How I Spent My Summer Vacation

Robert Hawes (r_d_hawes@hotmail.com), ACGNJ

As far as I can remember, I never actually had to write an essay on this subject while I was in school. Even though, strictly speaking, I haven't had a summer vacation in a long time, I've always wanted to use this title for something. Now, I finally have. (Although there are some out there who might say that I haven't really been **off** my summer vacation for years). Like last year, I had a lot of grandiose plans for the club's three-month hiatus that I never got to fulfill. However, this year I did, in fact, do something that I'd never done before. I wrote a Windows program from scratch, compiled it, and successfully ran the executable result on a different computer. (I compiled a lot of programs for DOS in years gone by, but never one for Windows only). What's more, it didn't just do something cute like say; "Hello, World". It actually performed some useful work

Since I attend the club's C/C++ User Group meetings, you might think I'd have written my program code in C. Sorry, but no. I used a Windows 95 database program that I first used on the job almost ten years ago. I'm purposely **not** going to name the program, for reasons I won't be going into. (How unusual). Still, readers familiar with my previous articles will not be surprised that, instead of getting right to the point, I'll now drone on and on about events from the past. (And even though much of the following doesn't really have a lot to do with what I did over the summer, I'm **still** keeping the title).

In early 1997, I took a job with a company that sold sneakers and sports-type clothing. They had five retail stores, but also did a considerable wholesale business. In addition to caring for the hardware and software needs of their twenty or so computers (a bunch of Windows 95 SR2 workstations, a Windows NT 3.51 server, and a NetWare 3.12 server), I was responsible for maintaining the code for in-house programs that were supposed to read text files exported by the commercial wholesale program used in their warehouse, and then write out text files that could be imported into the commercial retail program used in their stores. (I won't be naming those two programs either). The idea was to do **all** their receiving through the wholesale program, thus making things easier for their warehouse people (and their accountants). I said "supposed to" because, when they brought me in, things weren't working right.

Before going any further, I'd better define what I mean by the word "program". When I refer to the "wholesale program" or the "retail program", I

Smart Computing Presentation

September 15 at 8 p.m.

Each attendee will receive a packet of goodies and be eligible to win other merchandise.

Don't miss it!

Details on page 13 under Window Pains.

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Tips for reviewers: Why does anyone need it? Why did you like it or hate it? Ease (or difficulty) of installation, learning and use. Would you pay for it?

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mean what the average non-geek means when using that term: a proprietary software package purchased from a commercial vendor. Generally speaking, such a "program" is made up of a whole bunch of files, some of which are executable modules and thus technically programs in their own right. The same goes for the Windows 95 database program I mentioned above. But mostly, when I say "in-house program" or just "program", I'm really talking about a simple text file bearing an 8.3 format name such as "FILENAME.PRG". All this file contains is sequential lines of programming code. It can't do anything on its own. It needs to be "interpreted" by a higher-level software package that can read, understand and execute said code. This is, in fact, the best way to run work-in-progress programs like these. This way, they can be quickly and easily edited, as often as necessary. While I used that Windows 95 database program to run my code, I **wrote** my code in strict DBase IV programming language. I've never tried it, but all the programs I wrote should be able to be run under straight DOS. Since they don't contain any proprietary Windows commands, they could probably be ported to a different computer architecture or operating system without too much trouble, as well.

I was the third person to work on the afore-mentioned in-house programs. My employer's contract with the wholesale software vendor specified that data would be "seamlessly and transparently" transferred between their program and the retail program. To this end, the vendor custom modified their program to export three text files. The specifications for these files were developed in collaboration with Mark (the first computer guy), and Max (the office manager). Three small in-house programs would be required to convert the data from these files into a form compatible with the already built-in import section of the retail program. I was told that Mark had completed only the first program. I never met Mark, who left very suddenly to take a better job. I'm not sure if the second computer guy ever met Mark either. (In fairness, I'm just going to call him T (for "Two"). As you'll see, he pretty much never had a chance).

Instead of a cash register, each of the stores had its own computer, running a stand-alone version of the retail software. In addition, the central office (where I worked) had a multi-user network version. Each night, this master version would automatically poll each store by phone, downloading the day's sales, then uploading any additions or changes to the stock files. When I came in, they were having two problems with the retail software. First, just about every night, something would go wrong with the polling from one or more of the stores. The problem wasn't confined to any one store. It seemed to hit all of them randomly. Luckily, the people who wrote this program had considered failure as an option. They put holding buffers at both ends. If, for any reason, the connection was interfered with before both the download and the upload were verified as good, nothing would be updated at **either** end. It was as if the connection had never been made at all. So they didn't lose any data, but they didn't transfer any data either. The office would have to phone any stores missed at night and manually poll them during the day. That caused problems at the stores, since the clerks couldn't ring up any

sales while the computers were being polled, and polling took quite some time.

The second problem was with the data transferred from the wholesale program via the first in-house program. When imported into the retail program, it wasn't so much data as garbage. Max directed T to find out what was wrong with the retail program and fix it. T did everything he could think of, trying all possible combinations of every available user setting in both the polling and data import sections of the retail program, and spending hours on the phone with their technical support staff (or on hold waiting for them). Nothing he did made any difference. That's when Max brought me in.

By then, I'm sure that Max had already written T off as incompetent. But as he showed me what he'd done, I formed a different opinion. I decided that T was a knowledgeable guy who had done everything right. Since he hadn't found a problem with the retail software, I concluded that there wasn't one. Despite what Max thought, the problem had to be elsewhere. Looking elsewhere, I solved the second problem rather quickly. I took a look at the garbage input data file using the TYPE command from a DOS prompt. I saw unprintable characters. It was supposed to be a space delimited text file. Obviously, it wasn't. Furthermore, those characters looked strangely familiar.

Now, Max had insisted that Mark's program was finished and fully tested, and wouldn't let anybody touch it. Clearly, he was wrong. Mark had made a simple mistake. He forgot the last two words of the command that created the data file. Those were the words that should have told it to be a text-only file. If he'd run the program even once, he would have discovered the error and fixed it. The fact that he didn't find the error meant that the program had **never** been run with live data **at all**. Don't think I'm blaming Mark. Things like this are why programs have to be tested. I'd made that particular error several times myself on previous projects. How do you think I recognized it so fast? T and I share the blame for this one. We should never have taken the word of a non-computer guy like Max that the program was ready for use, even if he was the boss. Unfortunately, that bit of trust cost T his job. I doubt if Max gave him a good reference, either. Let this be a lesson to all of us.

Months later, an office worker told me that Max had **never** liked the retail program. (The master password GTRD, which I always thought of as "Gertrude", actually meant "Get Rid"). Maybe that's why Max was so certain that it was causing the problems. However, finding the retail program not guilty of the garbage problem reinforced my suspicion that it wasn't guilty of the polling problem either. Even though I could make voice calls over the modem line without any noise or other problems, I asked the phone company to check it out. They reported that the line was "stressed", and promised to fix it soon. After a few days, all the polling problems went away. By that time, T had gone away too.

Having discovered that Mark's program wasn't the holy and untouchable icon that Max believed it to be; I read through the code from top to bottom and found several unfinished sections, including commented notes from Mark to his

Pew

Berry F. Phillips (bfpdata@gbronline.com), CCOKC (www.ccokc.org)

"Pew" could conjure up several images in your mind. For example, you might think of a human expression uttered upon inhaling the exotic perfume of a skunk! Perhaps you might think of an aching back from that hard wooden pew at church! What does pew have to do with computing? Perhaps nothing caution because you are reading in the CHZ, the Computer Hysteria Zone!

The Pew Charitable Trusts, an independent nonprofit, was established between 1948 and 1979 by the children of Sun Oil Company founder Joseph Pew and his wife, Mary Anderson Pew, with the creation of the Pew Memorial Foundation honoring their parents' memory. In 2005, the foundation invested $177 million to fund the various trusts including the founding in 1999 of The Pew Internet & American Life Project which studies the social and civic impact of the Internet, often considered the most far-ranging, behavior-changing communications innovation since the invention of printing.

The Project produces reports that explore the impact of the Internet on families, communities, work and home, daily life, education, health care, and civic and political life. The Project aims to be be an authoritative source on the evolution of the Internet through collection of data and analysis of real-world developments as they effect the virtual world.

The basis of the reports are nationwide random digit dial telephone surveys as well as online surveys. This data collection is supplemented with research from government agencies, academia, and other expert venues, observations of what people do and how they behave when they are online, in-depth interviews with Internet users and Internet experts alike and other efforts that try to examine individual and group behavior. The Project releases 15-20 pieces of research a year, varying in size, scope, and ambition.

Latest trends from the project reports show the number of adult users are now almost equally divided between men and

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successors about what still had to be done. Obviously, Mark knew that the program needed more work. Too bad he didn't make sure that Max knew it too. As it turned out, getting the data from the wholesale program to the retail program required a lot more effort than Mark, Max or anybody else could ever have suspected. Ultimately, my additional code and comments expanded Mark's program to several times its original size, and I had to create four more programs from scratch, not two. As he left it, Mark's program shuffled the first text file's data as specified, and (almost) created the output text file. In addition, it checked for two possible data error conditions. Mark's notes suggested that both could be fixed as the program ran, without requiring operator intervention, but he hadn't yet worked out exactly how. Before I was done, Mark's program was expanded to check for eight possible errors, including a really weird one involving a single unprintable character. Only some of them could be fixed automatically. Each of my new programs also had to check for at least one possibly fatal error in the data exported by the wholesale program. Eventually, I got the programs to be user-friendly enough that an average office worker could step through them one at a time without being totally overwhelmed, but there was never anything "seamless" or "transparent" about it.

There's a lot more I could say about the fun I had on that job, but I'm past 1800 words already, so I'll move on. The point is, I got really familiar with that Windows 95 database program back then. So any time since, if I have data files to manipulate, that's where I go. Right now, I have it installed under Windows 98 SE on my Pentium II-300 computer. This is my project computer, which is **never** allowed to connect to the internet. That limitation is what led me to try something new.

I'm currently involved with an online store. Every day, I download a spreadsheet from one of our drop-shipping suppliers, listing all their currently in-stock merchandise. Now, we don't offer anywhere near all of their products on our site, but we offer a lot of them, and we don't want to offer anything that we won't be able to deliver because it's out of stock. So I wrote a program that imports that spreadsheet into a database (DB1), then compares it to a master database (DB2), containing only the products we sell. An item in DB1 that isn't in DB2 is just ignored, because we don't offer it. However, an item in DB2 that's not in DB1 means that something we're offering has gone out of stock. We'd better take it down from the Web quick, before someone tries to buy it. In addition, DB2 has a field for an out-of-stock flag, which (as its name would indicate) is set when an item goes out of stock. If an item in DB1 is found in DB2, but the out-of-stock flag in DB2 is set, it indicates that a previously out of stock item is now available again, so we can put it back up and sell it.

As my program runs, it creates an output text file listing all products that just went out of stock, and all products that just came back in stock. When it's finished, it displays a brief screen message, displaying only the totals for items newly in or out. If both are zero, I don't even have to bother printing the output file.

This program comes in very handy, and it quickly became indispensable. Just as quickly, having to transfer the downloaded spreadsheet by floppy disk each day from the internet computer to the project computer became a giant pain in the neck. To move the program to the internet machine (which runs XP SP2), I'd have to either install the whole Windows 95 database program, or compile an executable version on the project computer and copy only that. So I compiled it.

It **is** a Windows program, so I had to copy a "freely re-distributable" DLL library file to go with my new EXE file (and, of course, the relevant database files). Anyway, it worked!

See you next month. 🖥

CAPTCHA
(Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart)

by Sandy Berger (sandy@compukiss.com), Compu-KISS (www.compukiss.com)

Have you ever tried to sign up for a message board or Web service and been presented with an image with letters and numbers which you are asked to read and type into the Web form? While the shape, size, and background of the image varies it always has contains a series of letters and numbers, usually on a graphic background.

Often the letters and numbers are distorted and you have to struggle to recognize them, making you wonder why the website is making you go through this extra step. Don't blame the website. This image-recognition routine is something caused by cousins of the nasty spammers who have permeated our email.

The mechanism that makes you type in this information is called a CAPTCHA. If you know what those letters stand for, you will have a pretty good idea of why this mechanism is being employed. CAPTCHA stands for Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart.

Here's the story. Spammers have completely infiltrated the world of the Internet. In email they try to get you to buy their wares. On message boards they list links to their Viagra and pornographic websites so that they get better positioning in the search engines. They overload online opinion polls and they sign up for free email accounts which they use to send out more spam.

For the most part, all of this spam activity is done automatically. The spammers send out what we call "bots'. These are actually software programs that search the Internet and imitate the behavior of a human. These bots are smart enough to fill out registration forms and so they can automatically register at a variety of websites.

We recently had an attack of these automated bots on our Compu-KISS message boards. After years of being unaffected, we suddenly had hundreds of postings that told off-color jokes and links to pornographic and drug-selling websites. We moved the website to a new area (*www.happycomputing.com*), but were still inundated by these

automated posting. So we installed a CAPTCHA. Now when a new person registers for the message board they must type in the five letters and numbers that they see on the screen to prove that they are human. Since the CAPTCHA is a graphic image, most of the bots cannot read the text like humans can.

The CAPTCHA that we use has letters and numbers that are undistorted, so it is easy to use. If, however, we are attacked by some of the smarter bots that are out there, we will have to distort the letters and numbers slightly to make it even harder for the bots to register.

Although a slight inconvenience to the average user, the CAPTCHA is a real roadblock to vision impaired Internet users who use screen readers which, like the bots, are unable to read the text on the CAPTCHA.

It is extremely unfortunate that we all have to be inconvenienced because of the activities of Internet spammers. I really hated to have to install this software, but I had no other choice. The same is true of many other websites and Web services. So when you encounter a CAPTCHA, don't blame the website, blame the spammers!

The Compu-KISS Message Boards can be accessed at *www.compukiss.com* or directly at *www.happycomputing.com*.

Sandy Berger, The Compu-KISS® Lady, nationally respected computer authority, journalist, media guest, speaker, and author is a seasoned 30-year computer expert. Sandy is a consumer advocate promoting simplicity, ease-of-use, and stability in consumer technology products. She works with hardware and software developers to help them make their products more user-friendly.

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Pew, *continued*

women representing 73% of American adults who use the Internet which currently represents approximately 147 million people. Here is what we do online: Send e-mail (91%), use a search engine to find information (91%), search for a map or driving direction(84%), look for health/medical information (79%) , research a product or service before buying it (78%), check the weather (78%), look for information on a hobby or interest (77%), get travel information (73%), get news (68%), buy a product (67%), surf the web for fun (66%), buy or make a reservation for travel (63%), look for political news/information (58%), and for lesser percentages of use on online activities visit whose website was used to research this article with my appreciation.

While researching this Pew article, I began wondering if the article might be good enough to be submitted to win a "Pewlitzer" Prize! On second thought that would be just plain "pewlish!"

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From The DealsGuy

by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click (bobclick@mindspring.com), Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

I read an article in Information Week about a disgruntled employee who was alleged to have planted 50 to 70 malicious lines of code, amounting to a "logic bomb," before he left the company." It disabled about 2000 servers and brought the company system to a standstill. After four years, they have still not repaired all the damage. It is titled "The Threat Within" and revealed how much damage a disgruntled employee in an organization can really cause. The accused perpetrator is in court, but that doesn't change the damages done. Try these URLs to read more about it: *http://www.informationweek.com/security/UBStrial/* and *http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=RQI5J LK20L2XUQSNDLPCKHSCJUNN2JVN;?articleID=188703447*

I have packed a lot into this column so be sure to check the product Web sites for better information. I cut a lot of description info out to shorten the items. Also, check the Web site's privacy statements. I have not tried any of these. Be sure to check the information closely.

*Get Those Drives & Petitions Back!

DiskInternals NTFS Recovery can scan any physical drive or virtual image. It doesn't make any changes to the drive itself and can be safely used even on the system volume. While scanning the drive, its recovery wizard shows progress with the number of found files and folders. When scanning is over, the user can change some disk properties. You can set up a new cluster size or proceed with the existing one. The program displays all recoverable files and folders in the explorer-like window. A search engine helps find desired files and moves them to a safe location. With DiskInternals NTFS Recovery, you can access files that the system fails to see. DiskInternals NTFS Recovery v1.5 runs under Windows 98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003 Server platforms. A single user license costs $99.95 USD.

DiskInternals offers a 15% discount using the link *www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=11238-8&ss_coupon= NTFS-RAJ9-PR*. The coupon code is NTFS-RAJ9-PR. Registration entitles all users to free technical support and minor upgrades. A fully functional evaluation version of the program is available for download at *http://www.DiskInternals.com/download/NTFS_Recovery.zip*.

Product page link: *http://www.DiskInternals.com/ntfs-recovery/*

Web: *http://www.DiskInternals.com*

Postal Address: Pacific Business Centre, DiskInternals Research, P.O. Box 34069 #381, Seattle, WA 98124-1069, USA

Fax: 206-984-3919

They did not respond to my message when researching the information so I hope the discount is still good. Also, check close to see if there are any catches with the "fully functional" downloadable copy.

*Monitor What The Kids View

Adult Photo Blanker guards computer users from the ubiquitous expansion of pornography and violence in our life. This program not only prevents your children from accessing unwanted websites, but also controls the content of video files and photos loaded into your computer memory from the hard disk. This smart tool monitors nearly all multimedia content. Adult Photo Blanker uses 11 special criteria to reveal objectionable films, websites, images and the like. The program combines this built-in artificial intelligence scanner with the keyword filter, which recognizes unwanted content by specified words, and it is concealed from inexperienced users. Adult Photo Blanker is protected with a password, so if you want to turn it off and watch an adult film, you must use the password you previously specified. It features Block and Safe lists to customize each user settings individually. Each family member can configure options of the program in his/her own way. By the time you read this, a newer version will be introduced.

Adult Photo Blanker runs under Windows 98 (partially) / ME (partially) / 2000 / XP and costs $49.95 (USD.) Users group members receive a 20% discount. Just enter DEAL-LSFQ-GUY where it calls for a coupon when downloading the paid version. A fully functional trial version of the program is available as a free download at *http://www.oreware.com/download_prog.php?id_prog=25* (4.09 Mb). Product page: *www.oreware.com/viewprogram.php?prog=25*.

Web: *http://www.oreware.com*

*This Claims To Improve Your Windows Operation

True Launch Bar gets the best of MS Windows OS and streamlines it for greater comfort of use. Its unique system of switching toolbars and expandable menus gives instant access to files, applications, and settings from the taskbar. In addition, overlay images and skins give the system polish and slick looks. The latest update offers support to Windows Vista. You can also group shortcuts into menus that expand and collapse at a click, or float on top of other windows. The use of Drag-n-Drop helps quickly fill the menus with shortcuts for files and applications, system settings and controls. You can customize its color scheme and add gradients and transparency effects. Its plug-ins will equip your taskbar with a newsreader and the weather forecast. You will be able to monitor resources and network activities, access the address book and control media players.

True Launch Bar v4.0 runs under Windows 98/ Me/ 2000/ XP/ 2003/ Vista platforms. A single user license costs $19.90 (USD). The company also offers a home license for 4 installations priced at $49 USD. All registered users are entitled to free technical support and program updates. Additional plug-ins and skinning libraries are on the company web site. A fully functional evaluation version of the program is available for download at *download.truelaunchbar.com/install/tlb4.exe*. True Launch Bar V4.0 will be available at a 30% discount to user group members on these special links to the order pages: True Launch Bar Personal License: *http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=51538&pc=7L0L7* True Launch Bar Home License: *http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=53346&pc=7U0I4* Product page link: *http://www.truelaunchbar.com*

Continued

*Lets Improve That Password Protection!

Double Password, a new security manager, creates your security token on your flash drive (or other USB gadget, such as an MP3 player, PDA or even a USB-pluggable mobile handset). This device becomes the key to your OS. Double Password makes sure that no one can interfere with the work of your computer or get access to your data. It encrypts your password, which can accompany your security token. No external spy program can intercept your password. This is attained thanks to a special "double-bottom" password, which Double Password applies to protect your computer. This means that you enter one password, but the program remembers another (it remembers it in a special encrypted way, which cannot be seen from the outside).

Double Password offers security levels in low, medium and high. "Low" means all users can get access to your computer. "Medium" means that a user can log into your OS only with the help of a special security token (total security is guaranteed as you resort to the described "double-bottom" password). "High" is similar to "Medium", however in this case you cannot even work if your security token is out.

Double Password runs under Microsoft Windows NT/2000/XP. Users group members get a 20% discount using the coupon code YTR79G3 where requested. Discount prices are: Personal license, $29.95; Family license, $79.95 and Business license $59.95.

Product page link: *http://www.doublepassword.com/*

Web: *http://www.refog.com/*

*This Game Is A Blood-Chiller

From the creators of "Gunner 2" comes a new breath taker called JetJumper. The plot of the game implies that you become the pilot of an outlandish jumping machine equipped with a powerful jet engine. As soon as the jet engine sets the jumping machine into motion, you will have to jump from one platform to another. JetJumper helps you to collect a variety of useful items, which you are sure to come across; gems, magnets, green keys and the like. All these items help you to score and eliminate some obstacles on your way and to get new lives. Magnets help you to collect more gems. Once you have grabbed a magnet, all gems on your way start sticking to you like flies to an adhesive pad. Once you have jumped aside and have fallen from a platform, the game leaves no chance for your JetJumper to survive. During a takeoff, your JetJumper's jet engine exerts a force of thousands of newtons, so only a professional pilot can handle this aircraft.

JetJumper runs under Windows 9x, Me, 2000, XP (DirectX 8.0 or higher required). The game costs $19.95 (USD) and they offer a 10% discount to all group members by using TAB000BL code and this URL: *https://secure.bmtmicro.com/servlets/Orders.ShoppingCart?CID=949& PRODUCTID=9490005*. Registered customers are entitled to unlimited game play and a multitude of unlocked levels.

Product page link: *http://www.warlockstudio.com/jetjumper.html*

A trial version offering 60 minutes of game play, is available as a free download at *http://www.warlockstudio.com/download/jetjumper-setup.exe*. For more information about the company or games, please visit *http://www.warlockstudio.com*.

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click@mindspring.com. Visit my Web site at http://www.dealsguy.com.

Back Issues Needed

The editor is attempting to build a CD containing all issues of ACGNJ News in pdf format, but our collection is incomplete. We're hoping some faithful reader has been hoarding them and will be willing to lend them to us just long enough to scan them. We promise to return them quickly. Thanks Joseph Gaffney, who loaned his collection for scanning. Below is a list of what we still need.

1985: June, July, August, September

1984: August

1976: January, February, March, April (pamphlet-size booklets)

1975: All issues (pamphlet-size booklets)

If you can supply any of these missing issues (or scanned images or good copies), please contact the Editor by email (*bdegroot@ptd.net*). Those who supply missing issues will receive a free copy of the resulting CD as our thanks for your help.

Advertising Rates

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Full page	7" x 10"	$150	Published monthly except July and August
2/3 page	4½ x 10	115	Closing date: 1st of preceding month. Ex: Apr 1 for May
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1/4 page	3¼ x 5	50	Negatives rightreading, emulsion side down.
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1/6 page	2¼ x 5	35	Ads must be camera ready
	4½ x 2½		Send check with copy, payable to ACGNJ Inc.
1/8 page	3¼ x 2½	30	Material should be sent to ACGNJ, PO Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076
Business card		25	
10% discount for 3 or more consecutive insertions			For further information contact Frank Warren, (908) 756-1681, *kb4cyc@webwarren.com*.

HOPE Number Six Hacker Convention in NYC

by Cass and Ruth Lewart (crlewart@comcast.net), ACGNJ

If you ever wondered about computer data security and access to databases by unauthorized people, then this was the place to be. The HOPE Number Six (Hackers Of Planet Earth 2006) convention took place in the Hotel Pennsylvania in NYC on July 21-23. This was the sixth convention of its kind since 1994. It was organized by Emmanuel Goldstein, editor and co-founder of 2600 magazine and host of *Off the Hook* on WBAI. The credo of a hacker is to penetrate the barriers of passwords and access restrictions, expose security flaws, and do it without malice, personal gain or harm to others. Still, there is an occasional clash between hackers and the powers-to-be resulting in some hackers spending extended periods of time in Federal penitentiaries. The malicious version of interference wrongly referred to as *hacking* is commonly called *cracking*. Hacking, which originally started as attempts to penetrate the telephone network, is now more oriented towards computer networks, civil liberties and privacy protection.

The convention drew over two thousand mostly young, enthusiastic, and mostly male participants. In over an acre of space on two floors there were simultaneous talks, panel discussions and movies between 10 am and past midnight each day. The second floor of the hotel was dedicated to a computer network with dozens of computers trying to "hack" each other, a track for running two rented Segway scooters, a lock picking workshop and movie presentations. Two tracks of scheduled talks, plus ad hoc "birds of a feather" groups occupied the 18th floor, with an express elevator linking the two floors. Here are some highlights from talks and panels Ruth and I attended during the three days:

• Matt Blaze, who, after being kicked out of high school, got his PhD at Princeton and is currently a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, told the audience that he always proudly puts "hacker" as his occupation on tax returns.

• A talk on vulnerabilities of airport screening devices showed ways of defeating them. A Homeland Security representative was invited to attend, but he declined with the excuse that his boss would never approve expenses incurred to attend a hacker's meeting.

• A well attended session on lock picking — it is actually a sport officially recognized in many European countries and in Canada — showed the latest ways in lock opening without proper keys. The speaker from Denmark demonstrated a new technique called "bumping." A filed down key is simply inserted in a lock and hit with a mallet. This procedure will open in a few seconds most simple locks including those used in postal mail boxes. The session was followed by workshops equipped with a selection of locks and lock picking tools.

• A session on NYC Metro card showed how to read the codes on those and on other magnetic stripe cards. A simple reader made out of a cassette Walkman feeds the signal into the sound card in a PC. A sound card is an excellent A/D converter. A little programming and you know all codes embedded in the stripe.

• *Citizen Engineer*, featured Ladyada, software/electrical engineer and hardware hacker, and Phillip Torrone, senior editor of O'Reilly's MAKE magazine, with demos of outrageous things they did with open source hardware. Can you picture an ancient rotary phone with insides gutted and retrofitted with cell phone circuitry? You can imagine it caused quite a stir in a restaurant, when it rang with the old familiar chimes. Or picture a now obsolete VCR converted into a cat feeder. Ok, so it looked more like a cat grinder. Or imagine a gadget constructed from LEDs and hidden in a hat, that can unexpectedly turn off TVs from some distance away. Altoids tins figured prominently, as in a charger for the iPod. My favorite was a Roomba vacuum cleaner disguised as a real life frogger (based on the Frogger online video game). Frogger was quite a hit as it meandered across the road dodging cars, just like its video counterpart. Besides the entertainment value, the point is that much of this hardware is not patented and thus "open source." The Internet is a treasure trove of instructions on how to build the various gadgets. Ladyada has drawn on these sources to construct kits that are sold on the Internet. One very popular item is an inexpensive version of a

pricey Moog Synthesizer, that enthusiast have seen fit to improve upon. For more information, see *www.ladyada.net*, *www.adafruit.com*, and *www.makezine.com*.

Jello Biafra, former lead singer of the Dead Kennedys and a presidential candidate of the Green Party warned in a two hour speech about the corporate and government encroachments on individual freedoms. At one point he climbed the podium and mooned the audience to show his contempt for FBI agents who might have been present. His parting message to the hacker community was to hack the electronic voting machines in order to demonstrate their vulnerabilities.

We were so engrossed in the talks we attended that we had completely forgotten we were at a Hacker's Convention. That is, until just before a scheduled talk and panel on *Privacy Is Dead – Get Over It* was about to start. Emmanuel Goldstein and other organizers broke from a huddle to announce that Steven Rambam, the featured speaker, had been arrested earlier that afternoon and removed from the premises in handcuffs by seven FBI agents for supposedly intimidating a witness and impersonating an FBI agent. Par for the course! Rambam, a well-known private investigator, was supposed to show how easy it is to find details past and present of any person in the audience. He even prepared a thick dossier on one

SP1 to be Abandoned

by Chuck Thomas (Chuckt@insightbb.com), Bowling Green Area Microcomputer UG (http://www.bgamug.org/)

A popup message from Windows Update has been alerting me recently to the fact that Microsoft is ending its support for Windows XP Service Pack 1 (SP1) as of October 10, 2006. It offers a free download of SP2, which will continue to be supported once installed.

If, like me, you are still running SP1, you might think that it is no big deal since you never call or write Microsoft for support anyhow! But the one big problem is that there will no longer be any security updates for the old version of XP. Microsoft is regularly learning of security holes in their OS and issuing updates that you should be installing to keep your computer somewhat safe from hackers. These security updates will continue to be available to XP users with SP2 installed, but they will end in October for SP1.

If you don't know whether SP2 is installed, simply click Start/My Computer (or the My Computer link on your desktop) and then on the left side of the My Computer window under System Tasks, click View system in formation. The System Properties window that pops up will show basic information about your computer, including the installed Service Pack for XP. If you need to upgrade to SP2, go to

microsoft.com/wi ndowsxp/sp2/defau 1 t.mspx. You'll find a link in the Get Windows XP SP2 Now box to receive the huge file on a CD by mail for only the cost of mailing. This saves you the trouble of a long download and provides a CD for quick reinstall if it should be necessary. The page also provides "quick tips for a successful upgrade" under the How link.

Similarly, support is finally ending on the same date for Windows 98, ME, and NT. But I doubt that many of you are running these operating systems these days, and if you are you long ago ceased to worry about support from Microsoft!

Some of you may have heard that Microsoft announced that support for Windows XP Home and Media Center Edition would be discontinued at the end of 2006 — regardless of which service pack is installed. But that was an error, according to Microsoft. Here is the full story on that Micro-soft gaff from ZD Net news:

Until Tuesday night, a posting on Microsoft's Web site stated that support for Windows XP Home and Windows XP Media Centre Edition would end on 31 December, 2006. That would mean no more security fixes or any other support items, such as warranty claims, for users of those operating system prod-

Hope Number Six Hacker Convention, *continued*

of the previously selected volunteers. Mr. Rambam is currently on bail and was interviewed on the *Off the Hook* program on WBAI a few days later. He promised to show next month the results of the investigation he conducted on the volunteer. He did not discuss on advice of his lawyers his own predicament!

A panel on *phishing* (fraudulent attempt to extract sensitive information from a victim by posing as a legitimate business) was headed by two experts who defend financial institutions against phishing frauds. Most of the phishing programs are written by American programmers, where writing such programs is not a criminal offense. The phishing programs are then sold to mostly Russian gangs which collect information on hundreds of credit cards and bank accounts, extracted from unsuspecting victims, quickly use them and then regroup. It was interesting to hear that some of the perpetrators openly discussed their exploits in various chat rooms, which led to several arrests.

Saturday's Keynote was by Michael Hart, who started Project Gutenberg in 1971, when he was given $100 million in computer time to do "something of value." He chose to develop the electronic storage, retrieval, and search of what is stored in our libraries. Creating a free electronic library has become his life's work and mission. Through a fluke, much of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's work is copyright free. I have downloaded, courtesy of Project Gutenberg, many human-read (as opposed to the less desirable computer-generated) Sherlock Holmes stories into my MP3 player. Hart distributed

free DVDs containing the entire collection of text eBooks in the Project Gutenberg Library, some videos, some HTML eBooks, and some audio books in MP3 format. Hart's mission is to encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Read how you can contribute at *www.gutenberg.org* or on the introductory page of the DVD. Just let us know if you would like a copy.

The always popular session on Social Engineering was geared towards recent power failures in the borough of Queens. In a phone call to a McDonald's franchise in Queens, Emmanuel Goldstein convinced them to turn off the air conditioning and one of the cash registers to conserve electricity, and to admit a Con Edison "repairman" when he shows up. Several people were then called and told that their "Do Not Call" will soon expire. They then volunteered all kinds of personal information to remain on the "Do Not Call" list. Out of consideration to the people called, the panel organizers blocked from the audience this part of the calls.

For the Do-it-yourselfer it was shown in another session how to convert a nailing gun into a machine gun, and also many other crazy projects.

The meeting was a lot of fun and very informative — Ruth and I really enjoyed it! If you want to find out more about hackers listen to "Off the Hook" on WBAI-FM (99.5), Wednesdays at 7:00 pm. This year most of the talks and panel discussions were recorded and will be available on DVDs for a fee and as MP3 audio files for free downloading (try *www.2600.com*).

Do Shield Laws Extend to Bloggers?

by John Brewer (johnb@jnbrewer.com), Computer Club of Oklahoma City (http://www.ccokc.org/)

The first amendment to the US Constitution contains a number of important personal rights. It reads as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Analysis of the amendment confirms why the courts have been given the task of interpreting the language through the years.

One of the important parts of the amendment is freedom of the press. In order to protect the press, approximately 31 States have enacted "shield laws." Journalists are protected by a qualified (limited) First Amendment right protect their confidential sources. Many of the federal circuits have held that a qualified privilege exists. However, journalists are frequently challenged to reveal their confidential sources. This privilege has received attention recently in the New York Times Co. v. Gonzales case that involves the phone records of Judith Miller. An interesting variation to this issue is whether Internet journalists have the same protection as print journalists. A recent case in California has examined this issue. The case involved some Internet web site and Apple Computer.

Apple brought an action in California alleging that persons unknown caused the wrongful publication of secret plans on the World Wide Web to release a device that would facilitate the creation of digital live sound recordings on Apple computers. In an effort to identify the source of the disclosures, Apple sought and obtained authority to issue civil subpoenas to the publishers of the Web sites where the information appeared and to the email service provider for one of the publishers. The publishers moved for a protective order to prevent any such discovery. The trial court denied the motion on the ground that the publishers had involved themselves in the unlawful misappropriation of a trade secret. A California Court of Appeals held that his was error because (1) the subpoena to the email service provider could be enforced consistent with the plain terms of the federal Stored Communications Act (18 U.S.C. §§ 2701-2712); (2) any subpoenas seeking unpublished information from petitioners would be unenforceable through contempt proceedings in light of the California reporter's shield (note: California has a shield provision in the State Constitution) and (3) discovery of petitioners' sources is also barred on this record by the conditional constitutional privilege against compulsory disclosure of confidential sources. The Court of Appeals issued a protective order.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation is directly involved in the litigation. The following is extracted from the EFF web site. "The whole mess began in December 2004, when Apple filed suit against 20 unnamed and presumably unknown individuals, referred to in the court filing as "Does," for leaking confidential materials on an Apple product under development to several Web publications. As part of its investigation, Apple subpoenaed Nfox — for communications and unpublished materials obtained by PowerPage publisher Jason O'Grady. A Santa Clara trial court upheld the subpoena in March of 2005 and the EFF appealed.

"In a 69-page ruling, the 6th District Court of Appeal ruled that bloggers and webmasters are no different in their protections than a reporter and editor for a newspaper. "We can think of no workable test or principle that would distinguish 'legitimate' from 'illegitimate' news," the judges wrote.

"Any attempt by courts to draw such a distinction would imperil a fundamental purpose of the First Amendment, which is to identify the best, most important, and most valuable ideas not by any sociological or economic formula, rule of law, or process of government, but through the rough and tumble competition of the marketplace," they wrote.

"Today's decision is a victory for the rights of journalists, whether online or offline, and for the public at large," said EFF Staff Attorney Kurt Opsahl in a statement. Opsahl argued the case before the appeals court last month. "The court has upheld the strong protections for the free flow of information to the press, and from the press to the public."

"Apple argued its right to trade secrets trumped Constitutional rights, and it had exhausted other sources to determine the source of the information, even though Apple had not deposed employees who were in a position to know, Kevin Bankston, a staff attorney for the EFF told internetnews.com. The lower court decision agreed, and said Apple's trade secrets rights would trump any journalist's rights to source confidentiality.

Continued

SP1 Abandoned, *Continued*

ucts. But the posting was incorrect, Ines Vargas, program manager at Microsoft, told ZDNet UK sister site CNET News.com. The software maker has updated the online information to reflect that the consumer Windows XP editions, along with XP Professional, will be supported until two years after Vista ships, she said. Vista, the long-delayed next update of Windows, is expected to arrive by the end of the year.

"This was brought to our attention late last week, and since then, we have worked diligently to make the change on the site, which was effective Tuesday night," she said. "It was not a change in support policy. It is reflective of the policy as we understand it."

….so we can rest easy knowing we are safe in the hands of Microsoft!

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

"Suddenly…" or "I didn't do anything!" Part 1
A month's log of a Sun City Anthem Computer Club "house call" doctor

by Charles W. Davis (Chas@anthemwebs.com), Sun City Anthem Computer Club (www.myscacc.org)

In working to help Club members and others with their computer problems during the Thursday morning Computer Talk sessions, or more often when making "house calls," I often hear strange tales that usually involve acts of some gremlin like creature. However, gremlins are more closely related to mechanical problems in aircraft.

Generally the caller's comments start with "all of a sudden" or "suddenly" and end with "I didn't' do anything." I can only surmise that it was probably one of cartoonist Bill Keane's ghostly imps "Not Me." "Nobody" or even "Ida Know." Some recent examples:

"Suddenly…"

One morning a couple of weeks ago, I received a call and the person on the other end of the phone connection was obviously very upset. She exclaimed: "Suddenly all of my desktop icons are gone! I didn't do anything! Please help me!"

This situation seemed to be serious. I had never heard of this happening. I didn't have anything on the calendar for another two hours so I hopped in my 1999 Sapphire Blue Mica Miata for the short drive up the hill to her Tall Mesa Village home. She was right, the icons were indeed missing. A simple right click on the blank desktop, hover over *Arrange Icons by:* and then click on *Show Desktop Icons*. This was definitely an act by the "little people." As I said, I hadn't heard of this situation before. It must have been "Not Me" wishing to get off the hook by whispering in my ear how I might arrive at the solution. Since the club member was in the back room and the house girl had let me in, I quickly left the scene.

The next day the same lady called and said that her "My Computer" Icon was missing from the desktop. Realizing that it wasn't the normal desktop shortcut icon, I was puzzled. Not thinking things through, I again slid onto the seat in the Miata and shortly arrived on the scene. Sure enough most icons were visible, but the "My Computer" icon was not in its normal position. It wasn't immediately visible. I later noticed the top edge of the icon protruding just above the task bar. Once again, I moved the pointer to a blank spot on the desktop, a right click on the mouse and chose *Arrange Icons by* and chose *Name*. The My Desktop icon again assumed its prominence at the upper left. She said that she didn't drag and drop it down there. As I picked up a $20 donation to the Club, I assumed that it must have been "Nobody" and left for home.

"Suddenly…"

Monday morning is usually the time for the phone calls to begin. On a recent Monday, the caller sheepishly states that "suddenly I can't access the Internet." I recognized that the person speaking to me is the same one whose 18 year old granddaughter had placed hundreds of malware programs on his laptop two weeks before. At that time I had suggested a router/firewall so that she could plug her laptop directly to the router with Internet access. He had immediately gone out and purchased and installed one. Oh yes, the granddaughter had been there over the weekend and had brought her own laptop computer.

The blue Miata once again headed up the hill (from our home in the Valley View Village all destinations seem to be "up the hill.") to their home in Arroyo Vista Village. In just a few

Continued

Do Shield Laws Extend to Bloggers?, *continued*

"Bankston said the ruling is a win for anyone who uses email. "A lot of people will hear about this decision and think it doesn't affect them since they are not journalists, but it has a broader impact because of the number of email providers, particularly the number based in this district," he said.

"The court read Federal privacy law to forbid civil litigants like Apple from subpoenaing an individual's e-mail from e-mail providers. Instead, the court said civil litigants must subpoena you directly, and if you are a journalist, you can assert your rights of confidential sources.

"So they have to subpoena you rather than doing an end run around your rights and going straight to your e-mail provider," said Bankston.

If Apple chooses to appeal, the case goes to the state Supreme Court. Thus far, the sources for the original story have not been revealed, "and hopefully based on this decision they never will," said Bankston.

This is an interesting issue. The California case is far from over and this issue will continue to be litigated across the country.

John Brewer practices law in Oklahoma City, is a member of the Governor's and Legislative Task Force for E-Commerce, and enjoys issues relating to eBusiness and cyberspace. Comments and questions are welcome and can be emailed to johnb@jnbrewer.com.

minutes, I found that the dear child didn't plug the cable into the router as instructed, but had used grandpa's computer. Since she was an AOL user, she attempted to change Gramps' Accounts from Cox Cable to AOL dialup and failed. It would have been so easy for her to have just gone to AOL using Internet Explorer. She left for school Sunday evening and didn't mention a thing to Gramps. That way, she didn't have to tell on either "Ida Know" or "Not Me." I picked up the $20 donation to the club and was soon on my way.

An admonition: Set up a Guest Account without Administrative rights. Place a User name and password on the Administrative (your's) account.

"All of a Sudden…"

"All of a sudden" turns up many times a month and in some unusual situations. Last week, I received a call from a member that was using Microsoft Office Outlook. It seems that she had been entering information into a new contact when "all of a sudden" she couldn't enter information. She explained that she had been using Outlook and contacts for years and had never had this problem. Since this didn't seem (to me) that this required immediate attention, I arranged an appointment for the next morning. My Miata and I arrived at her Golf Mesa Village home just as the Grandfather clock guarding the entry was announcing that it was 10:00. Grandfather clocks that I am aware of don't announce "a.m." or "p.m."

She met me at the door and we proceeded to the office and she took her place in front of her computer to show me what was happening. She began keying in the house number, using the numeric key pad and just as she had said, nothing worked as expected. I immediately saw why this had happened so "suddenly." Apparently "Nobody" had pressed the Num Lock key thereby turning it off. So as she would enter a house number, things went wild as the 2,4, 6, and 8 keys acted as direction keys, 7 & 9 were Home and Page Up respectively and 1 & 3 were End and Page down. I asked her to press the Num Lock key and "all of a sudden" the problem was resolved. I collected the $20 donation check to the club and was homeward bound — downhill of course.

"Suddenly…"

On another Monday, I received a call from a member stating that she had recently upgraded to MS Office 2003 and a short time later, suddenly she could no longer access MS Publisher files. This was the result of someone else messing with functions that they should have stayed away from. Support teams at Norton will vow "Not me." But when the lady was directed to an article titled "How to use Office programs with the Norton Anti-Virus Office plug-in" she was able to resolve the problem as I watched. This article can help you extricate yourself: *http://support.microsoft.com/kb/329820/en-us*

It is maddening to think that one, nay thousands upon thousands, must jump through hoops because a bunch of programmers at Symantec can't get it right. I have never understood their automatic plug-in installation. At least they should tell the user, including a list of possible problems and their resolution, and let them make a decision as to whether to install the plug in. Who needs viruses when "reputable" software manufacturers can do things like this to you?

A long time ago, in computer time, but actually just over a year ago, I stopped paying the extortion money for antivirus software and have used the free AVG antivirus, which is available from *http://free.grisoft.com/doc/1*

"Suddenly…"

"Suddenly" you can't open Word or most other Microsoft Office products. This happened because you owned a Hewlett Packard multi-function printer with a flash memory card reader. It seems that a security update messed with the logic for these systems and caused much havoc around the world. A follow-on update was released to affected computers during the 4th week in April. If you are still having the problem, go to *Start* then *Windows Update*, download and install all Critical updates. It seems that "Ida Know" visited Microsoft's Redmond campus.

Suddenly…"

Last week, one of your neighbors in the Valley View Village went to his neighbors stating that his phone went "dead." On investigation, it was learned that he had ordered and installed a new Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system. Some of the equipment had arrived, but due to a transposition of digits when entering the credit card number, the important "Silver" box did not get shipped. "Ida Know" didn't know how the mix up occurred. "Who Knows" stated that the customer probably discarded the silver box with the packaging. However, the land line telephone provider had been notified to discontinue the service. "Dead line!"

An admonition: Always check the contents of packages to make certain that all components are included before installing anything! The Federal Communications Commission has a web site that explains most aspects of VoIP: *http://www.fcc.gov/voip/*

Not so "Suddenly…"

This particular call arrived on a Tuesday, so I was surprised to hear: "Suddenly I can send e-mail but I can't receive any messages. Everything times out. I've called Cox Communications and since I use Office Outlook 2003, they weren't much help." This phone call came in at a time that Vickie was out and wouldn't return for a while, so I slid behind the wheel of the Miata and headed for Ridgecrest Village to see what had happened so "suddenly."

It took several minutes of attempting to send messages to the owner's e-mail address. Sure enough the message would be sent, but no incoming messages. After some time it would all time out. The first inbound message would never arrive. I found that there was no Internet access using Internet Explorer. I installed Firefox from my USB Flash memory and was then able to access the internet. At this time clues began to appear one-by-one.

Norton Internet Security was warning of Firefox accessing the Internet — twice! ZoneAlarm was warning of Firefox accessing the Internet!

SIG News

PHP?

Anyone interested in a new PHP SIG (Interpreted Script Programming Language), please get in touch with John Raff (*jraff@comcast.net*). PHP is a widely-used general-purpose scripting language that is especially suited for Web development and can be embedded into HTML. If you are new to PHP and want to get some idea of how it works, try the introductory tutorial (*http://us2.php.net/tut.phpv*).

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

http://www.NJGamers.com

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be September 8, 6 p.m. to Saturday 12 noon — 18 hours for 5 bucks!

BYOC - Bring your own computer

BYOF - Bring your own food.

and if you don't like sitting on metal chairs... BYO chair! ▭

Window Pains

John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/winpains.html

This meeting is a combination of the older PC Symposium, PC User Group and Random Access Session which are now defunct. The intent is to provide the members with Windows oriented application discussions both Microsoft and Linux style. The presentation will be directed toward the more heavy technological level of attendee, although newbies are welcomed.

September 15: Jen Clausen will present to user group members on behalf of Sandhills Publishing. The presentation, aiming to educate attendees about Sandhills Publishing's magazines and the Smart Computing User Group Program, will step members through an issue of Smart Computing, convey the value of SmartComputing.com through a live demonstration, and introduce attendees to Smart Computing's sister publications - PC Today, Computer Power User, and the Reference Series. Each attendee will receive a packet of Smart Computing goodies and be eligible to win other Smart Computing merchandise. We invite anyone interested in expanding their computer knowledge to attend. ▭

Genealogy

Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)

http://www.webwarren.com/kb4cyc/gensig.shtml

Genealogy SIG is for genealogists interested in computers and computer users interested in genealogy, and is a forum to assist members in furtherance of both endeavors. Meetings usually focus on genealogy more than on computers. We meet at 8 PM on the fourth Thursday of the month, but we do not meet in November or December. In addition to our Web page, we also have an electronic mailing list. Messages to the list should be addressed to *gensig@webwarren.com*. To subscribe, include the line "subscribe gensig" in the body of the message. **Next meeting September 28** ▭

LUNICS (Linux/Unix)

Andreas Meyer (lunics@acgnj.org)

http//www.acgnj.org/groups/lunics.html

LUNICS is a group for those who share an interest in Unix and similar operating systems. While we do quite a bit with Linux, we've also been known to discuss Solaris and BSD too. We generally meet on the first Monday of the month at 8:00 PM at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information. **Next meeting October 2.** ▭

Web Dev

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for all Website Development techniques and technologies, to encourage the study and development of web sites of all kinds. All languages will be considered and examined. Anyone interested please contact the Chairperson in charge. The current project is a CMS for the club. Anyone interested in starting a new project, come to the meeting and announce / explain. Provide as much detail as possible. One can also send projects to the ACGNJ Newsletter editor for inclusion in the next volume.

WebDev should be an all-encompassing development and examination forum for all issues, applications, OS, languages and systems one can use to build Websites. We currently have two Web dev languages .NET and Java as SIGs but the other langages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola-MAC etc. ***Our next meeting September 13***. ▭

MCP

(Microsoft Certified Professional)

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/sig_mcp.html

The MCSE SIG is a study group with the goal of preparing for the Microsoft Certification Exams. In February of 2000 "Windows 2000" debuted along with new MCSE tests. It's two years later and we have settled somewhere between W2k Pro/Server and Windows XP in our studies. Windows NT while still viable, is history as far as Microsoft is concerned. Windows .NET server should be out this year and should look like Windows XP-Server.

The books we will be using are "Mastering Windows 2000 Server" by Mark Minasi and the "MCSE Self-Paced Training Kit" from Microsoft Press. These books are important because as a study group we won't have a teacher to explain the concepts. We'll **need** to discuss them in the group. This is a study group, not a class taught by a teacher. Since hands-on training is crucial in acquiring the skills needed for these tests, we try to focus on lab work as well. The Microsoft training kits are good for labs.

We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 7 pm to 10 pm. Attendees are encouraged to bring a PC properly configured with NT, 10BaseT network card, and Netmeetng 2.1. For more info, reading assignments, course schedule, visit our website. ▭

Java
Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)
http://www.javasig.org

The Java Users Group covers beginner, intermediate, and advanced level Java programming. Primary focus is on developing useful/practical applets and applications, but can include related topics such as Java I/O, JavaBeans, Reflection, object-oriented programming and software design issues. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month starting promptly at 7:30 PM.

August: We held a database "bake-off" — small teams developed a database application using their favorite object-relational bridge (Hibernate, Cayenne, etc.). To make efficient use of time, a small sports MySQL 5.0 database and corresponding POJOs to match the database tables were already created. The mission was to use a tool such as Hibernate and Cayenne to complete mapping and obtain some result sets. Also, there were presentations by Tatjana from Carnagie Associates and Luz Sandoval from Robert Half Technology.

September 12: Technical Overview of Java Server Faces ▭

C/C++ Programming
Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net)
http://www.blast.net/barnold

This group is devoted to programming languages in general and C, C++, and C++ for Windows programming in particular. Each month a small but hopefully useful program (complete with source code) is presented for discussion.

May: C++ Tips, Tricks, and Workarounds, VC++ 6 Compiler*,* CodeProject Snapshot. We discussed an article by Nishant Sivakumar called "C++ Tips, Tricks, and Workarounds", which I found browsing *www.codeproject.com*. The author explains a number of areas which cause trouble for Visual C++ programers. Topics include hidden modal dialogs, stealing focus, always on top dialogs, going full-screen, expanding / contracting dialogs, removing task bar icon, context sensitive help and other useful tips / tricks.

Our next meeting September 19.▭

Layman's Forum
Matt Skoda (som359@aol.com)
http://www.acgnj.org/groups/laymans.html

We meet on the second Monday of the month (no meetings in July and August) to discuss issues of interest to novice users or those who are planning to get started in computing. Watch our Web page for updates and announcements. ▭

DotNet
Jim Wong
http://www.jimw.net/acgnj/

May: Some of the items discussed:
* putting comments in source code
* training videos
* creating and using a simple class
* stepping through code with debugger

Next meeting: September 21 ▭

Investing
Norm Wiss (cut.up@verizon.net)
http://www.acgnj.org/groups/sig_investment.html

The Investment SIG continues with presentations on how to use analysis programs TC2000 and TCNet. Large charts are presented on our pull down screen and illustrate the application of computer scans and formulas to find stocks for profitable investments. Technical analysis determines buy points, sell points and projected moves. Technical analysis can also be used on fundamentals such as earnings, sales growth, etc. *Our next meeting: September 14.* ▭

Macintosh Users
Keith Sproul (ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu)

This group is no longer meeting, but Keith is still available to help Mac users via telephone or email. ▭

Main Meeting
http://www.acgnj.org/groups/mainmeet.html
Evan Williams (nhpressgo@blast.net)

June 2: Transferring Old Home Movies to DVD, by Leonard Thomas. *No September meeting. Next meeting October 6*. ▭

Online Auction
Bill Brown (onlineauction@acgnj.org)

Due to overwhelming response to a seminar held on April 7, the membership decided to form a permanent group. The group will meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the Month. The first meeting was held Wednesday, May 17. The topic was a general overview of online auctions and basics to getting started. The second half of the meeting will be a question and answer period. The general public is invited at no charge. Membership representatives will also be available for those who would like to join the organization.

These are the eight topics for discussion. We will cover all types of online auctions, as members chose. The general format of the meetings will be from 7:30 to 10 PM. The first 45 minutes will be to discuss the topic for the evening. A short break will be taken, the remainder of the time will be for specific questions to the topic followed by general questions and bull session. During the entire time, online presence will be established and examples will be given on screen.

1. Getting Started: Different Auctions Registering. Buyer account, sellers account Navigating websites.

2. Buying and selling. An overview of searching, sniping, snuffing.

3. Finding things to sell Gnoming, Clearance, Bargain Bins, Flea Markets, Garage Sales, Solicitation

4. Listing an item. Choosing a category, Setting a Price. Buy it now strategies

5. Maintaining your sales. Revising and re-listing.

6. Collection and payment follow ups.

7. Packaging, shipping, Inventory management.

8. Going further. Ebay express, stores ▭

Guru Corner

Jo-Anne Head (tinarock@aol.com)

If you need help with any of the technologies listed below, you can call on the person listed. Please be considerate and call before 10 PM.

Hardware

	Scott Vincent	973-539-8169

Software

HTML	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
CSS	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
ColdFusion	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
Java	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
C++	Bruce Arnold	908-735-7898
	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
ASP	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
Perl	John Raff	973-560-9070
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
XML	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
e-Commerce	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Genealogy	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Networking	Scott Vincent	973-539-8169
Home Automation	Charlie Huffsmith	732-549-1734
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681

Operating Systems

WindowsNT	Scott Vincent	973-361-5793
Windows95	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Windows98	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Windows3.1	Ted Martin	732-636-1942
	Charlie Huffsmith	732-549-1734

Macintosh

Mac O/S	Keith Sproul	(732) 821-4828

Discount Computer Magazine Price List

As described by the DealsGuy

	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr
Computer Games	$10.95	20.95	29.95
Computer Gaming World	14.95	28.95	41.95
Computer Shopper1	16.97	32.95	47.95
Dr. Dobbs Journal	15.95	30.95	
Mac Addict	10.97		
Mac Home Journal	15.97	29.97	
Mac World	12.95		
Maximum PC	9.95	18.95	27.95
Microsoft System Journal	21.95	39.95	
PC Gamer	12.95		
PC Magazine (22/44/66 Issues)	25.97	48.95	68.95
PC World	16.95		
Wired	6.00	12.00	17.00

These prices are for new subscriptions and renewals. All orders must be accompanied by a check, cash or Money Order. Make payable to Herb Goodman, and mail to:

Herb Goodman, 8295 Sunlake Drive, Boca Raton, FL 33496

Telephone: 561-488-4465, e-mail: *hgoodman@prodigy.net*

Please allow 10 to 12 weeks for your magazines to start. For renewals you must supply an address label from your present subscription to insure the correct start of your renewal. As an extra service I will mail a renewal notice about 4 months prior to their expiration date. I carry more than 300 titles at excellent prices — email for prices.

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Sign up online at *http://www.acgnj.org/membershipApplication.html* and pay dues with PayPal.

Dues

	US/CANADA	FAMILY OF MEMBER (No Newsletter)	FOREIGN	STUDENT	SENIOR CITIZEN (Over 65)
1 Year	$25	$10	$55	$20	$20
2 Years	$40				
3 Years	$55				$45

Mail this application and your check to:

AMATEUR COMPUTER GROUP OF NEW JERSEY, INC., P.0. BOX 135, SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ 07076

❏ New Member o Renewal   ❏ Address Change

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ E-Mail _____

City _____ State_____ Zip_____ URL _____

What topics would you like to see covered at club meetings?_____

Classified

FREE TO MEMBERS. Use our classified ads to sell off your surplus computer stuff. Send copy to Classified, ACGNJ NEWS, P.O. Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076 or e-mail to the editor, *bdegroot@ptd.net*. Classified ads are free to members, one per issue. Non-members pay $10. Send check payable to ACGNJ Inc. with copy. Reasonable length, please. Deadline: 1st of preceding month. (For example, April 1 for May issue.)

apcug — Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

http://www.apcug.net

Radio and TV Programs

Computer Radio Show, WBAI 99.5 FM, NY, Wed. 8-9 p.m.

Software Review, The Learning Channel, Saturday 10-10:30 p.m.

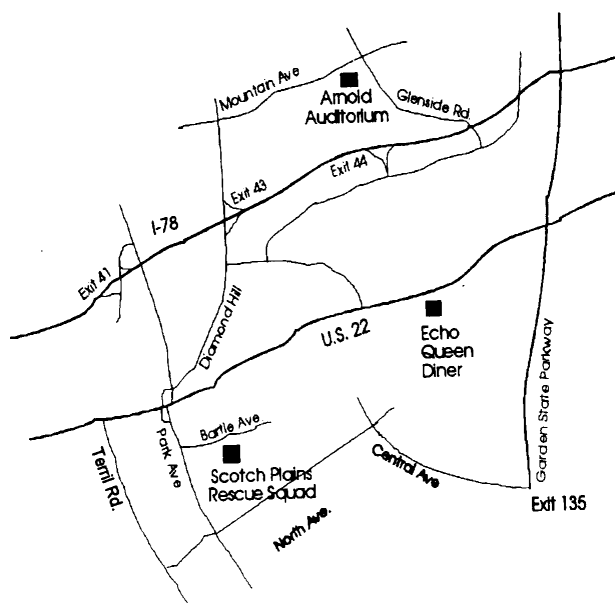**On Computers**, WCTC 1450 AM, New Brunswick, Sunday 1-4 p.m. To ask questions call (800) 677-0874.

PC Talk, Sunday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., 1210 AM Philadelphia. `1800-876-WPEN`, Webcast at *http://www.pctalkweb.net*.

MarketPro Shows

http://www.marketpro.com/

June 3-4: NJ Convention Center, Edison

June24-25, Meadowlands Expo Center Secaucus

Directions to Meetings at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains NJ

From New York City or Northern New Jersey

Take Route 1&9 or the Garden State Parkway to US 22 Westbound.

From Southern New Jersey

Take Parkway north to Exit 135 (Clark). Stay on left of ramp, follow circle under Parkway. Bear right to Central Avenue; follow to Westfield and under RR overpass. Left at light to North Avenue; follow to light in Fanwood. Right on Martine (which becomes Park Ave). Right on Bartle Ave in middle of shopping district.Scotch Plains Rescue Squad (2-story brick) is located on the right. Do not park in the row next to the building — you'll be towed.

From I-78 (either direction)

Take exit 41 (Scotch Plains); follow signs to US 22. Turn right at light at bottom of hill and use overpass to cross Rt. 22. Follow US 22 Westbound directions.

From US 22 Westbound

Exit at Park Avenue, Scotch Plains after McDonalds on the right, diagonally opposite Scotchwood Diner on the left, immediately before the overpass. After exiting, turn left at the light and use overpass to cross US 22. Bear right at bottom of ramp to continue south on Park Avenue. Turn left at the second light (a staggered intersection). Scotch Plains Rescue Squad (2-story brick) is on the right. Do not park in the row next to the building — you'll be towed. We meet on the second floor, entering by the door at the right front of the building.

From Western New Jersey

Take US 22 Eastbound to the Park Avenue exit. The exit is about a mile past Terrill Road and immediately past the overpass. Exit onto Park Avenue South and follow the directions above to the Rescue Squad building.

Oops! Only one program firewall at a time is allowed. Since the member's Norton subscription was about to expire, I downloaded AVG antivirus to his desktop (free at *http://free.grisoft.com*), shut off the cable modem, went to uninstall Norton SystemWorks and discovered two versions. I uninstalled both.

When I attempted to install AVG antivirus, the program indicated that the version of the Roxio CD creator contained code that was incompatible with AVG, and it provided a link for an update. I installed the update and then successfully installed the AVG antivirus. Then I turned on the cable modem and downloaded updates. I was grateful to the AVG programmers to make that test and inform the user. Suddenly, I decided that I like the AVG antivirus program and its creators even more than in the past.

Now I felt that I could address the original problem. I opened Office Outlook, and it proceeded to download a monstrous movie clip — 9.87MB! It was able to complete the download due to the fact that Norton wasn't scanning inbound e-mail messages.

"Suddenly" wasn't really all that sudden. The second and third firewall programs were installed over a period of time, but the problem didn't manifest itself until the arrival of the large file. As an aside, it was a clip from a newscast relating the story of an autistic youth that had been the go-fer for a high school basketball team. On the last game of his senior year, the coach (Dad) suited him up put him in to play. I believe that I saw through the tears that welled up in my eyes over 21 points racked up — all three pointers. I'm not a sports fan, but am a fan of the underdog! $20 more for the Club's treasury.

This article was originally published in Bits, PCs & Macs. Bits PCs & Macs is the newsletter of the Sun City Anthem Computer Club. All copies are available online at: *http://www.myscacc.org/newsletters.htm*

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ⌨

ACGNJ MEETINGS

For the very latest news on ACGNJ meetings visit the ACGNJ Web Page (*http://www.acgnj.org*)

Friday, September 1, 2006
8 P.M. - Cancelled: Main Meeting, Evan Williams (*nhpressgo@blast.net*).

Monday, September 4
8 P.M. -Cancelled: Lunics (Linux/Unix). Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*), cancelled.

Wednesday, September 6
7:30 P.M. - Online Auction, Bill Brown (*onlineauction@acgnj.org*)

Friday, September 8
6 P.M. to 5 A.M.- NJ Gamers. Gregg McCarthy (*greggmc@optonline.net*), 732-721-6507. Break 8 to 10 P.M.

Monday, September 11
8 P.M. - Layman's Forum, Matt Skoda (*som359@aol.com*), 908-359-8842.

Tuesday, September 12
7:30 P.M. - Java, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*) 908-246-0410.

Wednesday, September 13
7 P.M. - WebDev SIG

Thursday, September 14
8 P.M. - Investing, Norm Wiss (*cut.up@verizon.net*).

Friday, September 15
8 P.M. - Window Pains, John Raff.

Tuesday, September 19
8 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold (*barnold@blast.net*), 908-735-7898

Wednesday, September 20
7:30 P.M. - Online Auction, Bill Brown (*onlineauction@acgnj.org*)

Thursday, September 21
8 P.M. - Dot Net , Jim Wong

All meetings, unless otherwise noted, are at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains, N.J. Directions and map inside back cover.