Stephen Leon

Hank Kee (h.kee@earthlink.net)

I was saddened to learn that Stephen Leon, after a month in the hospital, passed away on New Year's Day. He was an active participant in the Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey, the New York Amateur Computer Club and the Trenton Computer Festival. A personal friend of mine, Steve was one of the unsung heroes in the evolution of shareware and freeware programs for the home computer system.

I met Steve about thirty years ago. Members of the Amateur Group of New Jersey and the New York Amateur Computer Club in 1978 had collaborated on creating a library to distribute programs in the public domain for the CP/M operating system. We felt that a forum was needed to enable authors to showcase their work. This is akin to musicians of today publishing their own work on the World Wide Web when they cannot get noticed by any of the major record labels.

We called it SIG/M (Special Interest Group for Microcomputers). I took on the responsibility of compiling and editing submitted programs. Steve had the task of verifying the completeness (quality assurance) of each volume. (A volume then was on a 5.25 inch floppy with a maximum capacity of 1.2 Mb.)

In 1982, we created a similar library for the IBM-based personal computer. We called it PC/Blue. I undertook the editing of the PC/Blue library and Steve took over the editing of SIG/M. The SIG/M library is comprised mostly of utilities, and communications programs. PC/Blue evolved into the distribution of freeware and shareware programs. Many programs that are commercially sold today had their roots in freeware. Some programs continue to be available in a "lite" version for free use.

The work was all done on a voluntary basis. The combined libraries totaled almost 800 volumes. There were many times I just wanted to drop the whole thing but Steve kept pushing that it be continued. The concept behind these libraries was recognized in the first annual awards for Technical Achievement by PC Magazine. The SIG/M library ran for about 10 years and the PC/Blue library finally gave way to the World Wide Web in the mid 1990's.

In the 1980's, both Steve and I worked in lower Broadway in Manhattan. We met two to three times a week for lunch. A frequent eatery for lunch was the Roy Rogers fast food restaurant. One of the puzzles he was never able to solve was that he almost always had a salad for lunch to hold his weight down, unsuccessfully; whereas I, who chomped away on a hamburger complete with all the condiments from the fix it bar, never had a weight problem.

We had many common interests. Steve was educated at Columbia University to be a lawyer. But I suspect he was really a wannabe computer programmer. He was self taught to program in Clipper. If computer studies were available when he went to college, I am sure he would have enjoyed working in this field. For many years he operated the Cliffside Bulletin Board System. He funded this operation entirely out of personal funds. Six computers each equipped with a modem were connected together on a local area network. This predated the advent of the World Wide Web.

Although he started late in life, Steve's pride and joy was his family. His son Jerry was a constant source of joy for him and his wife Stella. They moved to Mexico in the 1990's to be with Stella's relatives. Though separated by many miles and a national border, we stayed in touch. I spoke to him from time to time via Skype.

I am fortunate to have had a good friend like Steve. His unselfishness and energy is remembered and will continue to live with his family and friends. 💻

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Founded 1975

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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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Afterthoughts

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

This month's article is a convoluted trail of seemingly random digressions, some of which might not exactly be computer related. Hopefully, those readers who follow it through to the end will find it entertaining, and maybe even somewhat educational. I do have a point. If you stick with me until I actually get to it, you'll probably enjoy the trip. Are you ready? Then let's go!

This newsletter has an extraordinarily short deadline cycle. Submissions are due on the 25th of one month for the issue to be published on the first of the next month. That's **always** less than a week. (In February, it's a **whole lot** less). Unfortunately, that timing is also **exactly** wrong for the Trenton Computer Festival (TCF), which is always held at the end of April. The deadline for our once-a-year, printed-in-real-ink-on-real-paper newsletter edition (which we produce as a handout for TCF) was a whole month **before** TCF. The deadline for this issue was the **day** before TCF. I plan to be there, but anything I have to say about it will have just missed the May deadline. Therefore, it won't be published until June 1st, **more** than a month later. Moving the deadline would probably cause more problems than it would solve, so there doesn't seem to be anything we can do about it. Sigh!

Anyway, the "Afterthoughts" implied by the above title refer to stuff I wanted to get into said "Special 2008 TCF Edition", but couldn't. However, before we get to that, we'll have to wade through a morass of personal nostalgia on my part, starting with some really ancient history: I have a very old memory of someone showing me how to "cut" a stencil using a typewriter, fasten it (the stencil, not the typewriter) to the huge, ink soaked drum on a mimeograph machine, and then turn the hand crank to run off a bunch of single-sided copies; one for each revolution of the drum. I remember that drum as being hugely enormous, but it couldn't have been much over three and a half inches in diameter. (That's what you get for a circumference of eleven inches). The built-in clamps used to hold the top and bottom of the stencil in place wouldn't have added that much of a difference to the drum's size, so I must have been **really** small when this happened. Being mechanically inclined, I can still call up an image of that machine. Unfairly, I just can't remember **anything** about the nice person who took the time to explain what he or she was doing to a curious (and probably annoying) little kid. Or exactly where it happened, or what was being printed; except that I have a vague feeling it might have been church related. I'm fairly confident that was my first experience of "desktop publishing". (After all, that mimeo machine **was** sitting on a desk). It wouldn't be my last.

From 1990 to 1994, I published, edited, and (when I didn't get enough material from my regular contributors) wrote a monthly snail-mail newsletter for a train club. (We called it a "train" club because, in addition to building model railroads, we ran bus excursions to real tourist railroads as well. I was a Charter Member). I created my newsletter on my computer (first a 286, then a 486); but, as I'll explain further below, **not** completely. To keep postage costs to a minimum, each issue had to weigh less than one ounce. Five and a half regular 8½ by 11 inch sheets of paper (plus two staples to hold them together) came in just under that weight limit. Reserving the half sheet for special notices (such as "Pay your dues, already!"), that gave me five double-sided sheets to work with, for a maximum ten pages of content per issue.

I'd assemble each completed issue by stacking the full-size sheets (usually five, but sometimes less), then fastening them together with a single staple in the upper left-hand corner. Then, I'd fold each stack in half, so that the bottom end of the stack wound up behind the top end, and I'd hold the ends together by putting the second staple through the top center of the folded stack, about a quarter inch in from the edge. If I needed to include a half-sheet insert, I'd stick it in the center of the folded stack, where it would be held in place by that second staple. Finally, I'd put a stamp and an address label (which I also printed out from my computer) on the especially designed top half of the front page of each completed newsletter, and then pop them all in the mail.

I had a desktop publishing program that I used to print out the (semi-)final pages, but I found it difficult to type articles directly into that package. So I did all my typing and editing in WordStar for DOS instead. I didn't adhere to a fixed deadline. I put "Published 12 times a year (more or less)" on the cover, and I tried to put out a new issue each month. I accepted submissions as they came in, using them immediately or holding them until later at my discretion. One of my contributors gave me files on a floppy disk. Another gave me handwritten pages. A few more gave me clippings cut out of newspapers and other sources. I accepted anything I could get. On-disk submissions I simply converted to WordStar files, editing them later as time permitted. On-paper submissions I manually copied into WordStar myself, editing as I typed. (I'll tell you what I did with the clippings later). I was a hands-on editor of original submissions; changing grammar at my whim, and re-arranging text as I saw fit. I'd add details of my own whenever I thought it was appropriate. Sometimes I'd do an Editor's Note, but mostly I just stuck my additions in as if they had actually come from the author. However, I **never, ever** cut anything out. I felt that if somebody took the trouble to write something for our club newsletter, their work (even if somewhat altered) should be printed in full.

Being in DOS, my WordStar files were stored in the good old "8.3 all caps" format. WordStar files used the DOC extension by default, but they didn't have to. When it opened a file, WordStar was smart enough to know if that file had been created for it or not. Therefore, I used date-based custom extensions for all of my data files. For example, DRIVEL.917 would have been intended for the July, 1991 issue, while INSIPID.92C would have been intended for the December, 1992 issue. (Borrowing from hexadecimal notation: A = 10 for October, B = 11 for November, and C = 12 for December). Thus, if I set the input filter on my desktop publisher for

Continued

*.933, *only* the files I created for use in the March, 1993 issue would be displayed in the "File Select" box.

My desktop publisher had an interesting history. It was first sold as PagePerfect, but WordPerfect quickly sued them out of that idea. Over the years, I used three consecutive versions; each released under a different name by a seemingly different software company, yet each one was obviously an upgrade of the previous program. Each ran under a special run-time edition of Digital Research's GEM Desktop (an early Graphical User Interface). The program worked with "frames", which were basically small rectangles. Individual pages had to be laid out in frames: either text frames or graphics frames. Text flowed from one text frame to the next, in the order *I* selected. Graphics frames were supposed to hold graphics, and sometimes mine did; but mostly I used graphics frames as empty place-holders. Here we come to my biggest stumbling block: importing graphics. At the time, there *were* high resolution full-page scanners available, but not in my price range. I had to make due with a fairly low resolution hand scanner. It was good enough to scan in un-cluttered drawings, but scanning in photographs was beyond its capacity. (I didn't even think about reliable Optical Character Recognition of already printed text).

I had three different DOS graphics programs, each of which used a different graphics file format. The one associated with the hand scanner had a tremendous pixel editor, but when it tried to send output directly to my printer, the result was *really* terrible. My second DOS graphics package couldn't access the hand scanner, but it sent really *good* output to my printer. It also contained a first class editor, but I hardly ever bothered with that part. I just used it when I needed to directly print out graphics files. My third package was the DOS graphics plug-in for WordStar. It added graphics capabilities, allowing accurate preview and printing of graphic elements in WordStar documents. I had excellent translation utilities between all three file formats; and being a batch file wizard, I pretty much automated the whole conversion process. Although, since my desktop publisher could directly import and accurately print graphics files made by that first program, I hardly ever needed the other two graphics programs or the converter utilities as far as newsletter production was concerned. Also note that I haven't mentioned Windows 3.1 anywhere here. Want to guess why?

So how did I get photographs and clippings into my newsletter? Why, by good old fashioned paste-up. Each month, I would gather whatever photographs (black and white or color), plus whatever clippings and/or other pre-printed material I intended to use for my latest issue, and take them over to the best photocopying machine I currently knew about. (Most times, it would be one of the machines at my local public library). There I would fiddle with the contrast settings until I got the best reproductions I possibly could. If anything required enlargement or reduction, I did that too. Next, I'd go back home, get my scissors, cut out all the pieces, take measurements for each one, and write them down.

Then I'd start up my computer and lay out the frames on-screen for pages two through ten. Each of those interior pages got a one-line header, identifying the publication, the date, and the page number. I put all nine of them in first. My default page layout was two columns, requiring two tall, thin text frames. If that particular page contained only text, that would be all that was needed. If a page were to contain illustrations, I'd place the graphics frames first. For a computer generated image, I'd put the appropriate file in the graphics frame. For a photocopied picture, I'd create an empty graphics frame, then size it to match the cut-out picture measurements that I'd taken earlier. After my graphics frames were laid out and positioned to my satisfaction, I'd fill the empty spaces with text frames, which I'd link so that the text flowed properly from one to another. If a clipping took up part of a page, I'd create an empty graphics frame of the appropriate dimensions, then fill up the remaining space with text frames. If a clipping took up the whole page, I'd just leave it blank except for the header. Usually, the source and date as printed in the original publication would have been included as part of the photocopied clipping. In the rare cases where that hadn't been done, I would put that identifying information in a small text frame next to the empty frame created for the clipping. When all the inside pages were completed, I'd go to page one. The top half of page one was mostly taken up by a large graphics frame containing my masthead. I'll have more to say about that a little bit later. Beneath it there was just enough room for a small text frame containing the Volume Number, Issue Number, and Date of Publication. The bottom half was divided into two columns. The left-hand column contained several small text frames giving general club information, followed by a graphics frame displaying a map showing the club's location. That side hardly ever changed. The right-hand column contained a single text frame showing a list of upcoming model or full-size railroading events in NJ, NY, CT and PA. That side, of course, changed every month. Curiously, it *never once* occurred to me to print a table of contents.

Coming into the home stretch, I'd print out the pages on ten *single-sided* sheets of paper, and then glue the photocopied cut-outs into their corresponding blank spaces. In October, I'd also glue tiny little Halloweeny cut-outs (black cats, ghosts, skeletons, etc.) in various places on each page. In December, I'd do the same thing with tiny Christmassy cut-outs (angels, holly, mistletoe, etc.). Then, I'd take any pages containing pasted-on elements back to my known-good copier, and make a new copy to replace each of the original glued up sheets. (If I didn't take that extra step, a cut-out might have come loose and gummed up the works later). Finally, I'd take my ten clean "copy masters" to Staples, where one of their commercial copiers would use them to produce as many five sheet double-sided sets as I needed.

Now we get to my masthead. It was designed to be an attractive cover illustration, but it also had to comply with all postal service regulations that were in force at the time. So our identifying information was placed in such a way that it also

served as the return address; and I included white spaces for the stamp and the address label. Otherwise, it consisted of three main graphic elements that I'd scanned in using the hand scanner: a "crossbuck" railroad crossing signal, a "bullseye" main-line railroad signal, and an eye-catching railroad track that seemed to jump right out of the page at you. As a drawing, that track was triangular in shape. At the bottom, the "rails" were about two inches apart. At the top, the "rails" and "ties" squeezed together into a single line. But what good was a track without a train? I placed the track illustration on the left side of the masthead, then extended the line at the top so that it curved to the right and ran across the page to the right side. Past the curve, that gave me a flat line about five inches long, on to which I put a quarter-inch high train. If I drew the train so it was facing to the left, it was "moving" towards the reader. If I faced it to the right, it was heading away. When I reversed the colors (so I had white figures on a black background), I got a "night" scene. I made "day", "night", "left" and "right" scenes for each of the eight trains that I ultimately designed for a total of 64 unique newsletter cover illustrations in the "bank". Sadly, I never got to use them all.

As I'm sure you've guessed, I did a few other variations as well. In October, I put a full moon in the sky, containing the silhouettes of a witch riding a broom and some teeny, tiny bats. In December, I put Santa, his sled and his reindeer in the sky. As for my trains: the first was a generic steam locomotive pulling some passenger cars. For my second train, I changed the silhouette of the steam locomotive so it became one of the Jersey Central "Camelbacks", which ran commuter trains through our town in the fifties. (That design put the cab in the middle of the locomotive, right on top of the boiler, instead of in its usual location at the back). For my third train, I took the steam loco from the first train and gave it freight cars and a caboose. For my fourth and fifth trains, I drew a diesel locomotive and gave it my pre-existing passenger and freight cars. (These trains were only five to seven pixels high. So the best I could do was to create a general outline, anyway. It wasn't all that hard). For my sixth and seventh trains, I did the same thing for a Pennsylvania GG-1 electric locomotive. My eighth train was an Aerotrain.

So, what's an Aerotrain, anyway? In 1955, at the request of several railroads, General Motors developed a lightweight, low cost, high-speed passenger train for the middle range inter-city market. That was the Aerotrain. GM made two demo locomotive/passenger car sets. They were ultra-streamlined and looked *fabulous*; but as far as performance was concerned, GM blew it big time. At anywhere near the top rated speed of 100 miles per hour, the Aerotrain coaches rode so roughly that they *"almost beat the passengers to death"*. After multiple rejections, both demos were practically given away to the Rock Island Railroad in 1957, where they spent a scant ten years in slow speed Chicago commuter service before being retired. They're now in two different museums, where (though more than half a century old) they *still* look futuristic, and nobody has to know how badly they didn't live up to their looks.

Now back to me: When I was one year old, my paternal grandmother gave me a Lionel O Gauge electric train set for Christmas. Every year thereafter, my father would set those trains up under the Christmas tree. As I grew older, I was allowed to run them by myself (first supervised, then unsupervised). Eventually, I set them up completely by myself (not counting "assistance" from my younger brother); but somehow they remained a Christmas phenomena. We never played with them at any other time of the year. Furthermore, that set remained somehow "complete" in our minds. Although we bought new Plasticville buildings from time to time as extra scenery, it never occurred to us to want any additional train cars or track.

Cut to 1962. One day, I walked into a hobby shop and fell in love. I was probably looking for another "car" or "dinosaur" model kit to put together. (I did that a lot in those days). However, this time the object of my affection was a Varney HO Scale Aerotrain. It wasn't a set. The cars were sold individually; and they were cheap enough that I could buy them for myself, piece by piece over time. I should have realized that something was up. They hadn't been manufactured for over five years, yet all of them were still there each time I went back to buy another one. But what can I say? I was in love. From that time forward, I didn't buy car kits or dinosaur kits. I bought train kits (and fully assembled trains, too).

Founded in 1936, Varney Scale Models was one of the first manufacturers of HO Scale trains, and they made some *really* good stuff. The company was sold in 1960; but half a century later, most of the model railroad products that once carried the Varney name are still currently available from different manufacturers, mostly overseas. Except, that is, for some things they put out during their last few years of operation. To put it as kindly as possible, those products were not quite "up to snuff"; and my Aerotrain (made circa 1956) was one of them. It never performed well. The locomotive's rear wheels derailed a lot, and it tended to loose its drive shaft on turns. The coaches also had frequent derailment problems. Just like its full-size siblings in the real world, my Aerotrain was a lemon. (And likewise, it still looks good when I display it on a shelf).

So: TCF, then ancient newsletter stuff, then attractive lemons. What's next? A high school experience my brother told me about. As an elective, he once took a Journalism class. There, the instructor introduced the concept of the "cut-off paragraph". The idea is to give your editor something expendable to cut. So you don't put anything important in your last paragraph. Now, it's quite possible that I've got this all wrong; but isn't your last paragraph supposed to be your conclusion, the point that all your previous writing has led up to? For a paragraph, I didn't get the concept. However, turn it into a cut-off (or sacrificial) *appendix,* and suddenly it made a whole lot of sense to me. With that, all the pieces are in place at last, and we can finally get to the point of this article.

Back when I was a newsletter editor, I had no compunctions about changing a submission. Often, I was ruthless. Nowadays, as a contributor, I really, really, really, really, really *hate* to be edited. So, in situations where it looks like I might be edited, I add a sacrificial appendix to my submission. Since our

From The DealsGuy

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

I read an enlightening article about data center design; even the security was above and beyond what you and I would imagine. Read about new ideas for cheap cooling methods and an interesting concept for filling in the gap between the time the power goes out and your backup kicks in. Well into it, you will read about very tight security. A year ago, I gave you an article about a group of consultants hired to test the security of a company, and they made a joke of the entire building's security; and data security itself, in just a few minutes. I doubt their techniques would work in the facilities described in the article. Here is the Information Week URL: *informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=206900660*

*Enjoyed The Show

I did manage to browse the Electronic House Expo for three hours of pure pleasure (I had to hurry). It was not a large show, but there was enough there to keep you fascinated. I saw mirrors that could change to a TV or monitor in an instant. That large mirror on the wall was hiding a TV screen that was able to shine right through it with a sharp picture. This one is interesting: *http://www.ad-notam.com*. Automation of your home was all over the show in many forms. There were many booths with distributors of automation components for all facets of the home or business, including Worthington, one of the most well known.

I was fascinated with some of the doorbell/intercom systems that include a wide-angle camera whose image could be displayed on a dedicated monitor, or appear on your TV to show who is there. Push a button on your remote to ask the nature of their visit and if it was a family member, or your beer-drinking buddy whose TV went out during a game; push a button on the remote to unlock the door. If it was your mother-in-law, you could tell her you weren't home. However, I didn't see an "eject" button on the remote for salesmen; leaving room for further development. I stood where I could easily reach the doorbell button and my entire upper body showed plainly on the screen. I don't remember if that one was Nutone *http://www.nutone.com* or another company. eKey was there

Continued

Afterthoughts, *continued*

TCF newsletter edition is absolutely limited to sixteen pages, it definitely qualified. In 2006, I sent in a 722 word article, and it got in. In 2007, I sent in a 1703 word article, and it also got in. Last month, my 2008 submission totaled 1852 words, and it got in; but I couldn't *know* it would get in. So I sent it in with 1339 words of content and 513 words in a sacrificial appendix. I thought the appendix was interesting, but I wouldn't have been too sad if it had been cut. If I could have known ahead of time that all 1852 words would absolutely get in, I might have cut the appendix myself, and used those words to comment further on the MacBook Air. I had more to say about it, and I'm going to do so now.

If ever there was a case where function was sacrificed for the sake of form, this is it. I like the idea that the MacBook Air's case is made out of aluminum; but that's about the *only* thing I like about it. As I said last month, my main complaint is that it has *no* built-in CD/DVD drive. You might be able to get away with that on a low-end Linux laptop, but this is a high-end Mac, costing $1,799.00 to $3,098.00. Why pay that much for a purposely crippled product? But wait! There are even more deficiencies. It's as if the MacBook Air was designed by an anorexic teenager. Literally everything else has been sacrificed in the pursuit of thinness. For instance: I'm not a big sound fan, so I usually work with my speakers turned off. However, Apple brags that you can download the latest blockbuster movies from iTunes, and then watch them on your MacBook Air. Yet it has just one built-in monaural speaker. What kind of Multimedia is that?

They give you install/restore DVDs and printed documentation; but I wonder exactly *how* much documentation is actually printed, and at what point they tell you to look it up on the DVDs. There are only three input/output ports, hidden inside a flip-down door: a headphone jack, a micro-DVI port, and a USB 2.0 port. So you *can* get that Multimedia experience. If you carry around a set of headphones or external speakers, that is. They give you a micro-DVI to DVI adapter and a micro-DVI to VGA adapter. That's two extra tiny things to carry around. (Can't you just see somebody getting ready to give a big presentation, and they can't find that micro-DVI to VGA adapter)? For $99, they'll sell you an external slot-loading 8x USB 2.0 SuperDrive. Don't have Wi-Fi access? For $29, they sell a USB to Ethernet adapter, for you to carry around and/or lose. To my mind, however, the most absurd feature is their Remote Disc software, which enables a MacBook Air to wirelessly "borrow" the optical drive in a nearby computer. They tell you to simply insert the Mac OS X Install DVD into your target Mac or PC, and install the Remote Disc Setup software. That machine will then be permanently enabled for Remote Disc. Please note that word *permanently*.

Here's an analogy. Let's say that I'm an automobile manufacturer who is introducing a new model: the WonderCar McBob. To make it the smoothest, sleekest, fastest car ever made, I've eliminated the odometer. Who really needs one, anyway? However, it's conceivable that someday, someone might have to take a mileage reading. To cover that possibility, I've included remote access software. All you have to do is install my Odo Remodo software in another car parked *next* to yours. Then, you can read your car's mileage from the odometer located in that second car. Wouldn't you immediately call the funny farm, and have their mobile unit come and get me as soon as possible?

Well, I guess I'm finished venting for now. Those three vitriolic paragraphs add up to 502 words, so they *could* have been included in last month's issue. Ah, the clarity of hindsight.

See you next month. 🖳

AutoMatting -- Unique Digital Matts Extraordinaire

Neil Longmuir (longmur(at)ms.umanitoba.ca), Winnipeg PC User Group Inc., Canada, www.wpcusrgrp.org

From Image Trends Inc. – The Science of Imaging

AutoMatting automatically creates a unique matt for each image which is designed to make the photographer's work more attractive and appealing to the customer in a slide show or viewing mode." AutoMatting is a digital matting software program that creates a unique matt for each image. The traditional way to display photographs, was to mount the photograph to a matt board, and fit that mounted photograph into a matt opening cut to the size of the photograph. Matting a photograph helps separate the photograph from the surrounding background. Matting a photograph gives each photograph it's own visual unique and attractive look.

The way images are shown to customers, friends or family tends to be a bit boring. A set of prints is made from a roll of film or digital images. The pictures would be taken out of the photo lab envelope and passed around to customers, friends and family to look at.

This approach is fine if there are only a few pictures, but what if there are a large number of images. One solution is to create a slide show. Creating a slide show takes time. One major problem with a typical computer monitor or TV display is that the **aspect ratio** of the monitor or TV is **not** the same as the standard typical 3x2 aspect ratio of the images. Then, when we mix portrait (vertical) images with landscape (horizontal)

DealsGuy, *continued*

again with biometric locks. Here are some URLs of interest: *eholovision.com*; *www.eKeyusa.com*; *www.linearcorp.com*; and *www.litetouch.com*.

Several companies were showing universal remote controls and touch screen systems. Most people would probably think of remote controlled lighting and thermostats, but there are plenty of other items that should be included. Remote cameras around the property, a driveway gate, pool pump, alarms and maybe even devices to feed your pets; and that's only part of the list. I couldn't help notice that using a universal remote (similar to your TV remote) was not as easy as using a touch screen device because a touch screen icon often brought up a menu of other labeled icons for choices, but the button on the remote called for action, so you better get it right the first time. I read in Electronic House magazine *http://www.electronichouse.com* about an installation beyond "my" finances, but it was interesting what was done in this home: *electronichouse.com/article/smart_controls_for_a_complicated_home/*.

The EHX show included plenty of luxury audio products to enjoy from your easy chair, featuring great surround-sound. There was even a plush chair with the sound strategically located and controls at your fingertips. Solid Drive *http://www.soliddrive.com* was featuring a product that would make a speaker out of anything, and actually, the sound produced was great, (including good bass), from a large glass panel that also featured a large rectangular thin film fastened to it that allowed a projected TV picture to be shone through it clearly. There were also products that would hide your TV, when it was not turned on, by showing art from your choice of artists inside a beautiful wooden frame, or could automatically cover it with tapestry: *http://www.vutec.com*; *http://www.tapestriesltd.com*; *http://www.visionartgalleries.com*.

Two companies with central vacuum systems were there with impressive products; here is one; *http://www.airkinglimited.com*. There was a great little digital camera/camcorder being sold there that could publish your pictures or movies to the Web. One booth had a favorite of mine, a motorized drapery rod that could be programmed, or operated with a remote. I loved the motorized drapery rod we had for about ten years, but it fi-

nally bit the dust. It would take a lengthy article to describe that show adequately.

At the same time, other computer oriented shows were going on in nearby hotels, another over in Tampa, a Microsoft Show nearby and the prestigious Winter Park Art Festival. There are many computer oriented trade shows these days. Microsoft will be back here in June with the large Tech Ed Developers show and the IBM show in early April.

I have not tried the products below.

*How About An Add-on Toolbar!

http://www.altools.com/ALTools/ALToolbar.aspx offers their latest toolbar. ALToolbar is a new add-on that extends Internet Explorer with its suite of tools. It improves many common Internet tasks, making them faster and easier.

- Search popular web sites FASTER.

- Visit favorite sites INSTANTLY.

- SECURELY store logins and bookmarks online.

- AUTOMATICALLY login to web sites.

- Navigate easier with MOUSE GESTURES.

- Capture full web page SCREENSHOTS.

There are other tools in ALToolbar to make online life easier and faster. This one is more than other toolbars that all duplicate each other's limited functionality. It's a real suite of Internet tools designed for faster and easier Internet usage by real people. ALToolbar, like other ALTools, is completely free. We only ask that you enjoy it enough to tell a friend.

Ryan Smyth, Chief ALTools Evangelist, ESTsoft

http://www.altools.net

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my Web site (most not offering a discount). 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*. 🖥
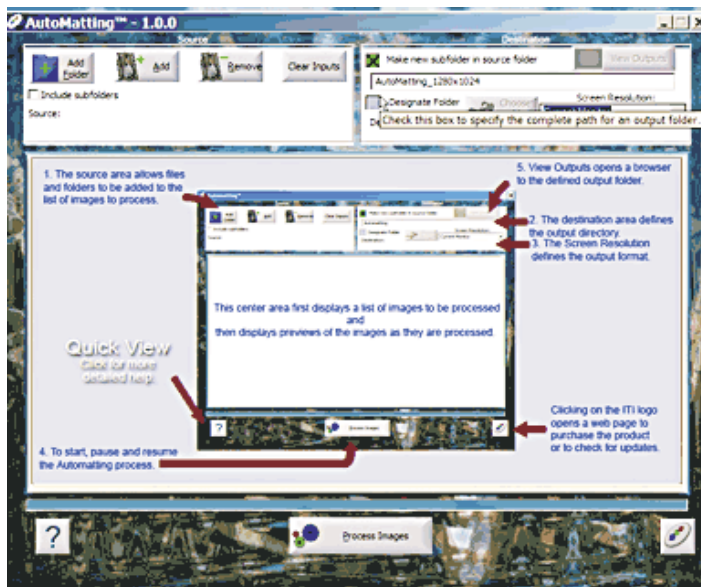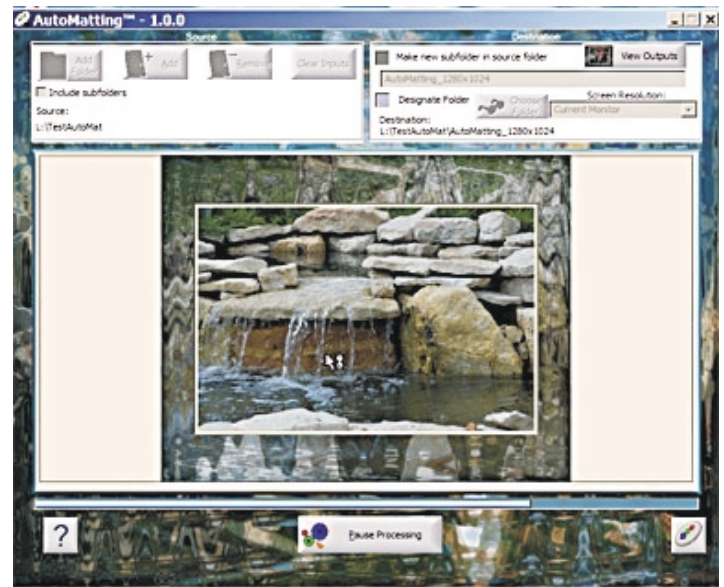
Figure 1

Figure 2

images the images are not the same size. Portrait images are smaller than landscape images and have vertical black bars on each side. Landscape images have smaller black bars on the top and bottom. The bottom line is that you want your images to be visually more attractive to the viewer.

The solution to making the images more attractive is to use AutoMatting to create a unique matte for each image in a folder and resize that image to the aspect ratio of **any monitor or TV screen**.

Also, if there are sub-folders under the main folder, those sub-folders can be included by checking the included sub-folders in the upper left corner. Once the images to be processed are selected, press Process Images at the bottom of the screen.

AutoMatting operates in a batch mode and creates a sub-folder of images using the colors and patterns in the original image plus a unique beveled edge border. The final result is an image that looks great on the display medium with no black bars appearing on the display. Figure 1 shows basic AutoMatting screen. Figure 2 shows the unique matting of a landscape image while Figure 3 shows the unique matting of a
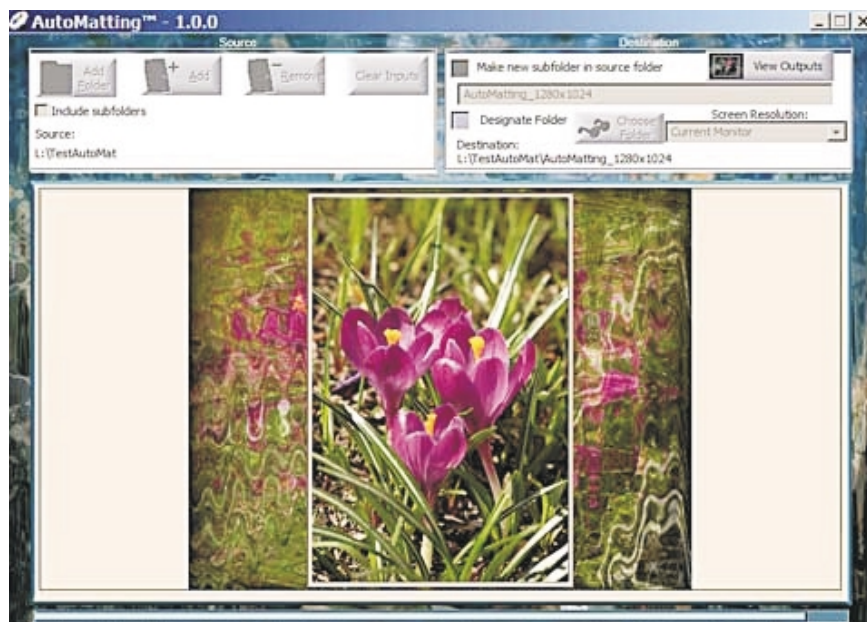
portrait image. Note in both cases there are **no** black bars around either image.

Conclusions

Automatting is a perfect example of a software application that was "thinking outside the box." This "New Wave" thinking application has given **all** end users whether they are professional photographers or ordinary every day photographers a great way to show their images to everyone on whatever display medium.

This is a terrific product. AutoMatting is available for a free "try before you buy" download. Visit *www.imagetrendsinc.com* and download the trial version for yourself. The cost to purchase this program is $49.95 and it is available for both the Windows and MAC platforms. This is a very impressive innovative product that works great for a new look to your images.

Neil's rating (***** – five stars)

I would also like to thank the kind folks at Image Trends Inc. for providing me with a copy of the AutoMatting for review.

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Figure 3

Spring Clean Your Computer

Joe Shipley (joeship(at)cox.net), Phoenix PCUG, Arizona (www.phoenixpcug.org)

While you're cleaning everything else around your home and office at this time of year, don't forget to clean your computer. There is truth to the saying, "A clean computer is a happy computer."

With the time we spend creating and working on our systems, we should do all we can to keep them running smoothly and give them long, healthy lives. So here are some things we can all do to prolong the lives of our systems. As a cautionary note: **backup all your important items before doing any maintenance on your system**. If you don't feel comfortable opening your system or editing the Registry, then don't do it! But what I intend to discuss here is not rocket science. These items are the same ones I perform when I clean my clients' systems.

Blow the Dust Out!

Dust is your computer's enemy! So get rid of it. The electronic components in a system generate heat. Heat is bad for a system. The more dust in a machine, the hotter it will run. When motherboard components get overheated, they "take a powder" and just shut themselves off until they can cool down. By keeping the insides clean your system will run cooler, thus letting it run longer.

Most generic systems have 4 to 6 screws that hold the case cover on. If you have a Dell, HP, Compaq, Gateway or other major brand system, look in the owner's manual or online to find out how to open your case. By removing the sides of the computer you'll gain access to its guts which is where the cleaning can be done. I use a small hand-held vacuum to suck up the dust balls. I use the crevice tool, that's not the one with the brush. You can also use canned air or air from a compressor to blow the dirt out. Be careful not to bump or touch any components on the motherboard while cleaning. Keeping one hand on the metal case while you clean should discharge any static electricity that might have built up.

With the vacuum, don't forget to suck out the dust that has accumulated in the power supply. There are usually vents on the side opposite the circular fan. I vacuum out from both the fan-side and the vent side. Note: if you are blowing rather than vacuuming, don't blow air into the floppy drive or cdrom/dvd units. Unless they are filthy and already don't work, you don't want to risk getting dust on the optics inside. And remember, blowing air into a computer really just moves the dust from the computer to somewhere else! I suggest you do it outside, if possible.

If you have a mouse that has a ball, think about getting a mouse that uses laser light instead. But if you want to clean the mouse, open it up, wash the ball with warm, soapy water, and gently scrape the gunk off the three rollers inside. Your mouse will act like new after a good cleaning.

You can also vacuum your keyboard. You'd be amazed at how much junk you'll find if you just turn it over and shake it up a bit. I have even gone so far as to wash the keyboard to get rid of spilled soda. An hour or two in the Phoenix sun and the keyboard is ready to go!

Cleaning the Software

Before running software cleaners such as Ad-aware, Spybot Search & Destroy and a good antivirus program (I like the free AVG), it makes sense to delete unneeded files and programs. Might as well not clean any more than you have to! This might be the time to use System Restore to create a Restore Point before you eliminate something you shouldn't. Better safe than sorry.

In the Documents and Settings area, look for the Local Settings folder for each user. If you can't find it, you may need to turn on the "Show Hidden Files and Folders" option on your system. To do this, open up Explorer, from the menu bar at the top go to Tools-Folder Options-View-Show Hidden Files and Folders.

Under Local Settings, I delete everything in the Temp folder. I also delete everything in the Temporary Internet Files folder also. Once that's done, I go to the Windows folder, and delete everything in the TEMP folder. Caution: some of you create your own Temp folders into which you may put things you might not want to delete. Check that out before doing a mass deletion.

Open the Registry

Again, if you're not comfortable editing the Registry, don't. You can back up the Registry (entirely or just specific keys) before proceeding. I mention this item in order to delete the "Compress Old Files" key before proceeding to the next step. You can either search for this key using the Find feature, or go to: HKEY_Local_Machine\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\VolumeCaches .

The second key down should be the CompressOldFiles key, if it hasn't already been removed. If it's there, RIGHT click on it and delete it. You don't need it. Close the Registry and proceed.

Clean Up Drive

To clean up your drive further, go to My Computer. For each hard drive, RIGHT click on the drive, left click on Properties, and then click on Disk Cleanup. If you didn't remove the CompressOldFiles key earlier, it may take a long time before the system responds. If you did, shortly you'll see files which may be deleted from your system so you can recover space. After cleaning these up you may see an increase in available disk space.

Clean Up Internet Explorer and Firefox

One of the easiest things you can do to keep your computer clean is to get rid of Temporary Internet Files that are stored on your computer. Here's how to do this for immediate relief:

▪Internet Explorer - delete Temporary Internet Files:
1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. Select the Tools menu.
3. Select Internet Options.
4. Select the General tab.

Continued

5. In the Temporary Internet Files section, click the Delete Files button.

6. Do not check the clear Offline Content box. Click Ok.

7. Click Ok to close the Tools window.

▪ FireFox (Mozilla) - clear browser cache

1. Open FireFox (Mozilla).

2. Click the Tools menu.

3. Click Options.

4. Click Privacy.

5. Click the Clear button for Cache.

If you use Internet Explorer, go to Tools-Internet Options-Advanced and almost at the end, put a check mark in the box that says "Empty Temporary Internet Files folder when Browser is closed" and IE will automatically delete the files when you close the browser.

Add/Remove Programs

In the Control Panel, you can add and remove programs you no longer need or use. If you are not sure, Google the program in question and then decide. You might want to opt to leave in any program you are not sure about. But if you still have games or programs you have not used in years, toolbars you don't want or need, or other items of no significance to you, clear them out. As I've said before, Google first, then if you're still not sure, leave them in. Often programs will have their own Uninstall feature. If you decide to remove a program, first go to Start-Programs and find the menu item of the program you want to delete. If it is there, check to see if there is an Uninstall menu choice and if so, I'd start with that before using the Add/Remove programs feature.

Spybot Search & Destroy and Ad-Aware

These are two FREE programs that do a great job cleaning up malware, spies, and other things that slow your system down. You can find them on the Internet at *www.download.com* , or just Google them. After installing them, make sure you use the update feature before doing a scan. These programs are updated almost daily, so it pays to take advantage of the latest updates.

Get Rid of the Language Bar

Control Panel, Regional Settings, Languages, Details, Languages, Uncheck the "Show Language Bar" box to get rid of the Language Bar at the bottom of your screen. If you use the Language Bar, by all means don't get rid of it.

Keep Your Antivirus Updated!

Whichever AV program you use, if it is not updated you're not getting full protection! Security suites slow systems down! I don't use them. Google "AVG Free" to get a free antivirus that does a good job, and then configure it to have it updated and run it daily.

Task Manager

Quite often slow performance is directly related to the programs that are running. RIGHT click on the Taskbar to open and look at duplicate program entries under Processes – click on the title of the Processes tab to sort alphabetically. If you see multiple instances of the same program running, for example, outlook.exe, odds are you're having some kind of

problem. If you're not sure about what a process is, Google it to find out or leave it alone. If you click on the CPU tab twice, you'll see which programs are using the most memory. Find the memory hogs, check them at Google, and then begin to end processes you don't need. If a process is critical, Windows won't let you close it.

MSCONFIG

Go to Start – Run and type in "msconfig" (don't type the quotes) and click on "OK" and look in the Startup and Services areas to check to see what programs might not need to start. If you know they are not needed, uncheck them. If you have a problem after restarting, then re-check them. If you're uncertain . . . Google the file names and learn about them.

Defrag Your System Regularly

Go to *http://www.auslogics.com/en/software* to find free software to defrag your hard drives. I recommend defragging at least monthly to keep your system running smoothly. This is a nice program, FREE, and it's pleasant to watch. Keeping your hard drives defragmented will add life to your system and speed up performance when saving and retrieving files.

The suggestions above are based upon a system running Windows XP Pro. With Vista things may be in different places. The operation should be very similar, however, so doing a search in the Help & Support area may provide the answers you're looking for.

For a PowerPoint slide presentation with screen shots of locations referred to in this article, please visit *http://www.phoenixpcug.org/articles* and look for the link.

Joe Shipley, Owner of SMART IDEAS!, is a computer consultant, independent network administrator, builds custom computers, trains users on software, and sells software and hardware in Mesa, AZ. You can reach Joe at (480) 831-8332 or by email at joeship(at)cox.net.

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 except #1 (June). These are also pamphlet-size booklets.

If you can supply any of these missing issues (or scanned images or good clear 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. ⌨

New Technology Terms

Sandy Berger (sandy(at)compukiss.com), CompuKISS (www.compukiss.com)

Words, words, words…in the fast-moving world of technology, new words and phrases are constantly introduced. In order to keep up with the times, you need to learn about the current terminology. This need not be a drudgery. In fact, it can be fun to see what new words and abbreviations are popular. Check these out and you can wow your friends next time computers and technology become the subject at the 19th hole or the neighborhood cocktail party.

SSD (Solid-State Drive)

This is a type of memory that you will be hearing more and more about in the future. It is a type of flash memory that has no moving parts. Some small laptop computers are appearing using SSDs for storing data instead of hard drives. Because SSDs have no spinning disks like the ordinary hard drives, they offer improved battery life for laptop computers. They also have better data access speeds than hard disks.

404

You may recognize this as a common message on the Internet. It indicates that the requested page could not be found. This may mean that the page has temporarily or permanently moved and is not currently available. However, recently the term 404 has come to have another meaning. It refers to someone who is totally clueless. From the error message "404 not found", this has become a slang term meaning that the person's brain could not be located. If you decide to call your spouse a 404, make sure that he or she has not read this column or you'll be in big trouble.

Crowdsourcing

Using the skills of a wide variety of people to do a job or perform a task is called crowdsourcing. The people who perform such a function are often found on the Internet. Although these people can be paid, often they are often volunteers.

Geotagging

This is technology built into a digital camera or part of a camera add-on device that is able to tag each photo with the exact location that the picture was taken. Photos can then be sorted based on where they were taken or be plotted on maps.

HDMI (High-definition Multimedia Interface)

This is a newer audio and video interface that is often found on televisions, DVD players, video game consoles, video cameras, and other video equipment. This type of connector replaces older standard connectors like composite video, S-Video, component video, and DVI. HDMI carries both audio and video in one cable. It supports digital rights management systems. HDMI cables can be very expensive in comparison to older audio and video cables.

One Laptop per Child (OLPC)

Led by Nicholas Negroponte, this is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to design, manufacture, and distribute affordable laptop computers to children around the world. The laptops were initially called the "$100 laptop", but the final build cost almost $200 each. In 2007, the One Laptop per Child organization started distributing these laptop computers to children in developing countries. The laptops are bright green and white portable computers with special features like a sealed keyboard. They are called XO computers.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Search Engine Optimization is the process of tweaking a website to improve the volume of traffic that is produced by search engines. The idea is to give the website a higher ranking in the search engines thereby producing more traffic to the site. SEO includes using keywords and website design to get higher rankings with search engines.

Skype

This is an online service that allows users to make telephone calls over the Internet. The software is free and there is no charge to call the computers of other Skype users. Your computer must have a microphone in order to use Skype. With the addition of a webcam, Skype callers from computer to computer can also place video calls where they can both see and talk to each other. Skype also allows you to call landlines and cell phones for a fee. Skype has other services such as instant messaging and file transfer.

FTW

This stands for "For The Win". You may remember it being a part of the game show "Hollywood Squares" where a certain square would be selected "For the Win." It is also used in some online games like World of Warcraft. It is now a popular term that usually projects a boast, as in "I did it FTW." It is often used ironically and sarcastically.

Bot

A bot computer is one that has been infected with some type of malware that allows the computer to be controlled by an outside entity. Millions of computers are bots that are now under the influence of malware distributors who use these computers to send out spam, attack other computers and websites, and carry out scams and identity theft. The computer owner is usually unaware that their computer has been compromised since this activity is performed in the background.

BotNet

A series of bot computers, sometimes as large as millions of computers is called a BotNet. The BotNet does the bidding of some entity that has compromised the computers and taken control of them by installing some type of malware.

Zombie

This means the same thing as a Bot — a personal computer that has been infected with a virus that allows an outside force to control it. Such a computer can be used to send out spam or attack other computers without the owner's knowledge.

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SIG News

C/C++ Programming
Bruce Arnold (barnold@ieee.org)

http://home.earthlink.net/~barnold2002/Acgnj/index.html

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.

April : Members Night. Members were encouraged to bring in C++ questions, problems, and even programs to be discussed by the entire group. Additionally, we had a review of topics covered during the last few months. Most of the programs previously presented used the latest C++ compiler in Microsoft's Visual Studio 2005.

Our *download site* has code and programs from most meetings.

Our next meeting May 20. 🖥

Window Pains
John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

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

Our 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.

May 16: Linux, Andy Meyer

June 20: How to Configure Your Router (DHCP, VPN), John Raff & Don McBride 🖥

DotNet
Manuel J Goyenechea

http://www.acgnjdotnetsig.org/about.html

http://www.acgnjdotnetsig.org/index.html

Next meeting May 15. 🖥

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 meeting May 5.* 🖥

Web Dev
Evan Willliams (tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com)

This SIG is an open forum for all Website Development techniques and technologies, to encourage study and development of web sites of all kinds. All languages will be considered and examined. Anyone interested please contact the Chairperson. 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. WebDev should be an all-encompasing 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 May 14. 🖥

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

The Java Group covers beginner, intermediate, and advanced level Java programming. Primary focus is on developing useful/practical applets and applications, but can include topics such as Java I/O, JavaBeans, Reflection, object-oriented programming and software design issues.

April: My new Hands-On Java workshop for the Trenton Computer Festival (TCF) 2008. I wanted to test it out with our members so that I could make adjustments with regards to timing right before TCF. This hands-on seminar essentially combined the Introduction to Java and Java Advanced Features seminars that I have presented at TCF since 2001. I provided the CDs containing the JDK and anything else necessary for this new workshop.

Our next meeting May 13. 🖥

Investment Software
Jim Cooper (jim@thecoopers.org)

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. We're no longer focusing on just Telechart -- if you are using (or interested in) Tradestation, eSignal, VectorVest -- or just in learning how to select and use charting and technical analysis, come join us !!

Our next meeting: May 8. 🖥

False Firefox Fix

Pim Borman (Swipcug(at)gmail.com), SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc (http://swipcug.apcug.org/)

Usually I don't pay attention to application software tips, such as keyboard shortcuts for common actions. The most important ones I already know, and the obscure ones are not worth the effort remembering. Therefore I would normally not have paid much attention to an article in the January issue of *PC World* by Lincoln Spector about undocumented Firefox tips. What caught my eye was that, according to the author, Firefox is optimized for dial-up connections, and one of the tips concerned changing its settings for broadband.

Firefox has dozens of hidden configuration settings that are not readily available to the ordinary user, for obvious good reasons. They are stored in HTML documents that can be accessed by typing about: config in the address bar of the browser. The article suggests that you back up the configuration file before you fiddle with it, and shows how to do that.

Following the instructions, I turned network pipelining and network proxy pipelining on (set their values to "true"), increased the network pipelining "maxrequests" to 15 (up from 4), and entered a value of 0 for a new integer *nglayout.initialpaint.delay*. After restarting Firefox I tried it out. It seemed to perform with alacrity, although I couldn't have sworn that it was faster than before.

Looking for background information on Firefox configuration, I found a June 2006 article on the *PC World* Web site by the ever knowledgeable Scott Spanbauer on the about: command to access hidden information. Specifically he mentions about: cache that gives access to an enormous file listing the URLs accessed in the past. Handy to find some old data or revisit a Web site without logging on.

Anyway, Spanbauer's article provided a link to Mozilla's about:config FAQ site (http://find.pcworld. com/53066). I took it from there and found out that the suggested settings to optimize Firefox for broadband were either irrelevant or actually retarding downloads. Turning pipelining on is not always supported by all servers and may therefore cause crashes. The value "maxrequests" has a maximum value of 8; higher values than that default to 8. Setting the delay value too low actually slows down the download; its preferred value is the default 250 milliseconds (about the blink of an eye). So much for helpful tips. I reset the parameters to their original values and left it at that. Don't believe everything you read!

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SIG News, *continued*

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. ⌨

Mobile Devices

David Eisen (ultradave@gmail.com)

Our next meeting May 21 ⌨

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. We meet at 8 PM on the fourth Thursday each month. 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.

Due to work schedule conflicts, the SIG Leader cannot make the meetings. If anyone else would like to pick up the baton, carry the banner, help the SIG along, please let us know. ⌨

Main Meeting

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

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

May 2: Dreamweaver, presenter to be announced

June 6: Guest speaker Bill Machrone   ⌨

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. 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. ***Next meeting May 19.*** ⌨

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

http://www.NJGamers.com

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be May 9, 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! ⌨

Guru Corner

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
	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
ColdFusion	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
CSS	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
	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
Genealogy	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Home Automation	Frank Warren	908-756-1681

Operating Systems

Windows 3.1	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?_____

Other Local Computer Groups

Princeton Macintosh User Group: 7:15 pm 2nd Tuesday, Jadwin Hall, A-10, Washington Rd, Princeton, (609) 252-1163, *www.pmug-nj.org*	**Linux Users Group in Princeton:** 7 pm, 2nd Wednesday, Lawrence Branch Mercer Library, Rt#1 & Darrah Lane, Lawrence NJ *http://www.lugip.org*	**New York PC:** 3rd Thurs, 7 pm, PS 41, 116 W 11th St. For info call hotline, (212) 533-NYPC, *http://www.nypc.org*
Computer Education Society of Philadelphia: Meetings & Workshops at Jem Electronics, 6622 Castor Ave, Philadelphia PA. *www.cesop.org/*	**Brookdale Computer Users Group**: 7 pm,3rd Friday, Brookdale Community College, Bldg MAN Rm 103, Lincroft NJ. (732)-739-9633. *www.bcug.com*	**NJ Macintosh User Group**: 8 pm, 3rd Tuesday, Allwood Branch Library, Lyall Rd, Clifton NJ. (201) 893-5274 *http://www.njmug.org*.
PC User Group of So. Jersey: 2nd Mon., 7 pm, Trinity Presb. Church, 499 Rt 70 E, Cherry Hill, NJ. L. Horn, (856) 983-5360 *http://www.pcugsj.org*	**Hunterdon Computer Club:** 8:30 am, 3rd Sat, Hunterdon Medical Center, Rt 31, Flemington NJ. *www.hunterdoncomputerclub.org*, (908) 995-4042.	**NY Amateur Computer Group:** 2nd Thurs, 7 pm, Rm 806 Silver Bldg, NYU, 32 Waverly Pl, NYC. *http://www.nyacc.org*
Morris Micro Computer Club: 7 pm 2nd Thurs., Morris County Library, Hanover Ave, Morristown NJ, (973) 267-0871. *http://www.morrismicro.com*	**Central Jersey Computer Club**: 8 pm, 4th Friday, Rm 74, Armstrong Hall, College of NJ. Rich Williams, (609) 466-0909.	**NJ PC User Group:** 2nd Thurs, Monroe Rm at Wyckoff Public Library, 7 pm. Maureen Shannon, (201) 853-7432, *www.njpcug.org*
Philadelphia Area Computer Society: 3rd Sat, 12 noon Main Meeting, groups 8 am-3 pm. Upper Moreland Middle School, Hatboro PA. (215) 764-6338. *www.pacsnet.org*	**NJ Computer Club:** 6:15 pm, 2nd Wednesday except Jul & Aug, North Branch Reformed Church, 203 Rt 28, Bridgewater NJ. *http://www.njcc.org*	**Princeton PC Users Group**: 2nd Monday, Lawrenceville Library, Alt Rt 1 & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, Paul Kurivchack (908) 218-0778, *http://www.ppcug-nj.org*

Classified

apcug The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Member of

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.

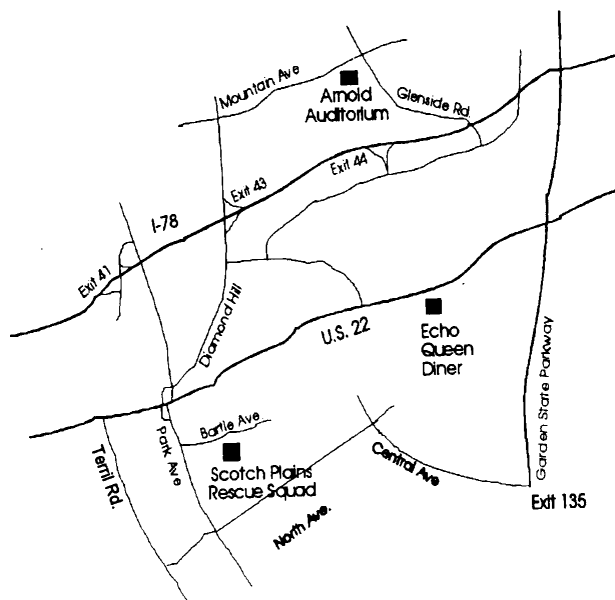**On Computers**, WCTC 1450 AM, New Brunswick, Sunday 1-4 p.m. To ask questions call (800) 677-0874.

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/

May 17 - 18: NJ Convention Center (Raritan Center)

May 24 - 25: Meadowlands Expo Center

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

Pim Borman (Swipcug(at)gmail.com), SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc (http://swipcug.apcug.org/)

Good, Bad, or Who-Needs-It? Penryn

With the introduction of Intel's Penryn Core 2 Duo and Extreme CPUs Moore's Law stays right on track. Thanks to further miniaturization to 45-nanometer elements, the chips have significantly lower power consumption, a feature that will be even more desirable in the five new Penryn-based CPUs for laptops that have now been released. The new Penryn-based systems are not significantly faster than systems with Intel's previous-generation processors, but outstrip those with the currently fastest AMD chip, the 2.2 GHz 9500 quad core Phenom CPU. Intel has introduced a new instruction set for the Penryns, called SSE4, that can greatly speed up applications written to work with it. That may take a while yet. Adobe is updating its next version of Premiere Pro video editing with SSE4 support. (PC World, March 2008)

Only two years ago I bought a new desktop screamer using the then-tops AMD Athlon 64 X2 Dual-Core processor. My pride in the new system didn't last long, as usual, as the AMD CPU was left in the dust by new Intel processors. Nevertheless, I doubt that even now my run-of-the-mill programs make use of all the special capabilities of the dual-core CPU. Photo editing with Adobe Photoshop Elements or The Gimp happens instantly, faster than I can think of what to do next. So who needs any more power?

PC World's 25th anniversary issue (March 2008) quotes from the March 1991 issue: "These five screamers are amongst the fastest - and the costliest - systems you can buy. We pick the best of the lot and answer the obvious question: Who needs this much power? - We reviewed four blazing 486 PCs in the March 1991 issue, starting at $8300, and decided that they were simply too fast for most people."

Famous last words!

All a-Twitter?

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to send "updates" (or "tweets"; text-based posts, up to 140 characters long) to the Twitter website, via short message service (e.g. on a cell phone), instant messaging, or a third-party application such as Twitterrific or Facebook.

That's how Wikipedia describes the latest rage in digital jabbering (*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Twitter*). presidential candidates use the service constantly, undoubtedly hoping to reach younger voters. Find out what Barack Obama (*http://twitter.com/BarackObama*) and Hillary Clinton (*http://twitter.com/HillaryClinton*) are up to. Ron Paul (*http://twitter.com/RonPaul2008*) seems to be the only Republican who twitters. John McCain is noted by his absence.

As the Twitter site (*http://twitter.com*)puts it, "Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co–workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?" Indeed.

Thanks to *The Economist* (Feb.2, 2008) for enlightening us about this service.

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ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Tuesday, April 27, 2008
7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, May 2
8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*).

Monday, May 5
8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*)

Thursday, May 8
8 P.M. - Investing, Jim Cooper (jim@thecoopers.org).

Friday, May 9
6 P.M. to 5 A.M.- NJ Gamers. Gregg McCarthy (*greggmc@optonline.net*), 732-721-6507. Break 8 to 10 P.M.

Monday, May 12
8 P.M. - Layman's Forum, Matt Skoda (*som359@aol.com*), 908-359-8842.

Tuesday, May 13
7:30 P.M. - Java, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*) 908-246-0410.

Wednesday, May 14
7 P.M. - WebDev SIG, Evan Williams (*tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com*)

Thursday, May 15
8 P.M. - Dot Net, Manuel J Goyenechea

Friday, May 16
8 P.M. - Window Pains, John Raff (*john@jraff.com*).

Monday, May 19
7 P.M. - Firefox Activity, David McRitchie (*firefox@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, May 20
7:30 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold (*barnold@ieee.org*), 908-735-7898

Wednesday, May 21
7:30 P.M. - Mobile Devices, David Eisen

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

Friday, June 6
8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*).

Tuesday, June 3
7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

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