Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

From the President

Michael Redlich

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome those of you that may be reading this newsletter for the very first time. The monthly ACGNJ newsletter is normally published electronically, but a special printed issue is published in April specifically for the annual Trenton Computer Festival (TCF).

The 32nd Annual TCF will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 28-29, 2007 at The College of New Jersey in Ewing, New Jersey. TCF is the world's oldest and largest computer show and is unlike any other. For essentially the same price as a regular computer show, you get what is normally expected **plus** access to a variety of 50-minutes talks and forums, poster sessions, a keynote address by a featured speaker, and the ever-popular outdoor flea market.

This year's keynote address will be presented by Constantine Kaniklidis, President of Technology Education Support (TES). Constantine is an industry-recognized expert in Data and Internet Security, Microsoft Operating Systems, Web Development, and Web Services. His keynote address, entitled "*Vista Exposed*," will provide an in-depth review (the good, the bad, and the ugly) of this newest operating system offering from Microsoft. This is indeed a must-see keynote address.

I can't forget to mention the Saturday evening banquet. This is your opportunity to socialize with colleagues and enjoy this year's banquet speaker, Sol Libes. Sol founded ACGNJ in 1975 and was the club President for six years. He also co-founded TCF with Professor Allen Katz in 1976. Sol presentation, entitled "*The Origin of the Computer Hobbyist Species*," will focus on the early days of computing (i.e., the 1960s) where hobbyists built their own personal computers from parts purchased at flea markets, junkyards, and dealers that sold used electronics. Sol was one of these computer hobbyists and he will share many pictures of these early personal computers. There is an additional fee to attend the banquet, but I am sure you will agree that it indeed worth the extra cost.

After a successful debut in 2006, the TCF Professional Seminars returns for its second year. This event will be held on Friday, April 27, 2007 at The College of New Jersey from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. The Professional Seminars are designed for IT professionals to enhance their skills by attending more in-depth technical seminars.

All of us at ACGNJ hope you will enjoy the activities and educational opportunities that TCF 2007 has to offer. There is something for everyone at TCF, and you can learn more at *http://www.tcf-nj.org/*. I hope to see you at the show! 🖳

Need help taming your computer?

Talk to one of our gurus see page 14 or visit the ACGNJ booth at TCF.

http://www.acgnj.org

Founded 1975

In This Issue

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Submissions: Articles, reviews, cartoons, illustrations. Most common formats are acceptable. Graphics embedded in the document must also be included as separate files. Fax or mail hard copy and/or disk to editor; OR e-mail to Editor. **Always confirm**. Date review and include name of word processor used, your name, address and phone *and* name, address and phone of manufacturer, if available.

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?

Advertising: Non-commercial announcements from members are free. Commercial ads 15 cents per word, $5 minimum. Camera ready display ads: Full page (7 x 10 inches) $150, two-thirds page (4½ x 10) $115, half-page $85, one-third $57, quarter $50, eighth $30. Discount 10% on 3 or more consecutive insertions. Enclose payment.

Publication Exchange: Other computer user groups are invited to send a subscription to ACGNJ at the address below. We will respond in kind.

Address Changes should be directed to Martin Rosenblum (*m.rosenblum@ieee.org*) and/or to his attention at ACGNJ at the address below.

Membership, including subscription: 1 year $25, 2 years $40, 3 years $55. Student or Senior Citizen (over 65): 1 year $20, 3 years $45. Family of member, without subscription, $10 per year. Send name, address and payment to ACGNJ, PO Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076.

Typographic Note: The ACGNJ News is produced using Corel Ventura 5. Font families used are Times New Roman (TT) for body text, Arial (TT) for headlines.

E-Mail Addresses

Here are the e-mail addresses of ACGNJ Officers, Directors and SIG Leaders (and the Newsletter Editor). This list is also at (*http://www.acgnj.org/officers.html*).

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The Future?

Robert Hawes (r.d.hawes@hotmail.com), ACGNJ

Some other computer clubs (so I've heard) have been wondering if they do, in fact, have a useful purpose any more. After all, the argument goes; computers are no longer mysterious oracles lurking in remote secret caves, tended by cadres of acolytes clad only in coarse robes and sandals. They've become everyday household appliances. Take the dishwasher. A fabulous invention, once reserved only for the privileged few; but if there ever was a need for dishwasher clubs, it's gone now. However, we don't have to travel very far to refute that argument. Just look at another invention that totally changed the way we live: the automobile. There are lots of car clubs out there, and people love them. Just as car clubs still fill a need, so can computer clubs.

What about the future of the computer itself? In this article, we'll look at two visions of the future: Mine and Microsoft's. First, my own personal fantasy: Two years ago, I made a discovery. Using a Linux Live-CD and an otherwise empty hard disk for data storage (stick memory would also work), I found that it was possible for me to do **everything** I usually do on a Windows computer that was booted from a hard disk. (Not necessarily as easy, but definitely doable). Many people might look at this and just think; "How cute". For me, it was a revelation. That CD had been recorded and closed. It was no longer possible to write anything more on it. Not for me, and not for **any** spyware, trojan, virus or worm. That CD was invulnerable to anything except scratches, yet it still worked perfectly. It came to me in a flash: *a properly designed operating system can be completely read-only.* I'm not talking about an embedded OS, either (although that could work too). My design would need a new piece of equipment. (That's why it's only a dream). On the outside, my "firmdrive" would look just like a hard disk, with the exact same cable connections, so it wouldn't require any change in computer hardware design. Inside would be only EEPROM chips, with a manual hardware switch on the outside to control its ability to be written to. That way, it could be upgraded just like a hard disk, but *only* with the conscious intent of the user.

I've written about this before (in the May, 2005 and April, 2006 issues), and I've elaborated even further on the design since. For instance, the original concept was **not** quite as spyware-proof as I first assumed. An attacker could be picked up and loaded into memory during normal use. It would be destroyed utterly when the computer was shut down, but it could report back anything it found until then. Therefore, some form of active protection running in the background would still be necessary. However, my basic concept is still miles ahead of anything else, and I've thought of ways to make it even better. You can see what my intent would be, if I had the power to influence the future of the PC. Now, let's see what Microsoft (which **does** have that power) is doing.

As I expected, Windows Vista is even more intrusive (I *really* hate pop-up messages) and even more bloatware (a fresh installation takes about **six** GB on the hard disk, versus two GB for XP). It's also a much bigger resource hog. The recommendations for a new install are at least **four** times greater than required for XP. What is all that extra capacity needed for? It's **not** for the "improved" desktop. In the six years since XP came out, video technology advanced a lot. Similar display quality has been available on other software platforms for quite some time, **without** requiring that much more hardware. It's not for Vista's new "bonus" programs, either. They're all just Microsoft versions of already existing software, which ran just fine under XP (or 98SE, for that matter). There's a much more sinister explanation.

For years, designers of all types have debated "Form Versus Function". As far as Vista goes, the form is a lot of pretty new golly-gee-whiz pictures. Beneath that form, however, there lurks a vile and downright evil function. We don't have to worry about getting infections only from the outside any more. In the name of "content protection", Microsoft has built malicious software right into the heart of Vista. A fundamental cornerstone of US jurisprudence has always been "innocent until proven guilty". In this new version of Windows, the assumption is "guilty until… well, forever". With Vista, **nobody** is innocent. Here's just one of its many absurd new requirements: **Thirty-three** times each and every second, the system will stop doing whatever its user told it to do, in order to check for "wrong" behavior. (This will **always** happen, whether or not any so called "premium content" is actually in use). If it finds anything it interprets as suspicious, it can take drastic action. Microsoft claims this would only happen in case of piracy. In actual fact, such anomalous behavior could be caused by a lot of everyday reasons; just one of which is electrical noise. Power and signal glitches can pop up all the time during normal use, caused by many different internal and external factors; including (for a particularly sensitive PC) the mere insertion or removal of a USB device. The original IBM Personal Computer specifications were designed to tolerate and ignore such aberrant signals. Vista actively seeks them out for retaliation. What's worse, under current law, it might actually be illegal for a computer owner to delete Vista and install another operating system. Don't laugh. I'm amazed, astonished and confounded, but I'm **very** serious. Removing Vista's new "features" would result in a reduced level of DRM (Digital Rights Management) protection on the subject machine. Such a substitution could be interpreted as being against that one-sided, heavy handed piece of bad legislation called the DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act).

So what is Vista? Since it doesn't collect information or reproduce itself, it's not spyware, a virus, or a worm. It's a logic bomb trojan. A Trojan horse is a program that (at first glance) will appear to be useful software, but which actually contains a malicious component (the payload). A logic bomb is a payload which activates only when certain conditions are met by the computer. Vista easily meets both those criteria.

That's the opinion of an over-the-hill old DOS guy (me). What does a fully up-to-date educator think? Peter Gutmann is a researcher in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, working on the design and analysis of cryptographic security architectures. He

From The DealsGuy

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

Are you taking a medication that has noticeable side effects? If so, you're not the only one. I recently read an article in Consumer Reports about the biggest complaints that patients have about their doctors. At least a third of the patients surveyed complained that doctors won't discuss side effects of medications. I've noticed that too, and the answer I get is that I will get used to the side effects, and that I need those drugs regardless. No compromise is discussed and the doctor changes the subject. My family practitioner did help me get off two medications when I complained strongly enough and insisted on a substitute.

I was put on Coumadin for a blood clot in my leg last year and my blood pressure started raging. My cardiologist prescribed two drugs, Coreg and Lisinopril for both the heart and the BP, which brought it under control. Not long afterward though, I

began having serious numbing of my toes and feet. I thought I might have a circulation problem in the feet (common with diabetics) so I went to my podiatrist who found no circulation problems and said it was probably a nerve problem in the leg.

I have two friends who had taken Lisinopril and got off it because of bad side effects, and two others who take it now with no problems. I decided I wanted a replacement for Lisinopril and the doctor prescribed Quinapril. But the paper about its side effects read the same as the Lisinopril description; it said among the side effects that numbing toes, feet, fingers and arms could be a side effect so I refused to take it. Since I stopped taking Lisinopril (new BP medication now) the numbing in my toes is improved, but not gone, and I also occasionally still have it in my fingers. A nerve conduction study showed nerve damage in the legs and arms, which, in the legs,

Continued

The Future?, *continued*

posted a technical report titled "A Cost Analysis of Windows Vista Content Protection" to an obscure security mailing list, and set off a firestorm of Internet controversy. He's **not** an anti-Microsoft zealot. He's a bona fide Security Professional. The entire document can be found at:

http://www.cs.auckland.ac.nz/~pgut001/pubs/vista_cost.html.

As printed out by my printer, it's 37 pages long. It has occasional dense technical passages, but it's mostly written in plain, everyday language. *Everybody* who cares about the future of computers should read it. The original document was released under the Creative Commons license. Having credited the author and cited the link to the original document above, I'm permitted to make excerpts for my own use. Here's a list of the most interesting entries from the Table of Contents:

- Disabling of Functionality
- Indirect Disabling of Functionality
- Decreased Playback Quality
- Elimination of Open-source Hardware Support
- Elimination of Unified Drivers
- Denial-of-Service via Driver/Device Revocation
- Decreased System Reliability
- Increased Hardware Costs
- Increased Cost due to Requirement to License Unnecessary Third-party IP
- Unnecessary CPU Resource Consumption
- Unnecessary Device Resource Consumption

I'll only make two direct quotes here. The first is from the "Unnecessary CPU Resource Consumption" section: "An indication of the level of complexity added to the software can be seen by looking at a block diagram of Vista's Media Interoperability Gateway (MIG). Of the eleven components that make up the MIG, only two (the audio and video decoders) are actually used to render content. The remaining nine are used to apply content-protection measures".

My second quote is composed of three sentences copied from Gutmann's "Final Thoughts" section: "At the end of all this, the question remains: Why is Microsoft going to this much trouble? ... The only reason I can imagine why Microsoft would put its programmers, device vendors, third-party developers, and ultimately its customers, through this much pain is because once this copy protection is entrenched, Microsoft will completely own the premium-content distribution channel. ... It's obvious why this type of business model makes the pain of pushing content protection onto consumers so worthwhile for Microsoft, since it practically constitutes a license to print money." That sounds an awful lot like what Microsoft has already been doing for years with their proprietary Office file formats, doesn't it?

Now, Gutmann is a thorough professional, and has verified sources for everything he reported (many from Microsoft itself). Plus, any unbiased researcher can easily repeat his findings. Microsoft **can't** say that Gutmann lied. They can only release weasel-worded announcements which, when they don't flatly contradict something they said earlier, boil down to "you won't notice" and "it not enough to matter". Well I, for one, think it **does** matter. To me, the new Vista features that Microsoft has been hyping are just a "sugar coating", applied to disguise the foul taste of the horrible "pill" underneath. Vista's draconian content protection measures are exclusively detrimental to the user (even in the extremely unlikely event that, as Microsoft claims, it's just a **little** bit). The only benefits go to Microsoft itself. I find it unconscionable that all new PC buyers will actually be forced to **pay** Microsoft for this disservice. What do **you** think?

For my own computers, the future is very clear: **anything** but Vista. But what about everyone else? Helping PC owners as a whole rescue their computers from the insidious clutches of Microsoft would certainly be a Herculean task. In my opinion, this laudable endeavor definitely provides a suitable future purpose for the computer clubs of the world. Will they rise to the occasion? ⌨

affects my balance. Doctors say diabetes caused the nerve problems, not medication. Maybe, but a logical conclusion to me is that I had diabetes for seven years with none of those problems before I was prescribed the Coreg and Lisinopril, and I always keep my blood sugar very near 100. I wonder if those medications were attacking my nervous system.

I also developed a problem while taking those meds when trying to sleep. My head moves around, but I have little control over that when trying to sleep on my side. That situation has also improved since getting off of the Coreg and Lisinopril. We'll see how it goes; but not much thanks to the doctors listening to my complaint. My cardiologist tells me to "stop playing doctor, you are not a doctor." I think doctors should be better doctors instead of protecting drug companies. I would like to hear from my readers on all this. I have already heard from several readers in the past about these problems.

The following announcements were severely edited so check their Web site for more information. I have not tried any of these products.

Problem With Your Flash Card?

PANTERASoft is proud to announce the release of version 2.1 of Flash File Recovery, a digital image recovery software tool for flash cards. Flash File Recovery 2.1 efficiently recovers corrupted or lost data from formatted, damaged, unreadable or defective storage media devices. This software recovers image and video files of different types: JPEG, TIFF and others; RAW Image files, like Canon CRW, Nikon NEF, Kodak DCR and various other video files — AVI, MOV, MPG/MPEG, and many more. It is also capable of recovering pictures from damaged or corrupted flash drives (including a camera's built-in memory) and memory sticks. Flash File Recovery 2.1 supports a wide range of flash cards: SmartMedia, CompactFlash, Memory Stick, MicroDrive, xD Picture Card, Flash Card, PC Card, Multimedia Card, Secure Digital Card, and many others.

Flash File Recovery 2.1 requires Microsoft Windows 9x/NT/2000/2003/XP/Vista and costs $49.50. User Group members get a 15% discount. Additional information on Flash File Recovery 2.1, as well as its fully functional version for evaluation is available for downloading from *http://www.panterasoft.com*.

Product page : *http://www.panterasoft.com/file-recovery/index.html*

E-mail: alexey@panterasoft.com with questions.

*You Tell Me What This Does!

ALM Works announces the release of JIRA Client 1.0, the first version of a handy desktop client for Atlassian JIRA issue tracking and project management system. This client offers interactive user interface, powerful search, offline mode and other capabilities that expand JIRA functionality to organize issue tracking for more convenience and efficiency. Thanks to JIRA Client caching issues, you can now search, create and modify issues when JIRA server is not available such as during business trips or on-site with a customer.

JIRA Client downloads issues from JIRA and stores them in a local cache allowing users to view and edit issues, regardless of a server's availability. Any changes that are not marked "draft" are uploaded to JIRA whenever the server is reachable. JIRA Client also periodically polls the server for changes and downloads new or modified issues. These changes are automatically reflected on the JIRA Client's interface, in issue counters and issue tables. JIRA Client has a powerful search with complete Boolean logic processor. Each downloaded query is displayed along with an issue counter that shows the number of issues that pass the query's filter.

Neatly Organized Issues Allows you to Concentrate on Work to be Done. Links between issues may be created by dragging "source" issues and dropping them over "target" issues, or by using copy-and-paste operations.

JIRA Client corporate license price is $169 per user. User group member are entitled to 15% discount for any type of license (offer valid until June 1, 2007) by using coupon code UGPROMO. ALM Works also offers floating, academic and personal licenses. JIRA Client is free for use in open-source projects. All customers are entitled to free lifetime patches and minor updates, and to limited-time technical support and major upgrades. JIRA Client 1.0 runs under Microsoft Windows 2000/XP/2003/Vista, Linux and Apple Mac OS X 10.4. The client is compatible with Atlassian JIRA version 3.3 or later, any edition. JIRA Client downloads and free time-limited evaluation is available from the product web site: *http://almworks.com/jiraclient*.

Download link: *http://almworks.com/jiraclient/download.html*

Company website: *http://almworks.com*

*Super DVD Creator Now Available

MasterSoft, Inc. announces the release of Super DVD Creator 9.30. Super DVD Creator lets you jumpstart your creativity and make a personalized disk (DVD, VCD or SVCD) from your own or a downloaded video. Whether you want to create a DVD as a present for your friend or beloved, transfer an old video of a family get-together from VHS to digital form, or create a digital resume, Super DVD Creator is an excellent choice. Select format (DVD, SVCD, VCD disk), add video files, include a DVD menu with chapters and subtitles and click 'Start'. That's all! Super DVD Creator will do the rest. It'll burn output to DVD in brilliant quality and much faster than any other DVD authoring software on the market. Another unique option in Super DVD Creator is Super Encode Engine, which is based on MMX-SSE & 3DNow! technology. It delivers an advanced and high speed converting method that lets users create a full 4.2 GB DVD in 60 minutes!

Super DVD Creator 9.30 runs under Microsoft Windows 95, 98, 2000, XP and Vista, and costs $29.90 (US) for a single-user license. User group members get 20% off its regular price. E-mail press@alldj.com for ordering info. Licensed customers are entitled to free lifetime technical support by e-mail and free lifetime upgrades. The software is backed by 30-day money back guarantee. Among the company's premier products, there are Super DVD Creator, Super DVD Player, Super DVD Video Editor, Super IPOD/PSP/iTurn/3GP/PDA Video Converter, Super Clone

Knoppix to the Rescue

Cass Lewart (rlewart@monmouth.com), ACGNJ

As tax time is approaching, I assembled all my income and expense items and entered them in the TaxAct program, which arrived recently for free in the mail, courtesy of H&R Block. I was also working on two PowerPoint presentations, one on GPS for the Trenton Computer Festival and one on High Definition TV for our computer club. I thought that I was making backups as I was moving along, but I was not 100% sure where those backups were. If you could see my desk with dozens of CDs, floppies and memory sticks floating around, you would understand the problem.

Well, it happened. My dual-boot Windows 2000 Professional system, where I kept all the data, would not boot or would keep rebooting. It worked fine the evening before but not the next morning. I remembered that it happened to me once before on another dual boot drive as soon as I installed Service Pack 3, required for some programs. I tried the Windows repair utility, I tried to reinstall Windows, all to no avail. I could not even get into Safe Mode. At one point the system asked me for password, though I never use one, and refused to continue. No password — no entry!

I started looking for my backups, but those I could find were not the recent ones. Only one chance remained — Knoppix! Knoppix is a version of Linux which fits on one self-booting CD. Knoppix was developed by Klaus Knopper, who gave it the name. There is also an expanded version of Knoppix which fits on a DVD. When I asked my son what is the difference between the CD and DVD versions, he told me that on DVD I will get lots of programs which I will never use. Knoppix is free under the open source GNU license and can be downloaded from many mirror sites. The GNU Project (GNU is a recursive acronym for "GNU's Not Unix") was launched in 1984 to develop a complete free Unix-like operating system. After downloading you have to "burn" a CD in ISO format.

To run Knoppix you set your computer to boot from a CD. Most often it is accomplished by pressing F8 during the boot process and then selecting CD-ROM as the first boot device. You then insert the Knoppix CD in the drive and continue the booting process. Knoppix then starts by recognizing various hardware devices in your computer such as floppies, hard drives, memory sticks, sound and video cards, modems, Internet connections and so on. In my opinion Knoppix recognizes hardware devices better than any Windows OS.

As Knoppix is running from the CD it will recognize a defective hard drive which will not boot, and display its contents. One can then copy the recovered files from that drive to a memory stick or floppy. I easily found the two Power Point presentations and copied them to a memory stick. The tax data was a little more difficult to locate as TaxAct stores the data five levels deep. I found the location by running TaxAct on another computer. The Knoppix file search function could not locate the file without a little help. Now I had all the important stuff recovered. I was even able to watch the PowerPoint presentation with OpenOffice, included on the Knoppix CD, and listen to various sound clips with player utilities on the CD.

Besides being a recovery tool, Knoppix CD gives you a complete set of utilities for most of your computing tasks. The current version of Knoppix is 5.1. Klaus, thank you, you came to the rescue! 💻

DVD, DVD To AVI Converter, and DVD To Mpeg Converter. For more information, please visit the Web site.

Product page link: *http://www.alldj.com/sdvdc/index.htm*

Download link: *http://www.alldj.com/sdvdc/download.htm*

Company website: *http://www.alldj.com*

That's it for this month. I have some new product announcements on my Web site page. 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. Visit my Web site at *http://www.dealsguy.com*. 💻

Online Retirement Planning Resources

Ira Wilsker (Iwilsker@apcug.net), APCUG Director; Columnist, radio and TV show host

Let's face it; many of us are working hard and may or may not be planning for retirement. All too many of us are present oriented, and do not adequately plan for our financial future. Whatever your political persuasion or beliefs, social security retirement income is only intended as a minimal safety net, and not a comprehensive retirement plan. Many of my college students have expressed concerns that either social security will not be around for them to collect when eligible, or that benefits will be cut back as the ratio of workers to social security recipients declines.

Many of us are lucky enough to have 401(k) or 403(b) tax sheltered retirement plans, while others among us may have IRAs, either traditional or the newer Roth plans. Many of us blindly accept that our employer will take care of us. Most of us are not independently wealthy, and will have to depend on ourselves to provide for our own retirement, either in part or in full. Very few of us have a reliable prediction of how well off we will be financially at retirement.

There is an old cliché that "information is power", and by having good information and acting on it in a timely fashion, we may have a financially comfortable retirement. Fortunately, the internet has many reliable resources that can help us with our retirement planning, regardless of our current age or fiscal situation. Some retirement planning resources are available from the financial media websites, while others are available online from brokerages, insurance companies, and mutual fund sponsors.

The online service Yahoo has extensive financial information freely available, including a comprehensive personal finance section. One such section is its retirement information at *http://finance.yahoo.com/retirement*. This page, which is continually updated, is rich in retirement information. Included on this page, as I type this, are topics including a variety of "how to" guides, "questions and answers" on retirement topics, and a variety of financial calculators.

One calculator available for free from Yahoo is its online *retirement calculator*. This online calculator is easy to use and confidential, and does not require any type of registration, but it does ask some very personal questions necessary to provide a retirement solution: current age, income, spouse's income, predicted rate of inflation, desired retirement age, and other pertinent information. While not totally comprehensive, the results provided are a graph showing retirement balance and retirement income and an annualized table displaying age, salary, beginning retirement balance, additional savings required, inflation adjusted desired retirement income, projected social security income, withdrawals from retirement account, and ending retirement account balances. While no online retirement calculator should be counted on to be absolutely accurate in predicting the future, this calculator will at least give the user a ballpark concept of what to expect at retirement under different scenarios.

Money Magazine and CNN have online retirement resources at *http://money.cnn.com/pf/retirement/*. As I type this, the page is displaying information on 401(k) plans and possible hidden fees which can eat away at returns, how to draw upon a 401(k) at retirement, information on accepting a pension or lump sum distribution, "The last 401(k) guide you'll ever need", and strategies for a comfortable retirement. On this page are also links to a variety of calculators to calculate savings nest eggs, debt reduction, a "millionaire" calculator to predict when the user will accumulate a cool million, and other calculators.

Many brokerage houses, insurance companies, and mutual funds have online retirement information. One of my personal favorites is the "My Plan" available online from Fidelity Investments at *www.fidelity.com/myPlan*. No registration is required to use this comprehensive calculator. This calculator has a friendly and helpful audio voice accompanying the simple questions asked. The use of a slider to enter information, as well as to demonstrate the impact of any changes is commendable. With only five simple questions, the calculator will demonstrate potential retirement scenarios. Small grey question marks are displayed adjacent to each term used and will open a window explaining each of the terms. The first question asks your age, followed by (second question) your current income. The third question asks how much you have already saved for retirement, followed by (fourth question) an inquiry about how much you are putting aside each month for retirement, including employer contributions. The final question asks about your investment style, with the slider ranging from "Short Term" (no stocks, no bonds, 100% cash instruments) to "Most Aggressive" (100% stocks, no bonds, no short term investments). As a solution, the calculator returns a pair of bar charts showing projected results at retirement if the market does poorly, or if the market performs about average. The calculated retirement goal shown is for 85% of pre-retirement income, poor market conditions, estimated social security income, and no other retirement income. Clicking on the link "Our assumptions and methodology" will give the details on how the projections are determined, based on statistical information.

On the myPlan "Snapshot" projections page are sliders for "Time" (retirement age), "Money" (contributions), and "Investment" (style and risk categories of investments). By adjusting these sliders right and left, the scenario will interactively change demonstrating in real-time the effects of the changes. Clicking on the boxes at the top of the "Snapshot" allows the user to vary age, income, and amount of savings, all of which will effect the graph shown.

The best time to have started to plan for retirement was "yesterday". Since "yesterday" is past, we should all plan now for tomorrow. These and other reputable resources may be a big help in our retirement planning.

Upgrading to an LCD Monitor

Herb Goldstein (reviewseditor@spcug.org), Sarasota PCUG (www.spcug.org)

Actually, I was happy with my high quality CRT (cathode ray tube) monitor. It was with considerable reluctance that I recently decided to get with the modern era and upgrade to an LCD. It has been quite a learning experience. Looking back, I realize that there are a number of very important practical considerations of which I was unaware in making the change and in making a choice. Perhaps I can pass along a summary of them along with some insight gained by hands-on experience to make the experience a little easier for you than it was for me. You need to do your homework both before and during your investigation. Here are some of the most important things you should know.

An LCD monitor offers considerable advantages in upgrading from a CRT. It is infinitely lighter and takes up much less desk space than a CRT. It uses the smallest fraction of electricity by comparison and is devoid of radiation concerns. When properly installed, its display may prove brighter, sharper and provide superb color.

SIZE: In any size range, an LCD will display more viewable screen than a similarly sized CRT. I decided on a 19 incher, the size of my CRT that I was happy with. Seventeen may work for you if that's what pleased you on your CRT. Over 19 for average use is both too much screen and excessive cost for most people.

ORIENTATION: Most prefer a normal tall screen (portrait view) for average usage. Wide (landscape) screens are available at greater cost in the same size range and are not recommended unless you have special need for that display. Some makes offer a swivel screen that you can change from tall to wide and back again instantly. You will pay considerably more for this feature when it is available.

COST: Has been decreasing from a few thousand some short years ago to a few hundred today. A quality 17 inch LCD can be found today for under $200, and a 19 incher for less than $300. If you have a watchful eye, special sales are common and offer substantial saving.

BRAND: There is a very significant display quality to be gained in better models of better brands. The most common best quality brands usually topping the review lists in computer publications are LG, NEC, Viewsonic, Dell and Samsung. Different models in the same brand provide different features. Check them out carefully on their respective websites and "Google" for reviews. You need to do your homework both before and during your shopping experiences if you want the best for your buck.

WARRANTY: Better brands provide a 3 year replacement on defective monitors. Don't settle for a one year warranty!

VIEWING ANGLE: Unlike a CRT, an LCD's view falls off sharply at the sides when you are not positioned in front of your monitor. In practical usage, this should not be a problem. Your view will be just fine when you are normally seated at your screen, with more than sufficient leeway from the norm.

RESPONSE TIME: Usually indicated in the advertising of better models. A faster response time is better — it indicates how quickly the screen can refresh a video image. If an LCD's response time is too slow, the display's pixels won't be able to keep up with the information sent from the computer's graphics card, and you may see ghosting and digital noise as a result. 8ms or better response time is common on quality LCD's and is preferred! The lower the response time, the less of a blurring effect is possible on the screen.

ANALOG VS. DIGITAL: Video cards can provide outlets for two different monitor display types, analog and digital. CRT monitors are cabled to your video card with an analog (15 pin) cable. LCD's usually provide the same cable and connection but will provide a significantly better display when attached via a digital (VDI-D) port on your video card. Better LCD's provide both digital and analog connections. So do better video cards. If your card doesn't have a digital port, you can either replace the card with one that does, or you can add an additional card. Easy to do. Just plug it into a PCI slot and your computer will recognize it. You are really better off in many ways with a better card. If need be, you can run your LCD with the same analog connection as you used for your CRT, but a digital connection will give you better results.

NATIVE RESOLUTION: LCD monitors will provide their best display when run at their "native resolution" which varies with the size of the monitor. For a 19 incher, the native resolution is 1280x1024. The resolution of a display can be changed easily by right-clicking on an empty area of your desktop and selecting "properties," and "settings." The same can be accomplished through your Control Panel in your Start Menu. Normally the correct choice will be made automatically by the installation software that accompanies your new monitor.

When you change your most common CRT setting of 1080x760 to 1280x1024, everything, including all your icons and fonts, will suddenly appear much smaller. Your LCD display however will become infinitely sharper. If you find it strange to your eyes, you can change your display properties to provide larger fonts. Many programs like word processors permit you to change your text to any size you wish while maintaining its quality, regardless of screen resolution.

Running at native resolution (your choice to do or not, but very highly recommended) will make your screen display smaller but you will be able to accommodate more viewed area on a page. It may be strange somewhat to your eyes at first, but the greatly increased sharpness and over-all quality of your LCD display will more than make up for it, especially if you are using digital rather than analog display.

AUTO-DISPLAY: Most quality LCD monitors will automatically install at their best display settings when you plug them in. However, they will also provide easy to adjust menu settings for most of their values that permit you to easily adjust the display to what is most pleasing to your eyes. They most common adjustment people make is for brightness. Most LCD monitors tend to be too bright unless adjusted. LCD screen illumination is entirely different and better than that from a CRT.

continued

VistaVexes

Jan Fagerholm (jan-f@pacbell.net), Assistant Editor, PC Community (http://www.pcc.org), Hayward CA

By the time you read this, Vista will be retail. Vista has many new features, and not just the interface (GUI). Microsoft's new restrictions on kernel access creates problems for many applications. While this was done to reduce security vulnerabilities, it produces incompatibilities in many common applications. Here's a few I've had trouble with:

- McAfee Internet Security Suite
- McAfee VirusScan Enterprise
- Norton Internet Security Suite
- Symantec AntiVirus Enterprise
- Cyberlink PowerDVD 7
- ABBYY FineReader 8.0
- Microsoft Visual Studio 2005
- Google Earth (any version)
- Partition Magic 8
- PerfectDisk 8
- Roxio Easy Media Creator Suite 9

And many more lesser known programs. Anything that uses kernel space is going to have a problem. McAfee has been particularly vociferous about Windows insecurity and is having a semi-public fight with Microsoft right now to try and get information from Microsoft about kernel space in Vista, which Microsoft is reluctant to release for security reasons. Both Symantec and McAfee have beta versions of potential Vista-compatible products available. You decide if you want to trust your antivirus protection to a beta. . .

There are alternatives, though. Several smaller companies in that market have released Vista compatible versions of their products. I've had success with AVG and Avast! on Vista, and am using these. Windows Defender works OK for anti-spyware and anti-phishing, though the default notification settings are intrusive, and it requires too much micro management to get the in-your-face warnings down to a reasonable level. The excellent Ad-Aware SE Pro work fine on Vista, and I'm presently using that.

Many of the applications I've had trouble with are utilities: backup programs, disk partitioners, and the like. This is to be expected, as utilities generally run much closer to the metal, so to speak, and are more sensitive to the architectural changes in Vista. I'm looking for updates or replacements for about a dozen utilities I use for system-level maintenance and recovery. Anything that is written to a particular version of the Microsoft Foundation Class (MFC) seems to have a problem. If you've ever had anything that complains about MFC422.DLL, you know what I'm referring to.

Vista uses DirectX 9 to get the Aero interface, so any application that uses DirectX will turn off Aero with a brief black screen then revert to the Windows Vista Basic theme (no transparency) before continuing. When you quit the application, it goes black screen again, then restores the Aero interface. This might not be so objectionable, if it were only games that did this, but virtually every video player (including Windows Media Player 11) does this with codecs that use DirectX to display video.

Even some non-multimedia applications do this. I like to have Visual Thesaurus 3.0 running while I'm writing. It uses DirectX to produce a graphical display of word relationships, so of course it shuts off Aero while it's running. This demonstrates what continues to be a flaw in the Windows architecture; it is still not multi-threaded, so there are many resources it cannot share.

This all sounds doom and gloom, but at least there are some nice enhancements to compensate. I'm particularly fond of the new taskbar clock, which has the ability to show three time zones simultaneously. Bring up the taskbar clock and click on the "Change date and times settings" link. There is a "Additional Clocks" tab, where you may choose one or two additional clocks and set the desired time zones. Then, when you display the clock, it will show the system time and the additional time zones that you specified. The Tool Tip also displays the additional times when you move the mouse cursor over the clock. (See below.) Also, the taskbar clock come up with a single click now, as it does in Linux.

Vista is still a bit raw. Looking at vendors Web sites, they are not rushing into Vista versions of their software, particularly device drivers for hardware. Vista will be pain along with gain for the next few months.

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Moving to LCD, *continued*

RUNNING MULTIPLE MONITORS: What's to do with your CRT now that you have your new LCD? One of your choices may be to keep it and run two monitors side-by-side. If you are using Windows XP and you have two ports on your video card (or two video cards), it's easy to do with a few simple settings in your display properties menu. You will then be able to run two different programs at the same time and easily drag items from one monitor screen to the other. Your cursor will readily mouse from one monitor to the other alongside. It can double your productivity and allow you to see and do things you did not know were possible.

Over all, upgrading to an LCD monitor will greatly enhance your computer experience and enjoyment. It's way more than worth any effort or expense involved.

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Things, Thinglets & Thingassos

S. Jack Lewtschuk (blacklion@royal.net), Monterey Bay Users' Group (www.mbug.org/)

Words of Wisdom

If builders built houses the way programmers build computer programs, the first woodpecker to come along would destroy civilization!

Keeping Track of Multiple Passwords

Passwords are a part of our everyday life: we use them for e-mail, online banking, stock trading, shopping, blogging, etc. For good security, you should have a different password for each website you enter. But how can you remember so many passwords?

A password manager is a great way to consolidate all your passwords without compromising security. A password manager is a program that stores all of your passwords for you. All your passwords are kept secure with — you guessed it — a password. The key advantage to using a password manager is that you only have to remember one password. That's not too bad. Then you can retain unique passwords for each of your various accounts without taxing your memory.

There are several pay programs that work this way. Before buying one, try KeePass (*http://keepass.sourceforge.net/*), a simple, *free* password manager. It can help you organize your passwords and also enter them into log-in forms. How does KeePass work? After you download and install it, there are several easy steps to setting it up. The first time you open it, you have to create the file that will store your passwords. Click the "New" button at the top left of the window which will prompt you for a "Master Key." Make it one that you can easily remember, but which someone else can't easily guess (e.g., your birth date, your spouse/child's/pet's name), because it's the password you'll use from now on to unlock all your other passwords.

KeePass includes categories for online functions such as e-mail, home banking and others. To put a password into KeePass, select a category and then click the "Add Entry" button. You'll be able to enter a title for the password, which will help you easily identify where the password is used.

Let's take Hotmail as an example — an effective title for a Hotmail password could be simply "Hotmail." You could also enter the web address where the password is required. KeePass automatically fills the password box with a random password. Chances are that it's stronger than the password you already use for Hotmail, but to make it work, you have to log into your account and change it to match KeePass.

If you want to keep things simple, erase the pre-filled box and put in the password that you already use and click "OK". Do the same steps for all of your everyday passwords and take a load off your memory. You can drag and drop passwords directly from KeePass. Click the password you need from KeePass and move it to the blank form on a Web page. The password will appear in the blank. KeePass keeps your entire password file encrypted. The only way to open or read it is with your master password, so don't lose it!

In addition to Windows, "switch-hitters" can download versions of KeePass for Macintosh, PocketPC, Palm and Linux. You can also take KeePass with you on a thumb drive by copying two files onto your thumb drive. One is the KeePass program (KeePass.exe), and the other is the file containing your passwords (the default is called Database.kdb).

Backing Up Outlook Contacts

Outlook stores all data in a single file called a ".PST file". This file contains your contacts, e-mail, calendar items and tasks. It's easy to back up your entire Outlook .PST file — just locate it and copy it as you would any other file. Backing up individual folders within Outlook is also easy, so you can export your entire "Contacts" list. Simply highlight "Contacts" in your Outlook folders list. Then click "File," and "Import and Export" to open the "Import and Export Wizard." Select "Export to a file" and click "Next," to choose from a list of options (I recommend Microsoft Excel as the best one to choose in order to export all your contacts into a nicely ordered spreadsheet). After making your selection, click "Next." You'll be given the option again to select the folder you want to export. Highlight it, click "Next," and specify the name and location where you would like to save your file (use the "Browse" button if needed), click "Next" and then click "Finish."

You can use the same procedure with other items in the Outlook folder list. This is handy if you only want to export certain parts of your Outlook data file. You can use the files with other programs such as a "Database." You can also use it to share information with other people. Say you want to share your contacts with friends or coworkers: just export them, and others can import your list into their Outlook program.

To import a file, click "File," and "Import and Export." Select "Import from another program or file," click "Next," and select the type of file from which you're importing. In this case, select "Microsoft Excel" and click "Next." Click "Browse" to locate the file you wish to import, then select your import options. You may want to allow duplicates, or you may wish to replace duplicates with imported items. You can also specify that duplicates not be imported. Click "Next," select the destination folder, click "Next" again, and finally, click "Finish."

Novice Corner — Starting in "Safe Mode"

At some point in time you may need to start your computer in "safe mode." You should print these instructions before continuing as they will not be available after you shut your computer down in step two. Click "Start," click "Shut Down," and then in the drop-down list click "Shut down." In the shut down window dialog box, click "Restart," and then click "OK." When you see the message "Please select the operating system to start" or "Windows" appears on the screen, press the "F8" key several times. Use your arrow keys to highlight the appropriate "safe mode" option, and then press "ENTER." If you have a dual-boot or multiple-boot system, choose the installation that you need to access using the arrow keys, and then press "ENTER.".

The Garage

Berry F. Phillips (bfpdata@1access.net), Computer Club of Oklahoma City (http://www.ccokc.org)

IT was born in a garage! If you had driven by the garage , you would not have noticed there was anything strange about the garage since it looked like all the other garages. However, if you were a neighbor you would be aware of certain unusual activity. You would have noticed cars lining the street, and people going into the garage carrying various equipment. If a neighbor was blessed or cursed, with an active imagination several fantasy explanations could come to mind. Perhaps it was a band practicing but there was no sound of music. Perhaps it was some kind of a terrorist group but no smoke or explosions or sounds of automatic rifles being fired. Well, the garage could be used for all kinds of purposes but one thing is certain; it was not being used as a garage!

The garage was located in Menlo Park, San Mateo County, California and was a maternity ward for the birthing in March 1975 of the Homebrew Computer Club. The 1999 made-for-television movie. "Pirates of the Silicon Valley (and the book on which it was based, "Fire In the Valley: The Making of the Personal Computer") describes the role the Homebrew Computer Club played in creating the first personal computer.

Hackers were attracted to the garage like steel to a magnet (in those days it was just another name for a computer enthusiast like nerd or geek). In the old days a hacker is one who "hacks" through a computer problem and who writes his own code to fix it. In modern times a hacker has unfortunately a negative connotation and should be correctly called a cracker, a combination of the words, criminal and hacker. The hackers wanted to "homebrew" their own machines using parts from the Altair computer kit, computer chips such as Intel 8080, or any other computer equipment. While members of the Homebrew Computer Club were hobbyists, most had electronic engineering or programming backgrounds. I am reminded of Bill Gates' Open Letter to Hobbyists which lambasted the early

hackers time for modifying and pirating commercial software programs. Several founders of microcomputer companies including Bob Marsh, Adam Osborne, Lee Filsenstein, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniack were founding members of the Homebrew Computer Club. Thirty years later, a reunion celebration was held as part of the Vintage Computer Festival sponsored by the Computer Museum. Upon completion of activities in the exhibit hall, there was an autograph signing and vintage computer equipment for sale that took many a hacker back to those early days they "homebrewed" their computer.

The Homebrew Computer Club's newsletter, one of the major forces that influenced the formation of Silicon Valley, was created and edited by members. The first issue was published in 1975 and ended after 21 issues in December 1977. There have been other Homebrew Computer Clubs, like the one in the Netherlands that started with a dozen members and operates today with 180 thousand members, the largest association in the world. Their small newsletter grew into the magazine, "Computer Total."

Today, many original members of the Homebrew Computer Club meet as the 6800 Club named after the Motorola (now Freescale) 6800 microprocessor. Who would have thought that a garage would be a maternity ward for the Information Technology Industry? I have decided to elevate the status of the lowly garage in my mind especially since I found out many of our largest corporations were also born in a garage! I am thinking now that a garage should not be for cars or junk but a shrine dedicated to American ingenuity and innovation! *This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above)* 💻

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

	Rates		Specifications
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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10% discount for 3 or more consecutive insertions			

SIG News

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.

March: Safer Browser - an Internet browser with safety features. This application program demonstrates the ability of the Visual Studio software to include an Internet browser window inside a standard C++ program. It allows creating a custom browser with special features. This application is designed to partially duplicate the functioning of a standard Internet browser. It may be used whenever diagnostics and/or extra safety is required. In order to go to a web site, just type the name in the Address bar at the top. A shortcut with that name as an argument may also be used. The Back Arrow (upper left) allows stepping backwards to sites already visited. Whenever a new address is provided, or the site code tries to jump to another site, a prompt message appears which allows the user to decide whether to proceed or not. The parachute logo represents the fact that you have much more control over your browsing. You will probable find it surprising that familiar web pages are so complicated. Often going to one page launches 5 others in the background without your realization. Tip: for safe web sites, just hit the Space Bar. Standard Hot Keys are provided: Ctrl-P for printing, Ctrl-C for copying, Ctrl-A for selecting all, and Ctrl-F for finding.

Our next meeting April 17. 🖳

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. 🖳

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.

March 13: **Developing Web Applications using Spring MVC**. Before the meeting, there was a pizza social starting with Rebecca Capuano and Mary Martini from TEK Systems to discuss career opportunities.

April 10: To be Announced🖳

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 April 11.*** 🖳

DotNet

Jim Wong

http://www.jimw.net/acgnj/

Meetings are postponed until further notice.

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***.

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 🖳

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*).

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 April 26*

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.

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

http://www.NJGamers.com

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be April 13, 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!

FireFox Activity

Firefox@acgnj.org

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for **all** FireFox and Mozilla techniques and technologies, to encourage the study and development of web sites of all kinds. All the browsers will be considered and examined. *Meeting third Monday of the month at 7 PM*.

The first meeting of the FireFox Activity was led by David McRitchie to discuss, argue and kick around many concepts and ideas. Web2 is definitely in the mix. All are encouraged to "think out of the box" about new web site design. All members and guests are invited to check out the design concepts and voice their opinion.

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: April 12.*

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 PM at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information. *Next meetings April 2. May 7.*

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.

March 16: Overview of Podcasting

April: No meeting

May: How to Hookup Wireless Peripherals, by Mark Douches

Main Meeting

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

Evan Williams (nhpressgo@blast.net)

March 2: VoIP Overview, Vonage

April: Cool Web Sites by Paul Natanson

May: Bill Machrone

Best Choice Investment Activity

Norm Wiss (cut.up@verizon.net)

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

This is a new event to ACGNJ. We will be using the Best Choice software for real-time trading. This new investing group had been previously meeting in South Amboy and has been in existence for almost a year. They are expected to join ACGNJ as members. *The group meets the first and third Tuesday of the month from 10:30 AM to 2:30 PM* at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad building.

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.

Software

HTML	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
CSS	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
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
Genealogy	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Home Automation	Frank Warren	908-756-1681

Operating Systems

Windows3.1	Ted Martin	732-636-1942

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.O. BOX 135, SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ 07076

☐ New Member ☐ 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

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.

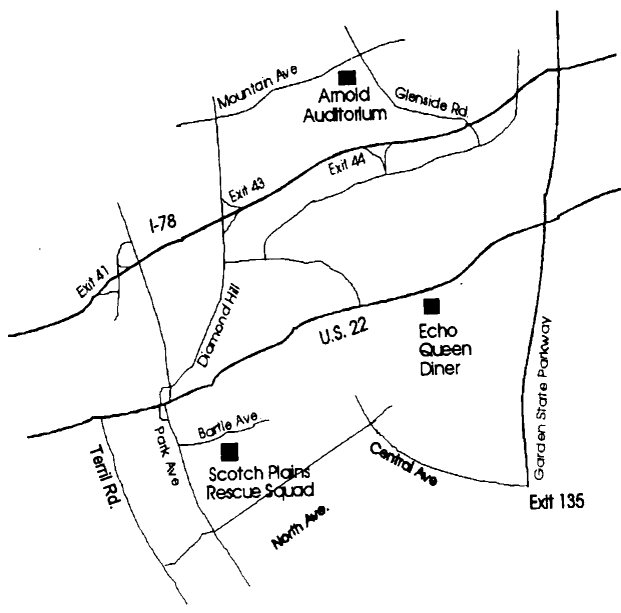**On Computers**, WCTC 1450 AM, New Brunswick, Sunday 1-4 p.m. To ask questions call (800) 677-0874.

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.

The New, the Best, and the Worst

Collected by Pim Borman (swipcug@sigecom.net), SW Indiana PC Users Group (http://swipcug.apcug.org/)

Random Spam

Have you noticed that a lot of spam lately appears to be totally pointless? Instead of trying to sell pornography, get-rich-quick schemes or ED medication (aka Viagra), the subject lines and content appear to consist of random words and sentences. Its intent is to neutralize spam filters that depend on keywords such as Viagra to identify and intercept spam. Swamping the Web with these decoys makes it harder to distinguish spam carrying messages from random noise. Same trick as used by Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. Most of these decoys are sent out by zombie computers, personal and institutional computers lacking adequate firewalls and virus protection, that have been hijacked by spammers and are transmitting spam unbeknownst to the owners. Are you sure yours is not one of them?

Free Software

As long as it has been available, I have been using tax preparation software for the annual IRS ritual. Mostly, I have been using the plain version of Tax Cut, because it has been the cheapest and done the job. Since my tax return is much the same from year to year I used to get irked by the roundabout way Tax Cut forces you to prepare your return. Last year Tax Cut sent free copies of its program around to previous users and as inserts in PC Magazines, so I just put up with it again. But this year I haven't seen any free copies and decided to try the free Tax Act. It has the reputation of being a solid program, but with less hand holding than Tax Cut and Turbo Tax provide – just what I wanted.

I downloaded the program from *www.taxact.com* and used it to prepare a provisional return. It worked just as I wanted, straightforward question-and-answer steps, or by directly filling in the forms as preferred. It told me about the tax credit for previously paid federal telephone taxes and took care of the calculations and printing the forms. It also offered to file electronically without charge, but I am still waiting for some 1099 forms, and the government still hasn't finalized some of the supporting forms for 2006. The only minor downside was that it didn't import my personal data from last year's return, but that was typed in quickly enough. If you really need more help (from J.K. Lasser) you can download the Deluxe version for $9.95, or $15.95 if you also want it to do the state return.

If you are interested in protecting your computer with a firewall and anti-virus software you might look at the Comodo Group. They offer a completely free firewall program, Comodo.firewall 2.4 that has received good reviews for effectiveness and ease-of-use. They also have Comodo.antivirus that is still in beta, but free for downloading. Comodo Group is an organization providing commercial security software worldwide, making it likely that they know what they are doing. They provide this free software, as well as some other free security programs, to improve their name recognition. More power to them! Find out more at *http://www.comodo.com/news/*

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ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Monday, April 2, 2007
8 P.M. - Lunics (Linux/Unix). Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, April 3
Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, April 3
10 A.M. - Best Choice Investing, Norm Wiss (*Norm.wiss@acgnj.org*)

Wednesday, April 4
7:30 P.M. - Online Auction, Bill Brown (*onlineauction@acgnj.org*)

Friday, April 6
8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Evan Williams (*nhpressgo@blast.net*).

Monday, April 9
8 P.M. - Layman's Forum, Matt Skoda (*som359@aol.com*), 908-359-8842.

Tuesday, April 10
7:30 P.M. - Java, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*) 908-246-0410.

Wednesday, April 11
7 P.M. - WebDev SIG, Evan Williams (*nhpressgo@blast.net*)

Thursday, April 12
8 P.M. - Investing, Norm Wiss (*cut.up@verizon.net*).

Friday, April 13
6 P.M. to 5 A.M.- NJ Gamers. Gregg McCarthy (*greggmc@optonline.net*), 732-721-6507. Break 8 to 10 P.M.

Monday, April 16
7 P.M. - Firefox Activity, David McRitchie (firefox@acgnj.org)

Tuesday, April 17
10 A.M. - Best Choice Investing, Norm Wiss (*Norm.wiss@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, April 17
8 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold (*barnold@blast.net*), 908-735-7898

Wednesday, April 18
7:30 P.M. - Online Auction, Bill Brown (*onlineauction@acgnj.org*)

Thursday, April 19
8 P.M. - Dot Net , Jim Wong, no meeting.

Friday, April 20
8 P.M. - Window Pains, John Raff (john@jraff.com).

Thursday, April 26
8 P.M. - Genealogy SIG, Frank Warren

Friday & Saturday, April 28 & 29
Trenton Computer Festival 🖳

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