the Lines:

Distinguishing Macro Code from Open Code in Macros

*Michael Molter*

*Coders Corner*

The REPORT Procedure's Temporary Variable: What Is It? Why Do I Care?

### GVSUG Member Lectures via Podcasts at RIT

This spring, students at RIT who are taking a graduate course in applied multivariate statistics have a new option in mobile learning: tuning into their iPods and other mobile devices.

GVSUG Executive committee member Steve LaLonde is at the vanguard of the latest method of serving educational content via podcasting. In previous semesters, Steve, an assistant professor in the John D. Hromi Center for Quality and Applied Statistics in the Kate Gleason College of Engineering,

recorded a series of lectures with more "traditional" audiovisual media in mind (such as DVD). But then RIT decided to extend its distance learning technology by partnering with Apple and joining the growing community known as "iTunes U". Steve's courseware was adapted to work with mobile devices as well as streaming web multimedia.

For more information see:

<http://www.rit.edu/~930www/NewsEvents/2006/Feb02/t04.html>

### Join GVSUG!

GVSUG annual membership costs \$15; ( but only \$10 if you are a student or unemployed.)

What does membership offer you?

Free admission to our meetings and special programs.

Invitation to our upcoming SAS Happy Hours

Access to the "Members Only" section of our website, which contains job postings, papers and more.

You will also have the satisfaction of knowing that you are supporting the educational and networking efforts of the SAS community in the Greater Rochester area.

So, be sure to sign up when you attend our program.

You may contact Gina Lau, for more information at [xtalau@hotmail.com](mailto:xtalau@hotmail.com)

## About GVSUG

The Genesee Valley SAS Users Group (GVSUG) is a non-profit organization that promotes the use and sharing of ideas of SAS® software and to provide a forum that will give each member an opportunity to improve and develop their SAS skills. Based in Rochester, NY, GVSUG is one of seventeen local user group affiliated with the regional Northeast SAS Users Group (NESUG).

At <http://www.gvsug.org>, you will find important and useful information such as

- Basic information and hot news about GVSUG itself;
- Advance notice of future meetings, with links for submission of abstracts if you would like to present a topic;
- Recaps of local, regional, and national meetings and conferences that our members have attended, such as NESUG and our summer picnic (with a photo album);
- Links to your favorite SAS web resources;
- Postings about available SAS-related job openings;
- SAS tips and tricks contributed by members; and
- Speakers' presentations from recent meetings in electronic form.

*You don't need to be a member* to view most of the web pages, but the job postings, speakers' presentations, and SAS tips and tricks are in the Members Only area (link on the right side of the main page). If you're not a member, this is another good reason to join!

## Special Thanks

### **Dr. Howard Proskin**

President and founder of *Howard M. Proskin & Associates*, a statistical consulting firm in Rochester, Dr. Proskin has generously offered to cover all expenses associated with the rental of the facility.

### **Michael Tomb**

A member of the GVSUG executive committee and founder of *Informatica ECS, Inc.*, a software

development firm specializing in Scientific and Medical Applications, Michael has provided portions of the GVSUG web site.

### **Vincent DelGobbo**

An employee of SAS Institute in Cary, NC, Vincent has generously donated his time to be with us and share some of his experience and knowledge gained with SAS.

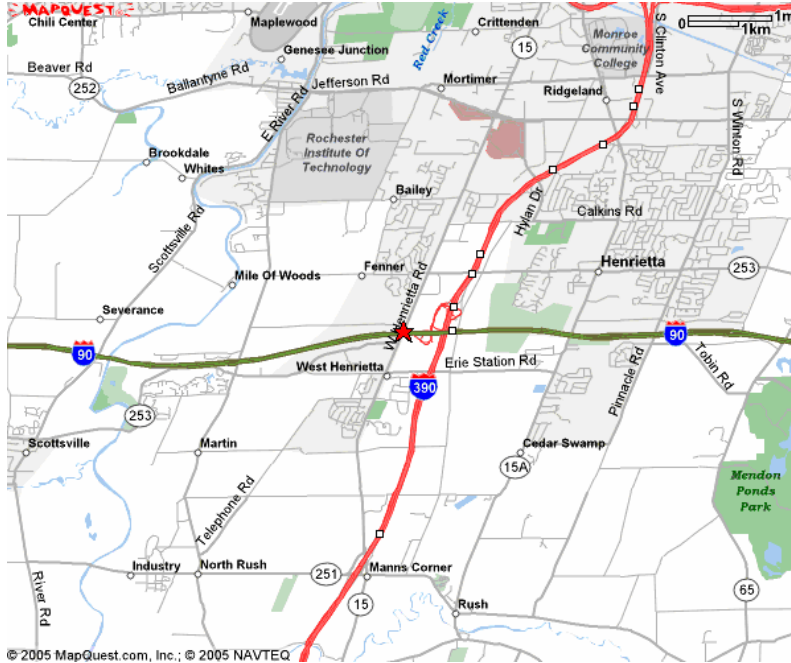
*Howard, Mike, and Vincent – Thanks for your support of GVSUG and all local users of SAS software.*

### *Please note:*

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# Directions to the Fall GVSUG Meeting

Our Spring Meeting is being held at the:  
**R•I•T Inn & Conference Center**  
5257 West Henrietta Road, W. Henrietta, NY 14586USA  
Phone: (585) 359-1800 Fax: (585) 359-1349



## From The Rochester International Airport

1. Turn right onto Brooks Avenue.
2. Veer right onto I-390 South to Exit 12 - Route 253 (Lehigh Station Road).
3. Turn right onto Route 253.
4. Turn left onto Route 15 - West Henrietta Road.
5. Travel 1/2 mile and the RIT Inn and Conference Center will be on your right.

## From The North

1. Take I-390 South to Exit 12 - Route 253 (Lehigh Station Road).
2. Turn right onto Route 253.
3. Turn left onto Route 15 - West Henrietta Road.
4. Travel 1/2 mile and the RIT Inn and Conference Center will be on your right.

## From The South

1. Take I-390 North to Exit 12 - Route 253 (Lehigh Station Road).
2. Turn left onto Route 253.
3. Turn left onto Route 15 - West Henrietta Road.
4. Travel 1/2 mile and the RIT Inn and Conference Center will be on your right.

## From The East

1. From Route I-90, The New York State Thruway, travel to Exit 46.
2. Follow signs for I-390 North
3. IMMEDIATELY exit onto Route 253 (Lehigh Station Road).
4. Turn left onto Route 253.
5. Turn left onto Route 15 - West Henrietta Road.
6. Travel 1/2 mile and the RIT Inn and Conference Center will be on your right.

## From The West

1. From Route I-90, The New York State Thruway, travel to Exit 46.
2. Follow signs for I-390 North.
3. IMMEDIATELY exit onto Route 253 (Lehigh Station Road).
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