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Pinnacle PCTV HD Pro Stick

Cass Lewart (rlewart@monmouth.com), ACGNJ



A few months ago I reviewed a Pinnacle High Definition TV (HDTV) tuner called PCTV HD Stick. As technology progressed Pinnacle came out with an improved version of the HD tuner called PCTV HD Pro Stick, or HD Pro for short. This miniature tuner not only receives over the air (OTA) analog and digital TV and FM radio signals but can also work with digital cable or with other Audio/Video (A/V) sources. If the computer is connected to the Internet the HD Pro will also receive Internet radio stations from all over the world. The HD Pro plugs into the USB port thus turning your computer into an HD TV display, an Internet and FM radio receiver and a digital audio and video recorder.

The analog TV transmissions, which will be discontinued in February 2009, use the NTSC standard with the same type of signal for OTA and cable transmissions. The new digital TV uses different types of transmissions for OTA and cable. To receive OTA transmissions with an antenna an ATSC tuner is required, for cable it is a QAM tuner. If you want to receive analog TV signals, you also need an NTSC tuner. The HD Pro, unlike the previously reviewed PCTV HD Stick, combines all three TV standards and also an FM tuner.

Digital Television

The advent of Digital Television (DT) and in particular HDTV brought joy to the consumer but also new problems. The old magnetic tape based VCR worked well for time shifting for analog cable and OTA reception. But when you connect an antenna to a VCR, then its NTSC tuner will not recognize any digital channels. Some digital cable boxes have analog outputs, which can be hooked to the analog A/V jacks on the VCR. However, with this setup you can no longer select channels with the VCR, it has to be done with the cable

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ACGNJ News will not be published during July and August — We'll be back in September.

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Vice President	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366
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Firefox Activity	David McRitchie	
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Financial	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366
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Membership	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366
Newsletter	— open —	
Trenton ComputerFest	Mike Redlich	(908) 246-0410
Vendor Liaison	Arnold Milstein	(908) 753-8036
Webmaster	John Raff	(973) 992-9002

ACGNJ News

Editor

Barbara DeGroot
145 Gun Club Road
Palmerton PA 18071
Tel: (570) 606-3596
bdegroot@ptd.net

Publisher

Associate Editor

Bill Farrell
(732) 572-3481
wfarr18124@aol.com

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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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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>).

Bruce Arnold	barnold@ieee.org
Jim Cooper	jim@thecoopers.org
Barbara DeGroot	bdegroot@ptd.net
Mark Douches	pcproblems@pobox.com
David Eisen	ultradave@gmail.com
Bill Farrell	wfarr18124@aol.com
Manuel Goyenechea	Goya@acgnjdotnetsig.org
Robert Hawes	r.d.hawes@hotmail.com
Sol Libes	sol@libes.com
Malthi Masurekar	masureka@umdnj.edu
Don McBride	don@mcbride.name
Gregg McCarthy	greggmc@optonline.net
David McRitchie	dmcritchie@hotmail.com
Andreas Meyer	lunics@acgnj.org
Arnold Milstein	mrflark@yahoo.com
John Raff	john@jraff.com
Mike Redlich	mike@redlich.net
Matt Skoda	som359@aol.com
Keith Sproul	ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu
Paul Syers	paul.syers@acgnj.org
Lenny Thomas	lennythomas@technologist.com
Scott Vincent	scottvin@optonline.net
Frank Warren	kb4cyc@webwarren.com
Evan Williams	tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com

Bookmarks Page

Hank Pearson ([hank.pearson\(at\)asciigroup.org](mailto:hank.pearson(at)asciigroup.org)), Arizona Assoc. for Computer Information (www.asciigroup.org)

Wouldn't it be nice if you could view a searchable webpage of bookmarks for your favorite websites? You can, but why?

Find Bookmarks with Forgotten Names

One reason to view your bookmarks as a webpage (as an alternative to looking in a menu) is to be able to find sites when you can't remember the first word in the name.

Let's say you have a Firefox bookmark named Carbonite Online Backup, and you can't remember Carbonite but you know you are looking for the word Backup. On your Bookmarks page (you will soon learn how to view), you can easily search for Backup.

You are using Firefox, aren't you? If you haven't discovered Firefox, download it from Mozilla (). It's free, fast, and secure. Make Firefox your default browser.

View Bookmark Descriptions and Tags

Another reason for a bookmarks page is to give you plenty of room to view (and find) descriptions of your bookmarks. You will learn how to add tags to improve your searches.

Zoom In and Out

A third reason to display your bookmarks on a webpage is to allow you to zoom the text in and out so you can see it clearly. To zoom any webpage, press Ctrl+Plus or Ctrl+Minus, using the numeric keypad.

DIY for Fun and Learning

So, how do you display your bookmarks as a webpage? You could download a tool to do the work for you, or download a tool to search bookmarks. But it's easy enough to DIY (Do It Yourself). It's interesting, fun, and educational. Are you just using your computer to perform certain tasks, or do you also enjoy learning by experimenting? If you like to learn, this tip is for you.

Find the Bookmarks File

You don't need to create a bookmarks webpage. It already exists on your own hard drive! The name of the file is simply bookmarks.html. Press Win+F to find it. (While holding down the Windows key (next to Alt), press F, for Find.) In the left

Continued

Pinnacle PCTV HD Pro Stick, continued from page 1

box. If you want to record several channels during your absence then you are out of luck!

Miniaturization and low cost electronics made it possible to produce an HD Pro tuner the size of two USB memory sticks for around \$100. Having such a tuner which plugs into a USB port of a computer allows viewing and recording of digital and analog TV signals on your computer. You don't need an HDTV set to enjoy analog and digital programs available in your area.

Pinnacle PCTV HD Pro Stick

Ruth and I have put HD Pro through its paces. The device is 3 x 1.25 x .75 inches, has a coaxial RF input at one end and a USB output at the other end. Included is also a short cable which can be plugged into the HD Pro to work as an alternate input. The short cable has an RCA jack for composite video, an S-Video jack and two RCA jacks for stereo audio input. The HD Pro can thus work as a video capture card and can feed A/V signals from a camera, a VCR or a satellite receiver into your computer for viewing or saving to hard drive, a CD or a DVD. The package also includes a short USB dongle to make HD Pro easier to insert, a small antenna, a remote control for the couch potatoes and an installation CD with software for Windows XP and Vista.

We installed the HD Pro on a recent vintage HP Vista laptop with a 1.8 GHz processor and 2 GB of RAM. The program first tested the laptop to make sure it met the requirements. After installing the Pinnacle Media software, I plugged HD Pro via its dongle into the USB port on the laptop. I then connected the antenna cable to the coaxial input on the stick and started the Pinnacle media program. The first task was to scan for analog and digital TV channels, for Internet radio and for FM channels. We live on a hill with a direct view of New York

City. The program found 20 analog, 30 digital TV and over 20 Internet and FM radio channels.

Unlike our Vizio HDTV, which sorts the analog and digital channels (e.g. analog 13 is followed by digital 13-1, 13-2, etc.), the Pinnacle program orders channels according to their type, analog TV, digital TV, FM radio and Internet radio.

Viewing and Recording

After the program scanned for available channels we were able to view or listen to each channel on the laptop.

We also scheduled the program to start and stop recording specific analog and digital channels at a future time. It was actually easier to program the Pinnacle stick than a VCR and our scheduled recording succeeded. One should not forget to close all programs including the Pinnacle Media and then put the computer in hibernation mode before the recording starts.

Recording takes approximately 6 GB per hour. Playback looks very good on the laptop or when the laptop is connected to a large screen HDTV.

Other Features

Though we did not try it, the laptop could record directly to a DVD instead of to the hard drive.

The Pinnacle program will also download from the Internet a free TV program guide if it is available.

Final Impressions

HD Pro is an easy and inexpensive way to introduce HDTV to your home. It also gives you the capability to record both analog and digital TV and radio programs, something you can not do with your present VCR. Note of caution: make sure that the software version you install is 4.98 or higher. Earlier versions had major problems. ☹

Product Review: Roxio Easy Media Creator Suite (v.10)

John Roy (johnroy1(at)comcast.net), The PC Users Group of Connecticut

Roxio, a division and brand of Sonic Solutions, has been a leader in burning software for many years. I personally have used the product since it was distributed by Adaptec several years ago. The CD/DVD burning software today far exceeds the basic functions that existed in those early days. Roxio Easy Media Creator (EMC) will accomplish so much more than the basic burning tasks and is now a full featured suite.

Doing this review has allowed me to explore and appreciate the many applications within this suite. Because EMC is so

comprehensive I will provide an overview in this article but follow up with more details in future issues of our newsletter.

Before I start boasting about some of these neat applications I must discuss some installation issues. The product would not install on my primary computer! After trying several times to install under various scenarios I checked for possible solutions using Roxio's web product support and also their user forum. None of those sources provided any clues so I connected with technical phone support. I was quite surprised that the wait time was very small and the technician was

Continued

Bookmarks Page, *continued*

window pane, click "All Files and Folders". In "All or part of the file name", type "bookmarks.html" (without quotes). Click Search.

If you get multiple results, it's easy to determine which bookmarks.html file to use. It's the newest one. In the View menu (of your Search Results window), click Details. In the right window pane, click the Date Modified column header (to sort the list). The file you are interested in has the newest date and time (for a file with the Type shown as Firefox Document).

Bookmark the Bookmarks File

Double-click that newest bookmarks.html Firefox Document to open it in Firefox. Press Ctrl+D to bookmark the bookmarks.html file. In the Name field, insert a hyphen (-) at the beginning (to name the bookmark '-Bookmarks'), so this new bookmark will appear at the top of the list.

Now, with your Bookmarks page displayed, press F5 to refresh the view. (F5 is a common shortcut key for Refresh.) Surprise? The new -Bookmarks bookmark is at the bottom, not the top. Let's address that. (This is Firefox 2.0.0.11. Future versions might vary.)

Create Another Top Bookmark

First, create another bookmark that will be displayed at the top. For example, open Google.com, press Ctrl+D, and name the bookmark -Google (starting with a hyphen).

Sort Your Bookmarks

Now, in the Bookmarks menu, right click any bookmark, and click Sort by Name. Look in the Bookmarks menu to confirm that the bookmarks are indeed sorted. Note the two bookmarks that begin with hyphen (-) at the top of the menu.

Look at your Bookmarks page again, and press F5 to Refresh. The new bookmarks are still at the bottom.

Rearrange Your Bookmarks

To force Firefox to rearrange your bookmarks page, move a bookmark in the menu. In the Bookmarks menu, drag, for example, either new bookmark that starts with a hyphen up or down to precede or follow the other bookmark that starts with a hyphen. (Having two hyphen-prefixed bookmarks lets you rearrange those two at the top without rearranging the other bookmarks.) Press Escape to close the menu.

Refresh your Bookmarks page with F5. The bookmarks on the webpage are now arranged as shown in the Bookmarks menu. (Do you need to refresh three times? No, we simply demonstrated that the bookmarks.html file is rearranged when you move a bookmark in the menu.)

Finding Bookmarks on the Page

When you are viewing your Bookmarks webpage, press Ctrl+F for Find. Type Backup, for example, and press Escape (to close the Find toolbar). To find the next occurrence of Backup, press F3. (F3 is a common shortcut key for Find Again.) When you find the desired bookmark (link), click it (or Ctrl+click to open the site in a new tab). (Or press Enter, or Ctrl+Enter to open the site in a new tab.)

Add Descriptions and Tags

To add or change descriptions of your bookmarks, in the Bookmarks menu, right-click the bookmark you want to edit, and click Properties. In the Description field, type anything (including your own tags) that might help you find your bookmark and remember what it is for. After clicking OK and pressing F5 (for Refresh), you will see your new Description in the Bookmarks page.

Make Changes through the Menu

Now that you know where bookmarks.html is located, you might be tempted to edit it directly with a text editor. Mozilla warns that it is automatically generated, so do not edit it, as your changes would be lost. Make your changes through the Bookmarks menu.

Displaying your Bookmarks as a webpage is a start in discovering many more tips and tricks related to Firefox.

Hank Pearson (hank.pearson(at)asciigroup.org) is the Treasurer and Webmaster for ASCII (www.asciigroup.org). He is a long-time member who frequently writes articles for the group's newsletter, and has served as President, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and Presentations Coordinator.

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professional and extremely competent. Unfortunately after almost two hours of phone support the problem was not solved.

The tech support effort involved major system modifications including deletion of all files associated with my original EMC version 9, my Nero burner software, a complete registry purge line by line of anything remotely associated with or influenced by Roxio software, removal of all anti-virus software and firewalls, elimination of all startup files except system essentials and running registry clean utilities. Nothing worked! A trouble report was left open but I never received any further calls. In their users forum I did find one other person with the exact same problem and no solution.

Fortunately I have a couple of other computers at my house so I tried installing the version 10 on both an older desktop and on my primary laptop system. The install went smoothly on both of those systems. So until I get a chance to rebuild my primary desktop I won't know if I can ever use the latest version on it. On a side note before trying to install EMC version 10 I had version 9 successfully working. After all the system changes I could no longer load my EMC version 9. So now I struggled with that problem for a few days. Once again not finding any online solutions I contacted a phone support tech who was able to direct me to a download utility that cleared the problem and allowed me once again install version 9.

While the debacle was frustrating don't let it deter you from considering the purchase of this capable applications suite. So let's look at why you should consider owning this product.

Once you get past the install you will see a super clean interface with applications divided into seven primary areas; Audio, Data and Backup, Copy, Media and Devices, Photo, Video, and Tools. Each application provides another set of choices. Audio has (13), Data and Backup (5), Copy (5) Media and Devices (2), Photo (9), Video (11), and Tools (8). That is a huge chest of applications at your disposal. If you were to purchase each primary application separately it would cost you a few hundred dollars. This package sells for about \$100 but if you watch for sales you can buy it for much less.

When you think of Roxio and burning software the primary reason most people purchase the product is for those tools. The Copy and Data and Backup modules take care of the basic requirements along with some other goodies. Anyone familiar with an older version will still find the original Creator Classic, but spruced up. That old standby is quite the workhorse. You select the type and size of disc you want to burn and it will keep you updated on available space as you move files or folders you want to burn into a holding area. Once your files and folders are selected you can burn your CD/DVD or make an image for later burning. You have advanced options to define the type of disc, speed, copies, etc. You can also make a bootable or multimedia disc and go directly to creating disc labels of your burn project.

The backup module provides capability to be selective of the files you want backed up or restored and at what frequency. If you want more powerful options then you will be provided an upgrade link. A range of backup devices and media including Blu-ray discs and HD DVD discs are supported. Large files can be automatically spanned across multiple discs .


The Audio module provides thirteen selections that cover just about everything you could possibly want to do with audio. All the expected tools are there to rip CD's into MP3 files or create audio CDs from other formats. You can make custom CD's with fades, effects and mixing. Tools are there to edit song information and to do batch conversions to formats of your choice. One module allows you to instantly capture any audio playing on your computer, including streaming radio. There is one utility "Convert LPs and Tapes" that I was especially enthused about. At our meeting we have had the question of how to convert LPs and Tapes asked many times in the past. While there are several methods to accomplish this, Roxio EMC has made it easy and crystal clear with this application. So for those of you that have a desire to do this you should give Roxio EMC serious consideration.

The Photo application contains a full featured photo suite with powerful editing, effects and touchup tools. It is complete with all the ancillary things you want to do with photos such as creating slideshows, panoramas, albums, greeting cards, calendars and layout templates. You can quickly optimize a group of photos for sending email.

The Video application is another full featured suite for importing, editing, customizing and exporting video into various formats. Included is CinePlayer a full featured video player. The features are similar to those found in Pinnacle Studio or Adobe Premier. While some of Roxio EMC tools are not as robust as the leaders you will find some tools not available in the others. The fact that it may not be as flexible as the stand alone programs makes it be easier for the novice. If you are a true video buff then even if you own other video software you would also want to have EMC in your software chest.

The smallest stand-alone module is Media Manager that enables users to easily browse, manage, share and protect their media files. The final application module is Tools. This module is used for creating disc labels, obtaining drive information, erasing discs, creating virtual disc drives and a few other assorted utilities. Roxio EMC is Vista compatible and includes gadgets for doing things directly from the desktop.

I'm certain most computer users will find enough applications on Roxio Easy Media Creator to make the investment worthwhile. If this review has captured your interest pay a visit to Roxio's website at <http://www.roxio.com/>. They have some great videos that will demonstrate these neat features

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From The DealsGuy For August

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

While working the IBM Rational Software Development Show, I visited with the guys maintaining the registration, cyber café and the classroom setup. They told me they were using VMware for the classrooms and one actual machine could support three or four virtual machines. Since each training class was for a different purpose, some virtual machines were set up for different applications. I assume that the best reasons for using virtual machines is the hardware saving, less heat and lower power consumption, which all translates to lower costs.

In another conversation, I had noticed that security people were not scanning the badges of attendees entering the exhibit floor, but there was electronic equipment there. I asked if there were RFID chips in the badges and they confirmed there were. When an attendee passes through the entrance, the RFID chip in his badge is detected and the data is recorded for various purposes. Also, while on the show floor, the attendee could also be tracked when he was near an exhibit. As the RFID chip nears the booth exhibit, a sensor detects it and even would know the time duration the person was at the exhibit. I assume that service would cost the exhibitor. The attendee could opt out of the RFID chip when filling out the registration form, but only about 1% do that. I wonder how many people even noticed that option on the form. I would prefer not to be tracked.

***Are You Interested In A Second Life?**

At a Central Florida Computer Society meeting (<http://www.cfcs.org>) Hewie Poplock and Mike Ungerman did a fascinating presentation on having meetings on the Net instead of in person, or even a combination of both. They used two projectors so the audience could see both laptop screens and what each presenter saw on their own screen. The displays sometimes included another member who joined them from his home. The presentation had a few glitches because they had not worked with it a lot, but Hewie and Mike are experts who will work out the bugs and refine the process to make it work.

They also demonstrated Dimdim <http://www.dimdim.com>, a free Web Working conference site; Paltalk <http://www.paltalk.com> where you can videoconference with up to 10 people, or voice and type chat to hundreds in public or private rooms, and Microsoft Live Meeting. They said the Association of PC User Groups is presently negotiating with Microsoft to obtain a license for Live Meeting for every APCUG user group and that there are several more applications that facilitate video chatting or conferencing; including a new Adobe site <http://www.acrobat.com>, where you can try "Connect Now," presently in Beta testing. Here is a comparison Web site. <http://hewiep.googlepages.com/cfcs20080615>.

Along the way, they also threw in a little about "Second Life," a Web site that seems to have become a fascination for some folks and perhaps a sort of addiction for others <http://www.secondlife.com>. At "Second Life" you create a new, but virtual, life of your own, even creating and building just

about any virtual item you wish. Second Life seemed limitless and you can buy virtual items, or sell virtual items you have constructed, using "Linden dollars." Some "residents" of Second Life have actually been able to earn a lot of real dollars by converting Linden Dollars into U. S. currency at L250=\$1. It was all completely new to me and the traffic on that Web site is tremendous. Hewie has a friend who spends up to 10 hours a day on the site.

***Just Paste In A Note**

How often do you want to write something down for future reference while you're working on a project? Probably more than you realize. Flashnote can be helpful when you work with text and Flashnote is absolutely free software so it's easy to take a look at it. Whether you're recording a telephone number, saving a URL to reuse, or just copying pieces of text for editing, you could use a personal information manager or some other program for creating and saving text, but most of those options are slow. Flashnote is small, quick and convenient so here is a way to save time.

<http://softvoile.com/flashnote/?s=news4.5>

***Keep Track Of Everything With This One!**

Remembering all the things that have been planned can be a major nuisance, and when important tasks get neglected it can be really serious, so here is a personal information manager. EfficientPIM Software announces the release of EfficientPIM version 1.61, the newest upgrade for its flagship tool, enabling you to maintain and secure personal information, make task lists and schedules, write notes, memos and even diaries to immortalize your memoirs. All this information can be password protected. With the Password Manager, you need to remember only one password to be able to record and find the others.

The Calendar display, Edit Note and Desktop Note functions have been improved from the previous version. You can literally stick some important notes on the desktop the way you do adhering paper notes to the fridge. EfficientPIM relieves your business life, enabling you to record, not only the information about your contacts, but all the events or appointments connected with them. The patented embedded search engine allows you to perform comprehensive searches, enabling you to find every piece of information you once recorded to the program.

EfficientPIM runs under Windows 98, Me, NT4, 2000, XP, 2003 and Vista and costs \$39.95 (USD) for a single-user license. A coupon code "EFFI-OMRW" gives user group members a 20% discount. Enter the coupon code in the EfficientPIM purchase page. This coupon code expires on Oct. 31, 2008. Licensed users are entitled to free updates and priority technical support for 24 months. More information is available at <http://www.efficientpim.com/>. Direct download link: <http://www.efficientpim.com/download/EfficientPIM-Setup.exe>

Continued

From The DealsGuy For September

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

We worked the Cisco show <http://www.cisco-live.com/> and they had over 700 computers setup. Classrooms were everywhere and, in spite of tight security, it was said that 26 laptops disappeared one night. Security certainly got tighter after that. There were attendees from many countries.

Last month I mentioned the Web site "Second Life" and its great popularity. I'm told that other companies have countered with similar products. Here is a quote from Mike Ungerman who helped Hewie Poplock with the presentation: "Following the review of virtual 'universes' like Second Life, I came across several other alternatives that offer much the same capabilities. Google has started Lively <http://www.lively.com/popular>, a 3-D, avatar based, chatting world. It's still pretty rough, but is billed to eventually offer much the same capability as Second Life.

"For those with gaming consoles, either the X-Box 360 or PS3, 3-D avatar based interaction is being offered in the next several months. X-Box Live is Microsoft's system <http://tinyurl.com/5awgix> and Playstation Home is Sony's offering <http://tinyurl.com/6xckoc>"

*How's Your Registry?

WiseCleaner has released Wise Registry Cleaner v. 3.6.2 and Wise Disk Cleaner V. 3.5.1, a pair of affordable Windows applications that stabilize your computer, and make it run more quickly. Wise Registry Cleaner speeds up the user's computer

by cleaning the Windows Registry. The Registry is at the heart of every Windows computer. Each time users install new software, information is added to the Registry. Few uninstall programs remove this information properly or completely. Therefore, over time, as users install and uninstall software, the Registry accumulates junk lines and pointers, and the computer's performance suffers.

Wise Registry Cleaner identifies and safely removes the useless information that has accumulated. In addition to scanning and cleaning the Windows Registry, the program optimizes the PC. If the user accidentally makes a mistake during a tune-up, they can undo all changes with a single click. The latest version of Wise Registry Cleaner includes a useful feature: "System Optimization Tool." Using this tool, users can easily tune up their PC in minutes without being a PC expert! [DealsGuy note: Optimize Your PC appears to only be in the Pro version.]

Wise Disk Cleaner is an intuitive, fast, and easy-to-use application that frees up disk space by deleting files no longer used by any software. In addition to the temporary files, log files, and backup files that accumulate over time, the program can identify more than 50 additional types of unnecessary files that users can safely remove. Instead of sending deleted files to the recycle bin, the program can compress these files and save them to a special directory, allowing users to restore files

Continued

From The DealsGuy For August, *continued*

*Sib Icon Editor Goes Freeware

SibCode announces the release of Sib Icon Editor 4.0. The new version of this renowned icon editor is now being offered at no charge, and is available under a freeware license. Sib Icon Editor is a fast and lightweight image-editing tool designed for creating and editing icons, toolbars, navigation buttons, small logotypes and similar graphics. Fitting the niche between simplistic Windows Paint and the almighty Adobe Photoshop, Sib Icon Editor offers small-graphics designers a way to unleash creativity without the steep learning curve.

Sib Icon Editor supports icons, toolbars, logos and other graphics of any size, color depth or aspect ratio. Both 16 and 256-color images are supported while 32-bit graphics gets alpha-channel support for creating images with no edge jaggedness. The alpha-channel comes in handy when adding semi-transparent shadows that look extremely effective on Windows XP and Vista. Sib Icon Editor offers a choice between a number of pens, sprays and paintbrushes. There is the usual bucket tool for filling the void, and there are gradients and chess fills to quickly achieve desired effects.

Only a few clicks will add a translucent or opaque shadow, modify opacity, colors, and gamma. Disabled icons are typically grayscale, so there is a tool for that as well. Tools for smoothing, inverting and coloring images are also available. The resulting image can be saved in ICO, ICPR, BMP,

JPEG or PNG formats. Sib Icon Editor can also convert Mac icons into Windows format.

Sib Icon Editor is available for free at <http://free-icon-editor.com/>

*Beep Beep What??

I would normally include some kind of freebie, but here is a tip I found in "Nuggets from Nuvo" by Joe Nuvolini, a great monthly column in the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society newsletter, Bits Of Bytes <http://ppcompas.apcug.org>. What's your state of mind when your computer does not come to life, but instead only gives you certain beeps? File this information away where you can lay your hands on it if, some day, that happens instead of booting. What do those beeps mean? Visit <http://networking.ringofsaturn.com/PC/beep.php> to get a list of the beeps. I wish my readers could read all the newsletters that I see for the valuable bits of information they contain. Not that I would know what to do with that information, but some of you might.

That's it for this month. I'll have some other new product announcements on my Web site. 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>. ☐

in the future if they find that they really need them. The latest version of Wise Disk Cleaner contains additional advanced customization options that let users fine-tune cleanup operations. [DealsGuy Note: Move To Location and Advanced Options appear to only be in the Pro version.]

Both applications are designed to be used in tandem, allowing users to streamline their Windows Registry and optimize their hard drive. Whether you are a business user who values a stable and brisk computer, a parent who needs to clean up after the software that their children install and uninstall on the family computer, or a computer consultant who needs applications that will keep their customers' PCs running optimally, Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner have the tools that you need.

Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner also offer support for more than twenty languages. It's easy to add additional language support into Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner. The User Interface messages are loaded from resource files for all supported languages. This means that you can add a resource file that contains messages in your own language.

Please note that there are FREE versions of both Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner. You can choose to pay for the PRO version, or only use the free version if preferred. Wise Registry Cleaner V. 3.6.2 and Wise Disk Cleaner V. 3.5.1 run under Windows 98 / Me / NT / 2000 / XP / XP-x64 / 2003 / Vista / Vista-x64 / 2008 Server, and cost \$19.95 (US) each. As a bundle, users can buy both programs for \$32.95. Visit <http://www.wisecleaner.com/> to purchase the software securely online, or to download free trial versions. Users can also download free versions of each program without the advanced options and system optimization tool.

***If You Don't Understand, Try This**

LingvoSoft <http://www.lingvosoft.com> announced the release of an all-new language learning system for Pocket PC that makes speaking any language simple, fast and enjoyable. Putting everything you need in the palm of your hand, LingvoSoft Language Teacher 2008 makes communicating in a new language easier than ever before. It provides every beginner with tools necessary to speak another language immediately — your success is virtually guaranteed.

With intuitive and efficiently arranged sections that teach the alphabet, words, phrases, and dialogs you will soon have the skills you need to start speaking accurately and comprehensibly. With the advanced voice output and speech recognition built-into the Language Teacher you will always get the pronunciation right the first time, something new learners absolutely depend on. Loads of practice tests and evaluations provide the help new students need to start mastering any language immediately. The price is \$149.95, but a 25% discount is available on any LingvoSoft software title. Simply enter your personal gift certificate code "MY8UZPF7M4" in the "Add Gift" field of the shopping cart and click the "Add Gift" button. <http://www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Language-Teacher/>.

***This Should Help You Copy**

[DealsGuy Note: Be sure to thoroughly read the FAQs on their Web site so you more fully understand the capability of the product.]

DVD neXt COPY released version V2.9.9.1 of DVD neXt COPY, a new and improved version that has the best quality of any DVD Copy software available. DVD neXt COPY triggers the quality king and jumps over the magical quality hurdle of the legendary DVDSHrink. Until now the "old" DVDSHrink possessed the best quality of any DVD copy program available. It was impossible for any competitors to reach this high level of quality and speed. As of now, DVD neXt COPY has broken through this barrier, and provides better quality and faster burns than DVDSHrink (High Quality Mode).

DVD neXt COPY now provides the highest quality of any DVD copy software available. Our extensive quality check was performed on the majority of the latest DVD movies with excellent results. We have compiled a test report on two special movies that are often used as quality reference movies, because they are very complicated to recompress. You can see the results in this test report: dvdnextcopy.com/quality_measurement.pdf.

During this special promotional period, everyone can receive 20% off DVD next COPY Xpress, Standard and Pro. Just enter the word "SAVE20" in the coupon field during purchase, to receive your 20% discount. Prices are as follows: Xpress \$49.99, Standard \$69.99, Pro \$89.99. The license is good for two computers but does require activation. Read more information about the new DVD neXt COPY at <http://www.dvdnextcopy.com> Watch the online DVD neXt COPY flash tutorials at <http://www.dvdnextcopy.com/tutorials.aspx>. Product page <http://www.dvdnextcopy.com/overview.aspx>

***What's That Key?**

Everybody knows Windows has a product key used to install it. If you needed it for some reason, do you remember where you put it? It also ends up embedded in your registry so maybe you could edit your registry if necessary to retrieve it, but that's living dangerously. The Magical Jelly Bean Keyfinder V2.0.1 is a freeware utility that will go in and get it for you. It has options to copy the key to your clipboard, save it to a text file or print it for your records. It works on a wide family of Windows operating systems. It also has support for multiple installations of Office, and the ability to change the Windows XP, 98 and ME installation key. It's at <http://magicaljellybean.com/keyfinder/>. Also offered is a neat popup dictionary that is freeware. I read about these long ago in Tim Hoke's freeware column in PC Alamode, newsletter for Alamo PC Organization <http://www.alamopc.org/index.shtml>.

That's it for this month. I'll have some other new product announcements on my Web site. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>. ☐

A Stress-Free PC

Jim McKnight (jim.mcknight(at)lacspc.org), Director, Los Angeles Computer Society, www.lacspc.org

There is no such thing as a totally “Stress-Free” PC, but there are many things you can do to reduce the stress and worry of owning one. As we use our PC’s, many of us worry about losing our data files, losing our email, losing our Music, our iTunes, our connectivity to the Internet, losing power in the middle of a critical activity, losing our ability to boot the PC, losing control of our PC to hackers, Spy-ware, etc. Wow, we worry a lot! It’s a wonder we dare use our PC’s at all.

To help solve and minimize these worries, here is a collection of ideas to help protect your computing environment. These steps are not really that difficult or expensive. In fact, many are free. There is lots of help available to you from User Groups, Friends, Internet Googling, PC Magazines, etc. to implement these suggestions. Details for implementing many of these suggestions are in the various self-help documents on my website at www.jmcknight.net.

Will it take a lot of time and energy to implement these ideas? Yes, at first, but once you have these processes in place, the regular time spent is minimal. Will I see a payback? You will only see a tangible payback for your time and energy if you experience some kind of catastrophic situation. Just like house insurance; if everything keeps running smoothly you will never know if it was worth it. You do get the warm fuzzy feeling of being protected, and you will sleep better at night.

Here are the three main areas of action. First: Protect your PC from bad things happening. Second: Prepare your environment so you can recover if bad things do happen. Third: Practice Secure Behaviors.

Protect Your PC from Bad Things Happening

1. Buy a Hardware Router (*Even if you only have one PC*)
 - The Router acts as a hardware Firewall.
 - Put it between your PC and your Modem.
 - Be sure to change the Admin Log-in password from the default to something private.
 - Either disable the Wireless feature and hardwire your connection, or lock-down the Wireless using WPA Encryption and a password.
2. Make sure the Windows Firewall is active.
3. Make sure Windows “Automatic Updates” feature is active and all your critical/important Windows updates are installed.
4. Install and activate an Anti-virus Program. Set it up to scan incoming e-mails.
5. Install and activate Windows Defender and other free Anti-Spyware programs. Defender will continually scan your PC for harmful activities (Note: Vista comes with Defender built-in).
6. Firefox (free) browser is generally safer than Internet Explorer.
7. Install McAfee Site Advisor (free) on each of your Internet Browsers. It helps identify risky sites. (Note: It is not related to McAfee’s Anti-virus or security suite.)

8. Buy yourself a Battery Backup Power Unit (unless you use a Laptop), so if you lose power at a critical time, you can gently close the PC down.

9. E-mail

- The best single thing you can do to secure your e-mail is to pick a good password. Do not use a single word, but a short phrase, and include some numbers. ie: “happy2cu4now” or “my5kidsrgr8”. I avoid passwords that include I, l, 1, 0, o, or O. Too easy to confuse my memory. I prefer to stick with all lower case for ease of entry, but if you like finger exercise, you can include UPPER CASE and special characters to make it even more secure. Be creative: “C@@@LDUDE” could work and easy to remember.
- Set up your email program to block images, unless OK’d by you.
- Using “Plain Text” e-mail is safer than using “HTML” e-mail, but not as pretty.
- Note: Your anti-virus program can scan incoming e-mails, but does not fully protect you.
- Thunderbird is a more secure e-mail client than Outlook, Outlook express, or Windows Mail.

Prepare Your Environment

(so you can recover if bad things do happen.)

1. **Restore/Install DVD/CD’s:** Make sure you have your “Windows Install” or “System Restore” DVD/CD’s on hand (or kept safe off-site). You need these in case of a catastrophic failure. If you do not have them, many manufacturers have instructions on how to burn your own Restore DVD/CD. Do it!
2. **Backup Plans:** Put multiple Backup processes in place that include:
 - Data Backups: Plan regular backups of all your personal data to CD/DVD’s (and kept safe off-site).
 - Image Backups: Plan regular “Image” back-ups of the entire hard-drive, preferably to an external Hard drive. This is a full image of your main Hard-drive that can be used to completely restore the PC back to normal.
 - Testing: Test your back-up process to make sure it can restore the system. This is less risky if you do it when you first buy a PC, because you have your system restore DVD’s (hopefully) to put things back as they were when you bought it.
 - Online Backups: If you like, sign up for an on-line automatic backup service like Carbonite, Jungledisk, or Mozy.
 - Restore Boot Disk: Create a Boot-Disk (using your Backup Program), so if you need to restore from a backed-up image, you are ready to go. This disk should be tested for “bootability” and then kept off-site.
 - Flash Drives: **Warning:** Do not trust Flash Drives as your only means of data backup. They are prone to unexpected catastrophic failures. Having 2 or 3 duplicate

Continued

Flash Drives would possibly be a reasonable alternative to DVD/CD's for your personal Data.

3. **Hard Copy Backups:** Write down or print out all your critical info, passwords, access info, log-in ID's, etc. and save off-site. Print out a hard copy of all your e-mail contacts and save off-site.

4. **Password File:** If you keep a list of Passwords on your computer, make sure the file is hidden and/or protected by encryption. Name your password file something that only has meaning to you. Do not name your file; "passwords.doc". Duhh. Use something off-beat, like Recipes.doc or Flowers.doc. Also, there are "Locker" Programs that are free or cheap that will hide, encrypt, and password protect your personal data files.

Practice Secure Behaviors

1. E-Mail

- Never open e-mail attachments from strangers.
- Never click a button or link in an email. If desired, copy & paste the link into your browser and make sure it is going where you think it is going.
- Be cautious about opening attachments & links from friends and family. Especially if it is something that was forwarded from someone else.

2. Anti-Virus & Anti-Spyware Scans

- Run a full Anti-virus Scan at least once a month.
- For each of your Anti-spyware Programs, run updates and a full scan weekly or at least monthly.

3. **Secuna Scans:** Once or twice a month, run a Secunia "Software Inspector" scan to make sure your most common programs are up to date against vulnerabilities. This runs from their website. You do not have to download any programs.

4. Backup, Backup, Backup

- Do your planned backups regularly. At least once a month, backup all your personal data files, emails, pictures, etc. to CD/DVD's, and put them somewhere offsite. (A safe-deposit box or a friend or relative's house).
- At least monthly, backup an image of your main Hard Drive to an external or second Hard drive.
- If possible, physically take the external hard-drive containing your backed up image off-site so you can recover easily in case of fire, flood, theft, etc. (A safe-deposit box is good). There are now many small cheap external Hard drives that will easily fit in a Safe-Deposit box. Buy two and alternate them.
- Periodically printout a hardcopy of your passwords and contacts. Save off-site.
- Power off your external Hard-drive when not in use.

5. **Hard-Drive Surface Analysis Scans:** Run a maintenance scan quarterly or semiannually on all your hard drives using a utility like "Spin-Rite". This helps assure you against a surprise hard drive failure.

References & Recommended Programs

Mozilla Products:

- Firefox Browser - Free: www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/

- Thunderbird E-mail Client - Free: mozilla.com/en-US/thunderbird/ (Thunderbird Step-By-Step setup at: www.jrmcknight.net/)

Anti-Virus & Anti-Spyware Products:

- McAfee Site Advisor - Free: www.siteadvisor.com/
- AVG Free Anti-virus - Free: <http://free.grisoft.com/doc/downloads-products/us/frt/0?prd=aff>
- Defender - Free: www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software/default.mspx#
- AVG Anti-spyware - Free: <http://free.grisoft.com/doc/downloads-products/us/frt/0?prd=asf>
- Ad-AWARE 2007 - Free: www.lavasofusa.com/products/ad_aware_free.php
- SpyBot Search & Destroy - Free: www.safer-networking.org/en/spybotsd/index.html

Software Scans & Backup:

- Secunia Software Inspector - Free: www.secunia.com/software_inspector/ (Requires the latest version of Java to run: www.java.com/en/download/index.jsp)
- Spin-Rite Program: www.grc.com/sr/spinrite.htm (The SpinRite Storage Utility Program is not free, but is money well spent.)
- Acronis True Image Backup Utility www.ugr.com/ (This program is available at a discount at the listed site and includes a free Tutorial CD.)
- Automatic Online Data Backup sites: www.carbonite.com/ and www.jungledisk.com/. Carbonite is currently \$50 per year for unlimited storage. Jungledisk is variable priced on usage but is cheap.

Battery Backup Power Units (also called a UPS: Uninterruptible Power Supply):

- When buying a UPS, I suggest you add up all the power ratings on all the PC equipment you plan to connect to the unit, then pick a unit about 1.5 times that amount. ie: If your usage is 300 Watts, buy at least a 450 Watt UPS (equal to about a 700 VA unit).
- The VA rating (Volt-Amps) vs Watts rating is confusing. With PC equipment, 1 Watt is about 1.6 VA. I go by Watts. If the tag on your PC says 2.0A and 120V, then calculate 2.0 Amps x 120 Volts or 240 watts for that device. (VA would be about 400)
- A UPS that is rated too small will fault when first powering on all your equipment at once. The first 30 seconds or so is when the highest power usage occurs.
- The most reliable brands seem to be APC and BELKIN. Triplet is OK.

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Viewing the Bigger Picture

Bonnie L. Snyder ([Bonniels21\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:Bonniels21(at)gmail.com)), P*PCompAS, <http://ppcompas.apcug.org/>

At the risk of being the bearer of bad news, I have to say that none of us is getting any younger. User groups tend to be populated more by senior citizens than by any other age group. As we age, we find the need for more and more assistive aids, including those that will help us to use our computers more comfortably and efficiently.

Many of us will find, as time goes on, that our vision is not what it used to be. We may find that our eyes fatigue as we read information on the computer monitor, and we may find that some of the smaller fonts and graphics on the screen require us to squint and lean forward into the display.

In this article, I will discuss two screen enlargement programs that might help us minimize our visual difficulties as we use our computers.

The first program I want to talk about is called Magic Lens Max. I downloaded an older version of the program from Giveawayoftheday.com and was very impressed with what it could do. I e-mailed the program's author and told him what a terrific program it was and I have demonstrated it to various groups who provide services to the blind and visually impaired. Additionally, the cost of the program is only \$39.95. I went ahead and purchased a copy of the most recent edition and was even more pleased with what the author had added since my downloaded version.

Magic Lens Max provides a variety of ways to magnify the computer screen, from resizable moveable lenses, which magnify directly over where your mouse or cursor is working, to a full screen magnification option, which slows down the screen refresh very minimally. You have some color contrast options to choose from with this program as well as an invert colors option for light text on dark background. The magnification levels can be selected from 50% (which is non-magnification) up to pretty much infinity. Anything above 350% starts to blur a bit, although there are options to sharpen. The Magic Lens Max icon that resides in the system tray can be single-clicked to turn on or turn off the magnification.

This is an excellent program that is both useful and affordable. If you are interested in testing it out, go to www.visionsuit.com. You can download a 30-day demo of the latest version. If you decide to purchase Magic Lens Max, once you have paid the \$39.95, you will be sent a registration code that can be entered into the demo, and it becomes fully functional.

The second program I evaluated for screen magnification allows for an additional option: speech along with the magnification. This program is called iZoom, and can be obtained from <http://www.issist.com/>. I really like the customizing options available in iZoom. These can be accessed from the initial menu when iZoom comes on, or once the menu is closed, you can reopen it quickly by clicking the mouse on the iZoom icon in the system tray.

iZoom allows for default or customizable hot keys, several sizes and colors of mouse pointers, color combinations supplied with the program, as well as custom color modes, several sizes and shapes of "locators" that help the user find

the location of the mouse pointer, and a choice of several lens shapes, as well as full-screen magnification. iZoom magnifies from 1X to 32X.

The negatives I have found in iZoom are as follows: First, when using the lens mode, you have to place the lens first over what you want to interact with, and then move the mouse pointer within that lens. Second, from about the 3X magnification up, the display becomes more and more pixilated which can be a problem for some vision conditions, such as astigmatism. Third, there is only one voice offered with the speech option and it is not a particularly pleasant one.

As you would expect, with additional options comes an additional cost. Again, you can download a 30-day demo of iZoom from the Website, and if you wish to purchase the program, the price is \$199. However, keep in mind that the two major commercial screen magnification programs, MAGic from Freedom Scientific and ZoomText Plus from AI Squared, both weigh in at from \$300 to \$550, depending on how many options you wish to have. So, if you feel the need to view the bigger picture, give the demos of the above programs a try, and see if they will be of use to you.

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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. ☐

Firefox 3 – Hot New Browser

Ira Wilsker (Iwilsker(at)apcug.net), APCUG Director

After a lengthy wait, Mozilla has released the latest release of the very popular web browser, Firefox 3. This new release, available for free download from www.getfirefox.com, has many new features, making it a very strong competitor to Microsoft's ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer.

Firefox evolved from an earlier browser, Mozilla, which in turn grew out of the Netscape browser as AOL announced the cessation of Netscape development. Since its first release several years ago, Firefox has developed a wide following, with hundreds of millions of copies downloaded. The newly released version 3 has tentatively set a Guinness world record with over 8 million copies downloaded in its first 24 hours of public release, despite overloaded servers that discouraged countless people from downloading it the first day of issue. According to published reports, the number of copies of Firefox 3 downloaded surpassed 14 million downloads in the first 72 hours. Obviously, many people are using it.

Rhetorically, so why are so many using Firefox 3 rather than Internet Explorer (IE), which is installed by default on all contemporary Windows computers? There are several other fine browsers in circulation, such as the newly released update to Opera, and Apple's Safari (for both Windows and Mac), but for Windows computers, Firefox is firmly in second place, right behind Internet Explorer. If Internet Explorer was not preinstalled on Windows computers and integrated into the operating system, there is a good chance that Firefox 3 could surpass IE in a fair competitive market.

Firefox 3 is faster rendering web pages than IE, has superior tabbed browsing, is written in tighter code taking fewer system resources, and has many advantages over IE. There is no reason why PC users should not download Firefox 3 for Windows (7.8mb download), and install it, as it runs happily on computers that already have IE installed. On a fresh installation of Firefox on a Windows computer, Firefox will nondestructively import the favorites (bookmarks), cookies, and other information from IE, without making any changes or impeding IE in any way. If Firefox 3 is installed on a computer that has an older version of Firefox installed, it will automatically install it as an upgrade, including all bookmarks, passwords, cookies, and other information.

Once installed, many users prefer to use Firefox instead of IE. I use Firefox for 98% of my browsing tasks; it would be 100%, but I have IE setup to access another internet account that I have, but rarely use.

According to the Firefox 3 website at www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox, over 15,000 improvements were made to version 3 over version 2. The newly released version 3 is claimed to be faster, safer, and smarter than the previous version and IE! One of the new features, which I have personally verified, is that web pages do indeed load faster than on IE and previous versions of Firefox. Firefox 3 also consumes less system memory and system resources, leading to improved computer performance when Firefox is loaded and running, compared to the previous version, or even IE. Firefox 3 is also more secure than previous browsers, and in-

corporates the latest technologies to help prevent phishing (identity theft), and other website forgeries. A neat new feature in Firefox 3 is "Instant Website ID" — clicking on the tiny website icon ("site favicon") at the left of the URL in the menu bar will display site information and identification, which will likely indicate if the site is as intended, or a web forgery. Firefox 3 has also been engineered to work smoothly and compliment Vista's parental controls, as well as most antivirus and other security programs.

Another interesting feature unique to Firefox 3 is the "Smart Location Bar" showing detailed information on websites recently visited, and is accessed by clicking on the right side of the menu bar. This Smart Location Bar is intelligent, in that it adapts to personal preferences to locate better website matches. Typing a "tag" or keyword in the menu bar opens a detailed list of previously visited websites containing that keyword, making it very fast and easy to locate websites that have previously been visited. Another very useful feature is the integrated spell checker, which underlines any misspelled words typed in a browser window. Right clicking on the word opens a list of suggested spellings, and a mouse click will replace the incorrect word with the correct spelling.

Malware of various types, including worms, Trojans, viruses, and spyware, is a growing menace to internet users. Firefox 3 integrates a sophisticated anti-malware feature that provides some protection if the user either intentionally or erroneously accesses a website that contains attack code. If such a dangerous website is accessed, a full screen (browser window) display will appear as a warning. Firefox, working with other organizations (including Google) maintains a continuously updated list of so called "attack sites", so there is nothing for the user to update or maintain. In the event the user does happen to fall into a suspect site, such as a very freshly created phishing website, the forgery can be quickly reported by simply clicking on HELP – REPORT WEB FORGERY; this will connect to a Google service that collects such information on a real-time basis, verifies the forgery, and automatically adds it to the malware list, as well as forwards the information to groups like Phish Tank (www.phishtank.com) for further action.

Many of us use multiple passwords and user names on countless websites. Firefox 3 has an excellent integrated and secure password manager. When a password is first entered, Firefox 3 asks if you want it to remember that password and logon information, without any annoying pop-ups. Speaking of pop-ups, Firefox 3 incorporates a sophisticated and easily configurable pop-up blocker which can stop pop-ups and pop-unders, speeding and making more enjoyable the surfing experience. In some cases, pop-ups are not irritating advertisements, but instead contain important information; these can be easily allowed when desired.

Many of us choose to tweak the appearance and features of our browsers, and Firefox 3 happily obliges. Firefox has many themes and "personas" that can be selectively implemented to change the appearance of the browser to meet our individual tastes. For those of us who want additional fea-

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Email Etiquette

John Roy, President ([johnroy1\(at\)comcast.net](mailto:johnroy1(at)comcast.net)), The PC Users Group of Connecticut, www.tpcug-ct.org/

Do you really know how to forward an e-mail? It is estimated that over fifty percent of email users do not know how to do it properly. Do you wonder why you get viruses or junk mail? Email messages get forwarded countless times without concern for the security of the previous sender's addresses.

Every time you forward an e-mail there is information left over from the people who got the message before you, namely their e-mail addresses and names. As the messages get forwarded along the list of addresses builds and builds creating a huge resource for spammers. All it takes is for someone to get a virus and the infected computer can send that virus to every e-mail address that has come across that computer. Even if the address collection doesn't result in a virus it surely will be harvested by spammers or someone looking to make a couple of cents for a listing of good email addresses. How do you stop or at least minimize the propagation of email addresses? There are several easy steps that we should all practice.

(1) Before you send out a forwarded e-mail, DELETE all of the other addresses that appear in the body of the message (at the top). That's right, DELETE them. Highlight them and delete them, backspace them, cut them, whatever it is you know how to do. It only takes a second You MUST click the 'Forward' button first and then you will have full editing capabilities against the body and headers of the message. If you don't click on 'Forward' first, you won't be able to edit the message at all.

(2) Whenever you send an e-mail to more than one person, do NOT use the To: or Cc: fields for adding e-mail addresses. Always use the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field for listing the e-mail addresses. This is the way the people you send to will only see their own e-mail address. If you don't see your BCC: option click on where it says To: and your address list will appear. Highlight the address and choose BCC: and that's it, it's that easy. When you send to BCC: your message will automatically say 'Undisclosed Recipients' in the 'TO:' field of the people who receive it.

(3) Remove any 'FW:' in the subject line. You can re-name the subject if you wish or even fix spelling.

(4) ALWAYS hit your Forward button from the actual e-mail you are reading. Ever get those e-mails that you have to open

10 pages to read the one page with the information on it? By forwarding from the actual page you wish someone to view, you stop them from having to open many e-mails just to see what you sent.

(5) Have you ever gotten an email that is a petition? It states a position and asks you to add your name and address and to forward it to 10 or 15 people or your entire address book. The email can be forwarded on and on and can collect thousands of names and email addresses. A FACT: The completed petition is actually worth a couple of bucks to a professional spammer because of the wealth of valid names and email addresses contained therein. If you want to support the petition, send it as your own personal letter to the intended recipient. Your position may carry more weight as a personal letter than a laundry list of names and email address on a petition. (Actually, if you think about it, who's supposed to send the petition in to whatever cause it supports? And don't believe the ones that say that the email is being traced, it just isn't so!)

(6) One of the main ones I hate is the ones that say that something like, 'Send this email to 10 people and you'll see something great run across your screen.' Or, sometimes they'll just tease you by saying something really cute will happen IT AIN'T GONNA HAPPEN!!!! (Trust me; I'm still seeing some of the same ones that I waited on 10 years ago!) I don't let the bad luck ones scare me either, they get trashed. (Could that be why I haven't won the lottery?)

(7) Before you forward an Amber Alert, or a Virus Alert, or some of the other ones floating around nowadays, check them out before you forward them. Most of them are junk mail that's been circling the net for Years! Just about everything you receive in an email that is in question can be checked out at Snopes. Just go to <http://www.snopes.com/>. It's really easy to find out if it's real or not. If it's not, please don't pass it on.

So please, in the future, let's stop or at least minimize the junk mail and the viruses by taking the steps outlined above.

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Firefox 3 – Hot New Browser, *continued*

tures, Firefox offers over 5,000 free "add-ons" (addons.mozilla.org/firefox), which are easy to install devices to customize the browser to work as desired. I have installed about a dozen add-ons, including some security add-ons (PhishTank, McAfee SiteAdvisor, and others), as well as an enhanced download manager (the one integrated in Firefox 3 is very adequate for most users). I also have selected to use differently colored tabs on the top of the browser window, an add-on that can make a tab an IE window (for the rare cases when a website is intended for IE only), a PDF manager, and several other add-ons.

Firefox 3 is an outstanding and free product. It is a very worthwhile competitor to Internet Explorer, and users should try it to see if they like it. I like it, and use it almost exclusively on my desktop and notebook computers. That is the best recommendation I can give it.

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Much Ado About Summer

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

The title above was really my third choice. My second choice was; “I Already Used That Title”. As you’ll see in a minute, that was actually a pretty good in-joke (at least I thought so); but it wouldn’t do, since it didn’t suggest (even indirectly) what the content of this article might be. My first choice was the classic; “How I Spent My Summer Vacation”. Unfortunately, I couldn’t use it here because (all together now); “I Already Used That Title” (for my article in the September 2006 issue of ACGNJ News). In point of fact, I previously used the title “Much Ado About A Bad Ethernet Cable” for my November 2005 article; but “Much Ado About...” is suitable for a series. (Sort of like “Abbott and Costello Meet Whoever”). I’ll probably use it again someday. Anyway, that’s enough ado about our title.

Why use “Much Ado” this time? For one thing, it nicely describes the way I “ran around in circles”, frantically trying to complete an ambitious last-minute project for the club. You want more details about that now? Then I guess you don’t know me very well, because (as is often the case in my newsletter articles) I’ve got a lot of other stuff to go through before I get to that topic. Such as: On August 16th, Ian Murdock’s Debian GNU/Linux celebrated its fifteenth birthday. Debian is the second oldest Linux distribution still in active development. (Patrick Volkerding’s Slackware Linux, released in April of 1993, is the oldest survivor from those good old days of yore). Moderately mis-quoting myself from one of my earlier newsletter articles; “Back when dinosaurs ruled the earth, and everybody was talking about exciting new inventions like fire, the wheel, and the i386 computer architecture”.

Happy Birthday

So, what’s with the “GNU/Linux”, anyway? Well, on September 27, 1983, Richard Stallman (then at MIT) announced the formation of the GNU Project. (The name GNU is a recursive acronym for Gnu’s Not Unix). That was the *true* beginning of that-which-we-now-call-Linux. It’s actually a tripod, and GNU was the first leg. (Though it didn’t really get going until January of 1984, when Richard quit his MIT job to work on it full time). Why wasn’t GNU the whole thing? Because even today, the GNU kernel (named Hurd) is *still* “not ready for prime time”.

Then, on September 15, 1987, X11 was released. The X Window System, version 1, had been developed (in May of 1984) by Jim Gettys and Bob Scheifler of MIT. It was the first windowing system environment to offer true hardware-independence and vendor-independence. Three years (and ten versions) later, in collaboration with Smokey Wallace of Digital Equipment Corporation’s Western Software Laboratory, they released X11; which is still the current protocol version. It hasn’t got as many (or as vocal) advocates as GNU, but it was the second leg of the tripod.

Finally, on August 25, 1991, Linus Torvalds (still a student at the University of Helsinki, Finland) announced his free kernel for 386 computers (which he’d begun as a hobby about four months earlier). At that point, it didn’t even have an official name yet. (Linus himself was partial to “Freax”). Then, in

February 1992, he released Linux version 0.12 under the GNU General Public License (specifically, GPLv2). At last, the third leg of the tripod was available. Anybody who wanted to could now combine those legs to build their own complete, legal, and free operating system; and indeed they did.

The first release of MCC Linux (aka MCC Interim Linux) was based on that 0.12 kernel. It was also released in February 1992, by Owen Le Blanc of the MCC (Manchester Computing Centre, a part of the University of Manchester, England). MCC Linux is considered to have been the first distribution of Linux. (Packaging a selection of GNU components with the Linux kernel, to provide an installable working system from a single source). There were plenty of “runners-up”: Dave Safford’s TAMU releases, Martin Junius’s MJ versions, H J Lu’s small base systems, and Peter MacDonald’s massive, comprehensive SLS releases. Note that SLS (Softlanding Linux System) was the first distribution to include X (and TCP/IP, too). Further note that *both* Patrick Volkerding (Slackware) and Ian Murdock (Debian) were SLS users who became dissatisfied with the direction that distribution was taking. As a result, each (independently) decided to create a new one. Even further note that Linus Torvalds himself has *never* released his own “official” distribution of Linux. (Most names and dates above are courtesy of Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, at www.wikipedia.org).

Many reviewers have written sentences along the lines of; “Linux was started in 1991 by Linus Torvalds”. That’s actually a mis-statement cloaked in the truth. It’s like going to an automobile assembly line and crediting the worker who stuck on the carburetor with building the entire vehicle. Sure, the car can’t run without it; but a lot of other people did a lot of other work, too. We define the word “birthday” as the day one first appeared in the world; naked, helpless, and with a whole lot of growing still to do. So we didn’t just recently pass Linux’s seventeenth birthday in August. On September 27, 2008, GNU (and thus, that-which-we-now-call-Linux) will be *twenty-five* years old.

Bye, Bye, Billy

OK, that was interesting; but enough about the past. What else happened this summer? Well, on Friday, June 27, 2008 Bill Gates “retired” from Microsoft. (Though he’ll still be Microsoft’s Chairman and largest shareholder, and will supposedly still spend one day a week on company business). I’d like to think that Microsoft might start acting better now; but from what I’ve read about Steve Ballmer over the years, I’m sure things can only get worse.

A web site called gizmodo.com tied a bunch of its blogs together under the banner heading; “Bill Gates Retirement Party”. One entry, posted at 7:30 PM on Wednesday, June 25th by Adam Frucci, was titled; “Why I Still Use Windows Despite the Peer Pressure”. Presumably, it’s copyright 2008 by Gawker Media (the site’s owner), but it didn’t actually say so anywhere, at least not that I could find.

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The author began by stating that except for himself, everyone in his office now uses a Mac. Then he laid out all his reasons for not switching, too. At first, I thought; “This guy’s obviously a confirmed Gates Goose-stepper”. Then, in a more charitable mood, I thought; “Maybe he was kidnapped in the middle of the night and taken to a Microsoft Re-education Camp”. Finally, when he made no mention of Linux, or the fact that Mac OS X is based upon Darwin (a BSD variant, and thus a “kissing cousin” to Linux), I thought; “Maybe he just doesn’t actually know all that much about operating systems”. Then I got to his last three sentences (minimally edited here due to language issues); “I’ve made my choice, and I’m sticking by it. At least until I buy my next computer, because I sure don’t want to have to use Vista. I mean, I like Windows, but I’m not crazy”.

Speaking of Vista and crazy: During a keynote address at Microsoft’s Worldwide Partner Conference (in Houston, Texas on July 8), Brad Brooks (Corporate Vice President of Windows Consumer Products) said; “The message is ‘Move to Vista. The time of worry is over’”.

Hah! Like anything good has ever come from believing something Microsoft said. Even ignoring the myriad performance issues, Vista is still just flat out *bad*. It has its own built in spyware, reporting dozens of bits of information about you and your computer back to Microsoft. Even discounting evil intentions on Microsoft’s part (that’s a stretch), it’s a sure bet that hackers will find a way to get it to report to them, too. (That’s if they haven’t done so already). Remember what both David Perry (TCF Banquet speaker) and FBI Special Agent Phil Frigm (June Window Pains Meeting speaker) told us. Internet hackers aren’t just mischievous and playful jokers any more. These days, they work for international organized crime.

On top of that, there are at least *three* Vista “features” that an impartial observer could only call Trojan Horses (of the Logic Bomb variety): Tilt Bits, Driver Revocation, and WGA Certification. At any time, for any reason deemed sufficient by Microsoft, any one of them can take your system down. Whether you’ve actually done anything “wrong” or not. Mere suspicion by Microsoft is enough. (None of that “innocent until proven guilty” stuff here). Vista was designed to put the interests of Microsoft and its “Content Provider” allies *first*, and the interests of the computer user *last*. To think that they can still get away with *forcing* computer buyers to *pay* them for such vile garbage.

Furthermore, they can’t even be honest about their stats. The following paragraph was part of a July 28, 2008 article by Dan Warne, from the Australian Consolidated Press Website (Copyright 1997-2008 by ninemsn Pty Ltd - All rights reserved), titled; “XP still killing Vista in sales volume: HP”.

Business PC buyers are still overwhelmingly opting for XP, computer giant HP has revealed. HP’s revelation, made at the launch of a new range of business notebooks, flies in the face of Microsoft’s persistent PR claims that Vista has sold tens of millions of copies — and is selling at a faster rate than XP ever did. However, HP explained how Microsoft is coming up with these “Vista” sales figures. “From the 30th of June, we have

no longer been able to ship a PC with a XP license,” said Jane Bradburn, Market Development Manager, Commercial Notebooks for HP Australia. “However, what we have been able to do with Microsoft is ship PCs with a Vista Business license but with XP pre-loaded. That is still the majority of business computers we are selling today.” So, in other words, Microsoft counts a sale for Vista, even though the computer manufacturer has really sold XP. Here’s a link to the complete article: apcmag.com/xp_still_killing_vista_in_sales_volume_hp.htm. Combining quotes from Machiavelli and the Bible: Put not your trust in Microsoft, for the truth is not in them.

Well, that’s enough spleen venting. Now for a bit of fun. I like the Internet. I like behind the scenes stories. I like silly jokes. Here’s a combination of all three:

A Comic Connection

One of my daily stops when surfing the web is a site called www.gocomics.com, which features newspaper comic strips. Five of the strips I read regularly are contemporary; and I won’t go into them here. The sixth is Bill Watterson’s “Calvin and Hobbes”. Produced from November 18, 1985 to December 31, 1995 (just slightly over ten years), it’s already been completely re-run for a second time over the Internet, and is now well into another go-round. (Even on this third run, many of these classic strips can still catch me by surprise, and give me a sustained belly laugh).

The inside stuff: If you study the layouts of enough Sunday funnies, you’ll notice a common phenomenon. The first few panels don’t really connect that well with the rest. That’s because, to save space, some Sunday newspapers just don’t print the first parts. The comic strip writers and artists have had to adjust their designs to allow for this unfortunate fact of life. Sometimes, they simply start out slow. Other times, they’ll open with a disposable “warm-up” joke.

On July 13, 2008, gocomics repeated the comic originally published on April 27, 1987. (Copyright 1987, 2008 by Universal Press Syndicate). In the first two panels, Calvin’s father is leaning over the kitchen sink, studying a do-it-yourself manual. The next seven panels show Calvin by himself, involved in one of his imaginative flights of fancy. (Unusually, this strip doesn’t involve Hobbes in any way at all). In the last panel, Calvin joins his father, who is now lying on the floor in a puddle of water, holding a wrench, with his head sticking inside the cabinet under the sink. Calvin throws a straight line to his dad, who delivers the punch line. Then, from off-screen, Calvin’s mom gets in the last word. It was a good comic, but not one of Bill’s best. (That’s the trouble with consistent excellence. When you’re merely very, very good, it’s like you let everybody down).

Calvin’s part of the strip was quite visual, so it would take me a lot of words to explain it. Luckily, I don’t have to. For the purposes of this article, I only need to quote the two expendable opening panels, where Calvin’s father is reading aloud. In panel 1; “Before beginning any home-plumbing repair, make sure you possess the proper tools for the job.” In panel 2; “Check the following list of handy expletives, and see that you know how to use them.” At 1:13 AM on the morning of

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June 30th, I really could have used that list. That's when I started to send out my experiment in e-mail: the End-of-June 2008 Newsletter Supplement. As usual, here's more background information for you to wade through:

Opportunity Knocks

The idea for the Supplement came from a missed opportunity. As one of the ACGNJ Directors, I receive "Cc" copies of board@acgnj.org e-mails. Through that connection, I read the message that ACGNJ President Mike Redlich sent to David Marra on May 24, 2008, inviting him to speak at one of our future meetings. Possibly as an afterthought, Mike closed with; "We actually have an opening for June 6, 2008". I also got a copy of Dave's reply on May 27th, saying; "As luck would have it, I am going to be in NJ during the late afternoon on Friday, June 6th. I would be happy to present Leopard to the group that night, if it is still open. Below is the description of my Leopard preso, and a short bio, if you need it". Finally, I got a copy of Mike's confirmation on May 28th.

Leaping into action, I added some text of my own to Dave's "description" and "short bio", thus re-working those paragraphs into a new announcement for our June 6th Main Meeting. At 6:45 AM on May 29th, I e-mailed a copy to Mike, asking him (in his capacity as ACGNJ President) if he would send it on to Newsletter Editor Barbara DeGroot as a last minute, post-deadline addition to the June newsletter. (I didn't send a copy to Barbara myself because I felt that would be "stepping on Mike's toes"). I guess, as is his right, that Mike decided not to do so.

I was disappointed when the June newsletter came out and my announcement wasn't in it. However (as readers of my October, 2007 "Halloween Episode" already know), when I've gone to the trouble of typing something into the computer, and for some reason it doesn't get used as intended; then I'll find some other way to use it. So I put my announcement aside, intending to make it the basis for a review of Dave's presentation in a later issue. Unfortunately, because of the summer hiatus, it would be really "old news" by that time.

Then, all at once, in the middle of the June Board of Directors meeting, several things I'd learned in various places came together in my mind. I knew that, during the six and a half years since we last had to actually use it (to print out snail-mail newsletter addresses), our Membership Database has been... Well, shall we be kind and just say; "benignly neglected". At a previous BOD meeting, I'd overheard a conversation suggesting that if we decided to do an all-inclusive e-mail notification to our members, our Internet Service Provider probably wouldn't even allow us to send out that many messages at once. (*I* wasn't eavesdropping. *They* were loud). While studying our old newsletter archives, I'd found out about the three mid-month newsletter supplements that were put out in 1987 (over and above the ten regular issues). I knew that a significant portion of the club (five of our Special Interest Groups) did *not* intend to go on hiatus for the summer. In fact, they planned to hold their regularly scheduled meetings as usual. Plus, there was the annual Planning Meeting on Au-

gust 21st. Finally, I had a potential report about the June 6th Main Meeting "burning a hole in my pocket".

I had a revelation. I could get some real world data about the database and e-mail problems, remind (hopefully) most of our members about the July and August meetings, and publish my Dave Marra story in a timely manner. All at the same time. Unfortunately for me, the New Business portion of the BOD Meeting arrived *before* my sanity returned. So I volunteered to produce an End-of-June Newsletter Supplement, and attempt to send it to the full membership as e-mail (rather than as our usual PDF file).

And now for something completely different:

The "E" and I

I got my first dial-up modem in the late eighties, shortly after I got my 286 PC. The computer club I joined then (*not* ACGNJ) had a phone line Bulletin Board, but I hardly ever used it. I attended TCF as a paying customer several times in the early nineties. One of those times, I picked up a "special offer" floppy disk for Internet access through NetCom. That's when I got my first e-mail account. I quickly grew addicted to surfing the web, but I didn't use e-mail much. (Mostly, just to send out resumes when I was job hunting). Things were good for a few years, but then NetCom was taken over by another company; which was, in turn, quickly gobbled up by yet another company. I became dissatisfied with the service, and looked around for a new ISP. I found NetZero. Their wacky and intrusive interface was a little annoying, but it was *free*, so I got used to it. Again, things were pretty good for quite some time. Then, NetZero decided to become "Net-Ten-Bucks". They continued legacy free service for their existing customers, but they made it inconvenient for anyone who didn't switch to a paid account; by doing things like setting time limits for Internet access. By that time, there weren't any other ISPs offering free service, either. So I held on to NetZero's now very restricted free service for as long as I could. I accepted that eventually I'd have to pay some company for my Internet access again; but I had absolutely *no* intention of *ever* giving *any* of that money to NetZero.

As for e-mail, I still wasn't using it very much, but I'd found that, for some things, an e-mail address was a necessity. As soon as I realized that my days with NetZero were numbered, I opened a Hotmail account on-line, and stopped using my NetZero e-mail address. By the time I finally switched ISPs, the only messages that my NetZero account was receiving were spam, so I dropped it without a second thought.

Now, the phone company in my home town has never been what you would call "cutting edge". Indeed, I had to set my first few modems to pulse, because touch-tone dialing wasn't available from my exchange until well into the nineties. However, eventually they announced the arrival of DSL service. I jumped aboard; but I never bothered to set up an e-mail client through my ISP. I just stuck with Hotmail on the web. For my *very* last-minute e-mail Newsletter Supplement, the easiest thing to do was to continue using Hotmail. So I opened a separate new account just for the project.

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Now, given my often expressed *highly* negative opinion of Microsoft, you might wonder why I use Hotmail. Well, it's *not* because I love their service. (I get more spam from *them* than from any single other source). It's from inertia. It would be a lot of work to move all my stuff to another free Internet e-mail service. Anyway, the damage has already been done. I've been there for quite a while, so Microsoft already made any unscrupulous use of my information that it wanted to a long time ago. If I go to someplace else, the danger starts anew.

So I had my method of delivery. Now, I needed a "customer" list (more about that later), and a product to "sell".

Product Development

Next, I started work on the first draft of my Newsletter Supplement. As intimated above, rather than produce it as our usual PDF file and send it as an attachment, I wanted to try a format that would be as instantly and universally accessible as possible. (I figured the less fuss I subjected my recipients to, the more likely they'd be to actually read it). So I designed the whole thing to be an almost completely "plain vanilla" e-mail. Except for the first line (which I made into a pseudo-masthead by setting it to be displayed in the largest available font size), and the five hyperlinks I wound up including, I intended everything else to go out as straight ASCII text.

However, I actually *wrote* the first draft as a document file in a word processor, to take advantage of the spell-check, page-count and word-count functions. After the title line, I added the usual Volume, Number, Date, and Staff information. As I said earlier, I've been working on a project involving old newsletter issues. So, after my introductory paragraph, I threw in a few more paragraphs of historical information involving previous supplements and summer issues. Following that, I listed the summer schedule, including the Planning Meeting. Then, at last, I turned my unused announcement for the June 6th Main Meeting into a report *about* our June 6th Main Meeting.

I'd based my announcement on the "description of my Leopard preso, and a short bio" supplied by Dave Marra. With the addition of my own first sentence, that "bio" had become my first paragraph; and with the addition of my own *last* sentence, that "description" had become my second paragraph. All I had to do was change my content there from future to past tense. I managed to salvage a few sentences about Dave's presentation at TCF from my original third paragraph, but I mostly re-wrote it, describing briefly what went on at the meeting. I also had a picture of Dave that I wanted to use; but that would have moved the Supplement too far from a "plain-vanilla" e-mail, so I left it out. Maybe I'll put it in the PDF version that I plan to produce (someday) for our newsletter archives.

John Raff had used the exact same "description and short bio" to write his announcement of the Main Meeting for the club web site. So my first two paragraphs looked suspiciously similar to his; but that was just a coincidence. When I decided to add a report about the June 20th Window Pains meeting, I *did*

use John's web site announcement for that meeting as a source, re-working his first *five* paragraphs into my first three. (From the "press-release" tone, I'd guess that this information was supplied to John by Special Agent Frigm himself, probably in much the same way as Dave Marra did). Then, I actually had to do some real work and write my fourth paragraph (describing the meeting) from scratch.

I closed with a short explanation about why I'd decided to produce a Supplement. Then, in a last-minute inspiration, I added a Member Survey. (That addition necessitated re-working my opening paragraphs a bit, as well). Finally, it was done. So I sent it off to my brother for proof reading. That was on June 25th. Later, after making the inevitable proof corrections, I copied it into a text file (to remove all of the word processor's hidden background information and overhead bloat). Then, I copied that text into my master e-mail. (I also had to *re-cut-and-paste* just the five hyperlinks from the word processor document into the master e-mail. For them, I knew that my interim text file copy would have removed *too much* background information).

Database (and E-mail) Blues

On June 25th, the whole project almost tanked. I had a delivery system, and I had a (just about) finished product, but I *didn't* have a list of members to send it to. I'd like to go into more detail here, but we're at about four thousand words and are not nearly finished. Since this situation is *far* from resolved, I'll save some space by holding it back for another time. Suffice it to say that I got *no help at all* from the person who is supposed to be keeping track of our membership. Instead, John Raff came to my rescue. After turning up several corrupted files, John finally found and sent me a usable member database on June *28th*. Unfortunately, it was a bit out of date (and thus guaranteed to be incomplete); but at least it was *something*.

A few people listed multiple e-mail addresses. For them, I re-edited the file so that they got a separate record for each address; and I sent a copy of the Supplement to each one. While I was realistic enough to expect *some* address failures, I was also determined to do everything I could to get a copy to as many members as possible. A few duplicate transmissions were an acceptable side affect.

Going to one of my Hotmail accounts (one where I'd actually bothered to build a "Contacts" list), I exported that list into a CSV file. (Comma Separated Variables, a special type of plain text data file that's very useful in both Spreadsheets and Database Managers). That gave me a format to copy John's database file into; and what a wacky format it was. Only three of the fields actually contained data. Field B contained the First Name, Field D contained the Last Name, and Field AU contained the E-mail Address. Do the math. That's *forty-two* blank columns between the Last Name and the E-mail Address. Opening John's file in the appropriate program, I saved a copy of it as a CSV file; and I added, deleted and re-arranged the columns until the First Name, Last Name and E-mail Address were in B, D, and AU, respectively. Then, I imported

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John's whole list into my special new club Hotmail account. Wonder of wonders, it actually worked.

I sent out my first test e-mail even before the Supplement was completely done (on June 25th at 4:43 AM), just to get a general idea of what it would look like. On June 29th at 2:04 PM, I sent out my second test. I thought it looked good to go. Unfortunately, as you'll see in a minute, I forgot something. Back on June 25th, I had sent messages to several club members, requesting comments and suggestions. To give them as much time as possible to respond, I put off doing anything more for as long as I could. So it wasn't until June 30th at 1:13 AM that I sent out what I assumed would be my third and final test message (to another of my Hotmail accounts). *That's* when I found out that my hyperlinks *didn't work*.

Fortunately, four of the links in the Supplement were just there for reference purposes, so I didn't really care if they actually worked or not. (Though it would have been nice if they had). However, the link in the Planning Meeting announcement was *important!* It led to information that a person wanting to attend would *need* to know. So I gave up on the other links, and concentrated on getting Hotmail to send just that one link in working order.

Now, there's another thing you need to know about Hotmail. After sending a message, you can click the browser's Back Arrow once to return to the New Message window. There, you can erase the old recipient, stick in a new recipient, and send the same message out over and over again. However, if you don't want to lose the message, you have to save it as a draft before you log out of the account. When sending test messages from one account to another (thus having to alternately log into and then out of each account), this can quickly become a big pain.

For test four, I re-cut-and-pasted just the Planning Meeting hyperlink from the word processor document into the master e-mail. Then, I decided to get tricky. In Firefox, I opened a second tab, and opened my second Hotmail account there. Then I went back to the first tab and sent the corrected Supplement to the second account. After the message was sent, I saw the same Inbox in both tabs. After popping back and forth several times to be absolutely sure, I theorized that Hotmail had interfered with itself somehow. So I logged out of Hotmail in both tabs, shut down Firefox, and (just to be extra safe) re-booted my computer.

After logging in to the target Hotmail account again, I couldn't find the test four message in that account's Inbox. Logging out and then logging in to the source Hotmail account, I couldn't find the Cc copy (that I usually send to myself) in that Inbox. Furthermore, the message wasn't in the source account's Sent folder, either. Test four had just disappeared. As far as either Hotmail account was concerned, it had never even existed. (Cue the "Twilight Zone" music). So much for my tedium-eliminating short-cut.

In my original version, the Planning Meeting link was located inside a sentence; "See www.acgnj.org/pm/pma.html for further information and for instructions on how to RSVP." Now, that *looks* like a working link; but nothing I did then would

make Hotmail transmit it as a live link. For test five, at 1:25 AM, I tried a small change. I added "http://", to the *already* known-good link in the word processor document, then cut-and-pasted it directly back into the outgoing e-mail. It *still* didn't work.

For test six, at 1:52 AM, I re-arranged the sentence as "For further information, and for instructions on how to RSVP, see:"; and hit Enter to give the link its own line:

<http://www.acgnj.org/pm/pma.html>

Then (after being re-cut-and-pasted back into the master e-mail), it worked. So, I had a work-around for my newly discovered problem with Hotmail. I didn't know exactly *what* I was working around, or *why* I had to work around it; but at least I could proceed. At 2:23 AM, I sent myself my own "official" copy, re-read it for a final clarity check, and tested the link again. (It worked). So I went into "production", sending out the first member copy at 2:28 AM on June 30th, 2008.

More Woes

I sent out the second member copy at 2:29 AM, the third also at 2:29, the fourth at 2:30, the fifth at 2:31, and the sixth at 2:32. Then, Hotmail threw me another curve. It popped up the first of what would prove to be many CAPTCHA screens; telling me to type in the eight distorted characters to prove that I was a real human being, and not some kind of spam producing robot. (For you trivia buffs, that's "Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart").

After passing that test, I got in seven more transmissions before hitting the next CAPTCHA. Then another six before hitting the third. Thereafter, I got another CAPTCHA every six or seven e-mails until my 45th, at 3:17 AM. After that, I got a message stating that my account had been blocked from sending out any further e-mails. The message contained a link, and stated that I should click on it if I disagreed with that decision. I followed that link, and was taken to several pages of rules, but *nowhere* did they give any means for overturning their decision. Typical of Microsoft, to provide a link suggesting that there might be a solution; then to throw up a ton of twisted verbiage but *no* actual means of fixing the problem. As you'll see further below, there actually *was* a solution that they could have presented. They just didn't bother to list it.

After metaphorically banging my head against the wall for a while, I concluded that the only thing left for me to do was to open yet another Hotmail account. So I did. Then, I re-imported my Contact list and continued from there. Since I had to re-construct the master e-mail for the new account, I first sent another test message to myself, at 4:20 AM. Everything looked good and the link worked, so I went back into production at 4:28. I sent out six messages, got a CAPTCHA. I sent out seven more, got another CAPTCHA. Then, I sent out just two more messages before being blocked again (at 5:06 AM). After sending only *fifteen* e-mails! What was going on?

Rather than open yet another account, I took a break. (If a new account could get blocked so quickly, what would be the point?) Eventually, looking in my Inbox, I saw that I had four

Continued

Your Next Computer Will Be Green

Marjie Tucker (mcug(at)dnet.net), Mountain Computer User Group, GA, www.mcug.org

With Europe leading the way, the computer industry is decidedly becoming “green.” The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (ROHS) directives went into effect earlier this year.

These two directives state that certain electrical and electronic equipment must cut down on hazardous materials such as lead, mercury, and cadmium. They also give customers the right to return their equipment free of charge. Companies have several years to fully implement these directives, but the leaders have already started to make changes.

Dell, for example, is advertising Energy Smart workstations and notebooks that can reduce power consumption by as much as 78%. The Energy Smart configuration uses a default power setting that is designed to reduce consumption and energy costs right out of the box. In addition, the power supply, fan, and motherboard use significantly less energy to maintain cool internal temperatures.

HP is using 80 Plus power supplies to lower energy bills and AMD technology that reduces heat output and PC power consumption. In addition, they have already introduced an

Continued on page 21

Much Ado About Summer, *continued*

“Delivery Status Notification (Failure)” messages. Curious to see which e-mail addresses had gone bad, I opened and read each one. Afterwards, I noticed that Hotmail’s blocking message had disappeared. It seems that just reading those messages was enough to prove to Hotmail that I was, in fact, a real live person after all. (I *hadn’t* deleted them. They were just no longer marked as unread). So, at 5:42 AM, I went back into production.

At 5:46, after just six messages, I got blocked again. Now knowing to go directly to my Inbox, I saw just two Failure messages. Steamed at this account, I logged out and went back into to the first club account. Going into its Inbox, I saw *eleven* Failures. Quickly, I read them all. Checking the times, I saw that three of them had come in after the account had been blocked; but still, that left eight messages for that account against four and then two for the other. Figuring that the first account might be more “tolerant”, I retrieved the draft of the Supplement that I’d saved there, and sent it out to the next member on the list at 5:59 AM.

Naturally, at that point, Hotmail hit me with another “gotcha”: a message saying that I’d reached the maximum permissible messages per twenty-four hour period. Counting that one last Supplement, the forty-five previous member copies, my own copy, and the three test messages starting at 1:13 AM (but *not* the message that had vanished into the Binary-muda Triangle); I got a limit of fifty messages per “day”. Something else Hotmail never told me. So I went back into the second account and slogged my way through to the end. With no more surprises, it didn’t take that much longer. I finished at 6:26 AM on June 30th. Total elapsed time: five hours and thirteen minutes. Total bad e-mail addresses: 23. (The last Failure message didn’t come in until 10:06 AM).

As for the results of my survey: The response was sparser than I would have liked. However, of those who did reply, a clear majority favored us sending a small monthly e-mail to our members, containing any last minute schedule changes, plus a link to our latest newsletter.

Enough, Already

Well, most of that took place on just *one* morning. What other club stuff did I do for the rest of the summer? Well, I’m Chairman of our By-Law Revision Committee, so I spent a lot of time “running around in circles” over that. Then, I sent out another all-member e-mail: a “Last Minute Reminder” about the August 21st Planning Meeting.

Now, I’ve been experimenting with using Mozilla Thunderbird as my e-mail client, but I still hadn’t mastered it when it became clear that the message couldn’t wait any longer. So I used Hotmail again. I’d already deleted the 23 bad addresses, and added all the new ones I could find; but this time, instead of sending out individual messages, I broke down the list into groups of twenty. (My selection of the number twenty was arbitrary, but it worked quite well, so I’m keeping it). Plus, for security, I created a “dummy recipient”: all.acgnj@hotmail.com. Spammers and such, take note. This address does *not* forward messages to every member of the club. It just goes to a single Hotmail account that *only* I will *ever* look at. If it starts getting spam, I’ll just close it.

What I did was put the dummy recipient in the “To:” field. Then, I put the name of the group containing the *real* recipients in the “Bcc” (Blind carbon copy) field. This way, all twenty messages got sent out, but none of the group’s addresses were included in those messages. In addition, I got another (unexpected) result. I sent out my first test message at 1:16 AM (eerily close to my previous start time). This message was a lot smaller, and contained just one link; but it was the exact same *important* link as last time. Fortunately, it tested good on the first shot. I sent out the first “production” message at 1:21 AM, expecting to spend several hours on the job. I sent out the *last* message at 1:24 AM. *Less* than four minutes later. This time, when I was actually acting more like a real spammer by sending out multiple messages at the same time, Hotmail never complained once. Count on Microsoft to include Draconian intrusions that react to penalize an innocent user, yet *don’t* react *at all* to a more realistic menace.

Unfortunately, only about a month and a half later, another five e-mail addresses sent back Failure messages. In addition, one address sent back a Mailbox Full message. I didn’t even know that there was such a thing.

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.

June: The subject was a discussion about graphics in Visual Studio. The object of the application is to represent graphically a pair of Dice and "roll" them to create random numbers. This can then be used in any game requiring the throw of a pair of dice. The program demonstrates taking a graphic drawing of a "dot" and placing it in multiple locations on the screen. It uses a new .NET tool or function called TableLayoutPanel Class. The other major items used in this application are the Random Class for generating a random throw and the Timer Class for sequencing the display.

Our [download site](#) has code and programs from most meetings.

Our next meeting September 16. ☞

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.

September 19: Dynamic Web Sites (JavaScript, Ajax, database driven), Mike Redlich

October 17: Creating Macros to Automate Routine Tasks in Excel and Word Paul Natanson ☞

Main Meeting

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

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

September 5: Introduction to C Programming, Bruce Arnold

October 3: Firefox (Any Topic), David McRitchie ☞

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. **No meeting September 1, next meeting October 6.** ☞

Web Dev

Evan Williams (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-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 languages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola-MAC etc.

Our next meeting September 10. ☞

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.

There are no concrete plans for a special project this year. If you have a suggestion for a project or if you have been working on something that you would like to share with the group for feedback or help, please let me know. We can even work on something new as a group.

Our next meeting September 9. ☞

DotNet

Manuel J Goyenechea

The .NET SIG leader is in the process of relocating to a new job in California as a result this SIG has stopped meeting. ☞

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: September 11. ☞

Your Next Computer Will Be Green, *Continued from page 1*

HP recycling program where you can trade-in or donate the products.

Government Initiatives Many U.S. government agencies have implemented standards and regulations to encourage green computing. The Environmental Protection Agency launched an Energy Star program in 1992 and strengthened its requirements in 2006. In 2003 the California State Senate enacted the Electronic Waste Recycling Act and in 2007 President Bush issued Executive Order 13423 requiring all federal agencies to use the Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool when purchasing computer systems. In addition, a global consortium called The Green Grid was founded in 2007 by AMD, APC, Dell, HP, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Rackable Systems, SprayCool, Sun and VMware.

Another initiative formed by a group of Global-minded IT executives, the Green Computing Impact Organization (GCIO), was created to be an active participant in transforming the IT community from an environmental liability to an Earth conscious example of responsibility. GCIO is a nonprofit organization that is based on environmental audit programs for consumers and small business homes with respect to general energy-efficiency programs (including lighting, heating, insulation, etc.). GCIO's mission is to educate and assist enterprise technology users in the design of environmentally aware and responsible information system operations. They help consumers become more environmentally responsible by reducing energy consumption and electronic waste in an effort to protect the Earth.

GCIO is sponsoring educational programs across the country and participating in a Green Computing Summit that will be

held in Washington, DC on May 20th. The summit will address how public sector IT managers, procurement officials, and program managers public sector professionals can transform their IT and data center operations into more environmentally conscious yet efficient solutions. This conference will attract senior government IT professionals and their industry partners tasked with helping agencies become greener in the coming years. Attendees will represent federal, state and local governments, public policy organizations and suppliers to government. You can read more about this event at www.e-gov.com/EventOverview.aspx?Event=SGCS08.

Features of Green Computing

Power management is the most popular method. The operating system of the computer can be set to directly control the power saving aspects of the hardware. It can automatically turn off the monitor or hard drive after a period of inactivity. Or, the entire system may hibernate, turning off most of the components such as even allow the user to manually adjust the voltages supplied to the CPU to reduce the electricity consumption and the amount of heat that is produced. As of July of 2007, all new Energy Star certified desktops must have a power supply that is at least 80% efficient.

Other features include using motherboard video output instead of a video card, hard disks that consume less power, flash based solid state drives that require fewer write cycles, and lower energy monitors. And, manufacturers of networking equipment are developing switches and routers that reduce energy costs.

Continued on page 22

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)

The mobile devices SIG focuses on the ins and outs of the mobile devices you carry everyday. We discuss ways to enhance your phone experience by adding new capabilities, modifying ROMs on the phone to make it faster, and solve problems with your device. The Mobile Devices SIG focuses on Windows Mobile, due largely to the flexibility in Windows Mobile and the ability to select from a wide application base. However, if you bring your RAZR, or any other phone with questions on usage or available features, we are always happy to help! If you ever had any questions, or want to enter the realm of mobile phone enhancing, these meetings are for you.

Our next meeting September 17 ☐

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. **Our next meeting September 15.** ☐

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

<http://www.NJGamers.com>

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be September 12, 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:

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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.

	US/CANADA	FAMILY OF MEMBER (No Newsletter)	Dues	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

FREE TO MEMBERS. Use our classified ads to sell off your surplus computer stuff. Send copy to Classified, ACGNJ NEWS, P.O. Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076 or e-mail to the editor, bdegroot@ptd.net. Classified ads are free to members, one per issue. Non-members pay \$10. Send check payable to ACGNJ Inc. with copy. Reasonable length, please.



<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.

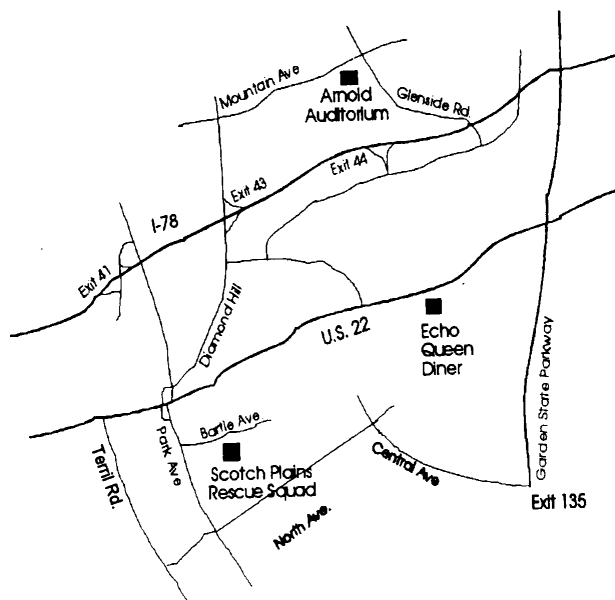
On Computers, WCTC 1450 AM, New Brunswick, Sunday
1-4 p.m. To ask questions call (800) 677-0874.

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/>

Sep 27 & 28, 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. ☐

Recycling Materials

Obsolete computers can be reused for charities, non-profit organizations, and developing countries. Parts from really old systems can be recycled through some recycling centers. Some recycling charges can be passed back to the manufacturers.

Recycling this equipment keeps the lead, mercury, and chromium out of our landfills. In addition, computer supplies such as cartridges, paper, and batteries can be easily recycled.

How Can We Work Greener?

Visit the website for Climate Savers Smart Computing at <http://www.climatesaverscomputing.org/> to view a three step program to go green. Here are the basic steps that they suggest:

Step One - Turn on Power Management. Since the average desktop PC wastes nearly 50% of the energy it consumes as heat, it makes sense to use the power management features that are built into Windows XP and Vista. The benefits? You will reduce your electricity bills and your energy footprint will be lowered as you reduce your greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Savers organization predicts that the power management features on your computer can save nearly have a ton of CO₂ and more than \$60 a year in energy costs.

Step Two - Buy an energy efficient computer. Energy Star, the program designed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, specifies the standards that equipment and appliances must meet to wear the Energy Star badge. You can visit their website at www.energystar.org for specifics. Basically an Energy Star compliant PC uses 15 to 25 percent less energy. This program is expected to save U.S. consumers and businesses more than \$1.8 billion in energy costs over the next

five years and prevent greenhouse gas emission equal to 2.7 million vehicles.

Step Three – Unplug from phantom power. As long as your computer is plugged in it still uses electricity, even while it is turned off or in standby mode. A computer that is turned off, but still plugged in, can use up to 10 watts. The Climate Savers estimate that you can reduce your electricity bills by as much as 10% by unplugging your appliances and electronics when they're not being used.

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ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Tuesday, September 2, 2008

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, September 5

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

Monday, September 8

8 P.M. - Layman's Forum, Matt Skoda (som359@aol.com), 908-359-8842. No meetings in July or August.

Tuesday, September 9

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

Wednesday, September 10

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

Thursday, September 11

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

Friday, September 12

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

Monday, September 15

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

Tuesday, September 16

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

Wednesday, September 17

7:30 P.M. - Mobile Devices, David Eisen Thursday,

Friday, September 19

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

Tuesday, September 30

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Monday, October 6

8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (lunics@acgnj.org) ☐

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

Don't Miss Smart Computing!



Finally, the plain-English computing resource you've been looking for!



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— Customer Service

— Online Tech Support Center

Amateur Computer Club of New Jersey

Friday, September 15th, 7:00 PM

Scotch Plains Rescue Squad

Smart Computing
In Plain English