Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey **NEWS**

Election and Business Meeting Report

Photo by L. Thomas

Newly elected board members and officers (L to R): Malthi Masurekar, Bob Hawes, Seery Syers, John Raff, Paul Syers

http://www.acgnj.org

Founded 1975

Trenton Computer Festival

TCF coming next spring. Mark the date -

April 24th and 25th, 2010.

Tell all your family, neighbors, friends and co-workers.

Opening

The meeting was called to order with an official quorum. In the absence of President Mike Redlich, Vice-President Paul Syers presided. Altogether, sixteen members were in attendance.

Election

The election slate was presented:

Officers

President	Paul Syers
Vice-President	Evan Williams
Secretary	Seery Syers
Treasurer	Malthi Masurekar

Directors (through 2011)

Gregg McCarthy
Arnold Milstein
John Raff
Bob Hawes

Nominations from the floor were requested; but none were made. Therefore, since all eight candidates were unopposed, a motion was made to elect them by voice vote. It was seconded and approved.

With this motion carried, the elections were closed. (See messages from Mike and Paul on page 14)

Awards

For 2009, the Board of Directors had approved eight Long-Term Meritorious Service Awards; but only two of the recipients were present. Therefore, Bob Hawes presented framed certificates to John Raff and Frank Warren (see photos on page 3).

A Constitutional Question

While in the process of converting our *only* copy of the December 200**1** Constitution (which has been posted on the Internet for the last eight years) into a permanent his-

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In This Issue

Officers, Directors and Leaders

Officers			Board of Directors		
President	Paul Syers		Director Emeritus	Sol Libes	(609) 520-9024
Vice President	Evan Williams	(908) 359-8070	Through 2011	Gregg McCarthy	
Treasurer	Malthi Masurekar	(732) 560-1534		Arnold Milstein	(908) 753-8036
Secretary	Seery Syers			John Raff	(973) 992-9002
Past President	Mike Redlich	(908) 246-0410		Bob Hawes	
			Through 2010	David McRitchie	
Special Interest Groups				Don McBride	(732) 560-0369
C Languages	Bruce Arnold	(908) 735-7898		Bill Farrell	(732) 572-3481
Firefox Activity	David McRitchie			Lenny Thomas	
Genealogy	Frank Warren	(908) 756-1681	**Standing Committees**		
Hardware	Mike Reagan		APCUG Rep.	Frank Warren	(908) 756-1681
Investing	Jim Cooper		Facilities	John Raff	(973) 992-9002
Java	Michael Redlich		Financial	Evan Williams	(908) 359-8070
Layman's Forum	Matthew Skoda	(908) 359-8842	Historian	Lenny Thomas	
LUNICS	Andreas Meyer		Membership	open	
NJ Gamers	Gregg McCarthy		Newsletter	Bob Hawes	
WebDev	Evan Williams	(908) 359-8070	Publicity	Gregg McCarthy	
Window Pains	John Raff	(973) 992-9002	Trenton ComputerFest	Mike Redlich	(908) 246-0410
			Vendor Liaison	Arnold Milstein	(908) 753-8036
			Webmaster	John Raff	(973) 992-9002

ACGNJ News

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

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

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

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Address Changes should be emailed to *membership@acgnj.org* or sent to ACGNJ at the address below.

Membership, including subscription: 1 year $25, 2 years $40, 3 years $55. Additional family members: $10 each per year. Student : 1 year $20. Senior citizen (over 65) 1 year $20, 3 years $45. Send your name, address and payment to ACGNJ, PO Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076.

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

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

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Frank Warren	kb4cyc@webwarren.com
Evan Williams	ewilliams@collaboron.com

torical reference document, Bob Hawes discovered a typo. In the first sentence of Article IV, Section III, the term "Vice President" was written as "Vice. President". Bob felt he had sufficient evidence to show that this was an after-the-fact transcription error, and had *not* accidentally been voted upon and adopted as part of the December 2001 amendments. However, to be on the safe side, he presented the problem to the full membership. A motion to authorize correction was made, seconded and passed. (Note that in our December 200**8** amendments, we changed all instances of "Vice President" to "Vice-President"; but this *predates* those revisions, so it should stay as "Vice President").

Finally, a motion to adjourn the Annual Business Meeting was made and passed.

Main Meeting Presentation

Following the Election and Business Meeting, Mark Streitman spoke about "Building your own Home Theater". His topics included Digital TV, sound systems, projectors and other electronics, various types of DVRs, computers, software, and how to put them all together. He covered ambiance (furniture and wall decorations, from the comfortably cheap to the ridiculously expensive). He highlighted both Windows based systems such as Microsoft Media Center and Linux based systems such as Mythbuntu (a combination of Ubuntu and MythTV). He mentioned Internet services such as YouTube, Hulu and TV.com, and he examined displays (LCD, etc.) and screens (some of which can actually be *painted* directly on the wall). It was an entertaining and educational show. 🖳

Awards at December Main Meeting

At our Annual Business Meeting on December 4th, the ACGNJ Board of Directors presented eight Long-Term Meritorious Service Awards for 2009. Six were Decade-Plus Awards, in recognition of service to the club for more than ten years. They were given to Mike Barlow (16 years), Jim Ditaranto (17 years), Sheldon Koepf (15 years), Andreas Meyer (13 years), Scott Vincent (three simultaneous positions, 17 years, 15 years and 15 years, for a total of 47 years) and Frank Warren (three simultaneous positions, 13 years, 10 years and 9 years, for a total of 32 years). The seventh was a Double-Decade Award to Bruce Arnold (20 years); and the eighth was a Quadruple Whammy Award to John Raff (*four* simultaneous positions, 15 years, 15 years, 12 years and 12 years, for a grand total of *54* years). John (below left) and Frank (below right) were in attendance, so Bob Hawes presented them with their framed certificates personally. At right is a representative sample of the certificates. 🖳
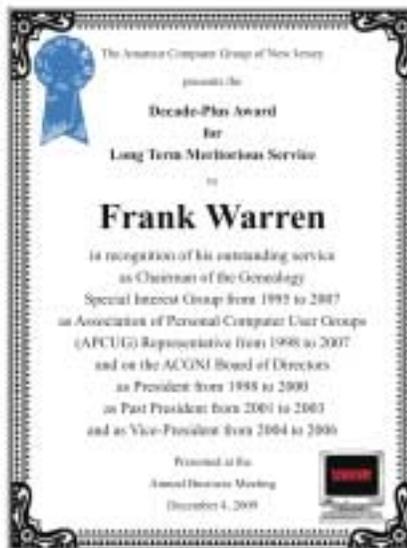
Photo by L. Thomas

Photo by W. DeGroot

Twelve

Bob Hawes (bob.hawes@acgnj.org)

In terms of computer use, 2009 was a significant year for me. Therefore, I've got a tale to tell; but what should I call such a year-in-review article? In the past, I've often gone for a "twist" on somebody else's work.

So: I've had an on-again, off-again relationship with the TV show "24". I like its concept. (Each week's hour-long episode details one hour in real time out of a single 24-hour day). I haven't always liked what the producers have done with that concept, though. They've gone to some extreme and downright wacky lengths on occasion; but in my opinion they've missed a situation that (given good writing, which they usually have) could be played for suspense, for comic relief, or for *both*.

In the first episode, I'd like to see them put one of their characters on board a non-stop flight from Australia to the US. Thus, that character would be stuck on that airplane for most (if not all) of the TV season, unable to do anything but talk on the phone or telecommute over the Internet via laptop computer. Meanwhile, all of the other characters would be out there fighting to save the world. Talk about frustration; but perhaps, somehow, that character could swoop in at the last minute and save the day. Maybe, now that I've published my idea for all the world to see, one of the "24" producers will notice it and steal it. That would be only fair, since here I've ripped off *their* title to get mine.

Anyway, in this article I'll be recapping my previous articles for the past twelve months, highlighting how my computer interests evolved over that interval. In our January 2009 issue, I had **three** bylines. On page 1, *Election and Business Meeting Report* is credited to both Paul Syers and Bob Hawes. In this case, I don't really think of myself as a co-author, since I didn't actually **create** anything. What I did was copy Paul's minutes from the December 5th Main Meeting, then re-edit them into a newsletter article. (This was Paul's last month as Secretary. At that same meeting, he was elected Vice-President for 2009). Next, on page 3, there's *A Solstice Party*; my short (464 word) report on the later part of that meeting (**after** the events recounted by Paul). That night was the first ACGNJ event that I volunteered to host; and on the whole, I was pleased with the results. (Though it's true that some things didn't go quite as well as I'd hoped). While those two articles really don't have anything to do with computer use, they **were** published in 2009. So even though they don't fit my theme, I'm briefly mentioning them here.

Then, we come to page 4, and *Cut It Out* (my "regular" January article). In it, I investigated a "new" feature that one of our members had "discovered". In a PDF file on the Internet, he highlighted text, copied it into the clipboard, and then pasted it into a new file that he'd created. I was

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flabbergasted. I'd always thought that paying Adobe enormous piles of money for the full version of Acrobat was the only way to get any information out of a PDF file; and by believing that, I'd become the victim of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because I assumed that I couldn't copy information out of a PDF file, I never even looked to see if I could. So I did some tests. Since I don't trust the "phone home" capabilities of any newer Adobe PDF readers, I looked at three older versions (5.0, 6.0 and 7.0), as well as the then-current release of Foxit Reader (2.3). With a few caveats, all my tests were successful. For further details, please refer to *Cut It Out* itself. For the purpose of this article, the thing to note is that **all** of my tests were performed under either Windows 98SE or XP.

In *Get It Right* (my February 2009 article), I apologized to the manufacturers of Foxit PDF Reader for a mistaken criticism that I'd made (in *Cut It Out*) of another of their products (Foxit PDF Editor 2.0). Then, I made further comparisons of various Adobe and Foxit products, leading up to my conclusion: "Right now, it's my opinion that Foxit does them better". (As before, please refer to *Get It Right* itself for further details). For the purpose of this article, the thing to note is my next-to-last sentence: "Though, to be fair, I haven't yet checked out any open-source or Linux programs".

In *OS Wars: The Penguin Strikes Back* (my March 2009 article), I tested three Linux PDF readers: Evince, KPDF and Okular. In fairness, I also broke down and tested Adobe Reader 9. (At the time, that was the latest release. I **wasn't** impressed). Again, please refer to *OS Wars: The Penguin Strikes Back* for further details. So as not to "contaminate" my regular XP system, I installed Adobe Reader 9 on a special "throw away" Windows installation that I made by restoring an old backup image to an empty hard disk. Then, when I was done, I wiped out that disk completely.

For Linux, I didn't work from a hard disk at all. I booted entirely from CDs. KPDF was already installed on a recent favorite: Slax 6.0.7 (a May 2008 download). To test Evince and Okular, I used a current Ubuntu live-CD. Evince came pre-installed, but I had to download Okular from the Internet. As I did so, the following thought occurred to me (quoting myself from *OS Wars: The Penguin Strikes Back*); "Here I am, downloading more than **forty** interdependent component files from the Internet, and installing them into an operating system that **doesn't really exist**. At least not physically, because **nothing** can be written to the closed-session live-CD that I booted from. Virtualization technology has sure come a long way." That **was**, in fact, amazing; but for the purpose of this article, the thing to note is my conclusion: "So Foxit Reader can breathe easier. It's

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still my recommended Windows PDF Reader. (At least for now). Okular, however, is the new heavyweight champ; and the new standard for all future comparisons".

Next, after years of just dabbling with Linux, I finally made the break. In *Moving into the Future*, my article in our Special TCF Edition 2009 (that's what we called our April 2009 issue), I described how I modified my "main" computer to use three separate hard disks enclosed in three removable drawers: a 320 GB data drawer, a 20 GB XP SP2 drawer, and a 40 GB Kubuntu drawer. (Kubuntu is Ubuntu with the KDE desktop environment pre-installed). The idea was that the two Operating System drawers could be swapped as necessary, and that the data drawer could be accessed by either OS. The goal was to use the Kubuntu drawer as much as possible and the XP drawer as little as possible (preferably *never*). Note: I downloaded my first Windows version of OpenOffice.org two years previously, in April of 200**7**; but I didn't actually transfer *all* of my word processing activities there until April of 200**8**. Thus, when switching to Kubuntu, I *already* had a year's experience using OpenOffice.org (even considering that first year's delay). The fact that I was now doing all my work *exclusively* on a Linux version made *no* difference at all.

In *Thirteen Things?* (my May 2009 article), I explained why I converted my new Kubuntu installation to "pure" Ubuntu. My title came from "13 Things to do immediately

after installing Ubuntu", an article written by Ambuj Varshney and posted on the Internet in February of 2007. After installing only about half of those thirteen things, I proceeded to install my own personal "punch list", plus a few other things. (Please consider reading *Thirteen Things?* if you haven't already done so. In my opinion, at least, there are a lot of interesting "further details" there). However, even as I was installing Ubuntu, I knew that, like its predecessor, this installation wouldn't last very long. The next non-beta release of Ubuntu was scheduled for just *two days* before that newsletter's deadline. That *wouldn't* have given me enough time to create an acceptable article, so I had to go with an older version. Now in theory, because I'm the Newsletter Committee Chairman, I could have granted myself an extended deadline. In practice, that *wasn't* an option. ACGNJ News is published on a *very* tight schedule. For that issue, there were only *five* days between my (and everybody else's) submission deadline and Barbara's (our editor) publication deadline. Cutting her time any shorter, merely for my own convenience, was out of the question.

In *Two Days in May* (my June 2009 article), I described the second *and third* ACGNJ meetings that I volunteered to host. At the May 1ˢᵗ Main Meeting, we scheduled another vote, to accept or reject *more* amendments to our By-Laws (made at the suggestion of our attorney). I had some technical difficulties at first, which (of course) amused

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everybody *except* me. After the vote, I hosted another "ice cream cake and videos" party. The ice cream cake went over well again; and I showed a pair of shorter and more educational videos concerning the 5th Amendment. (I didn't bother making coffee this time). If you missed those videos, or if you want to see them again, there are links in *Two Days in May*. In my opinion, this is such an important (and well done) subject that *everybody* should watch them at least once.

I had even more technical difficulties at the May 15ᵗʰ Window Pains Meeting. My topic was *Installing and Using Ubuntu 9.04*, and when I set up the demonstration computer that I'd brought from home for the meeting, it just flat out *refused* to boot! I had to use the official club computer as a last-minute substitute. So I disconnected the club's hard disks, replaced them with my own, and finally began my presentation (only an hour and a quarter late). Quoting myself from *Two Days in May*; "If my topic had been *Installing and Using Windows Whatever*, I'd have been 'dead in the water'. Because if I'd installed any of Microsoft's NT family of operating systems (that's everything *except* Windows 95, 98 and ME) onto a hard disk connected to one computer, then moved that hard disk to a different (*non*-identical) computer, Windows would have bombed. You just can't do stuff like that with MS. Linux, it

seems, is much more versatile". (For further amusing and/or horrifying details, please refer to *Two Days in May*).

In July and August of 2009, for the first time this century, we published two summer issues of ACGNJ News (written totally by me). I had three purposes for those issues: First, to advertise the club's schedule of summer activities. Second, to provide permanent reference copies of the club's latest Constitution (in July) and By-Laws (in August). Third, to try out my new experimental "two column/half page" layout, to see if it looked as good in real life as it appeared in my imagination. (It *did*; and Barbara thought so too. With a few minor alterations, she's been using it from our September 2009 issue onward).

Now, you may be wondering why I didn't go into further detail about the contents of those July and August issues. That's because my *next* article (in our September 2009 issue) was *July and August Revisited*, in which I "dug into" the construction of my two summer issues in *excruciating* detail. Just about everything anybody could ever want to know about newsletter article construction is in that article, plus *five* appendices, containing fan mail from an influential reader and lots of other stuff. You want minutia? Read *July and August Revisited*.

In my last three articles for 2009, I tested hard disk imaging programs. In *Something Spooky?* (my October "Halloween

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Episode"), I began by testing the Linux programs Clonezilla and Partimage. Then, in *New Blood* (in our November issue), I tested TeraByte Unlimited's Image for Linux and Image for DOS. (That's right! Somebody out there is still actively developing a DOS program). Finally, in *Wrap It Up* (my December article), I tested the Linux program FSArchiver; and then tied up a few loose ends involving Image for DOS. My conclusions: *None* of them meets my needs completely. Clonezilla can be depended upon to do continuous *same-size* backup and restore operations perfectly; but Clonezilla *can't* change hard disk sizes, and doesn't seem to have any plans to change this behavior. (It's listed in their documentation as if it were a *good* thing). Either Image for DOS or Image for Linux can also be depended upon to do same-size operations. Furthermore, they're working on size-changing capabilities. They just haven't succeeded yet. While TeraByte's long-term objectives seem to be the best fit to my own needs, their products are non-free proprietary programs. So I won't actually be *paying* for them until they do everything *exactly* the way I want. For now, in situations where I can't use my previous "go-to guy" (good old Ghost for DOS), I'll have to make do with Clonezilla.

Also in *Something Spooky?*, I briefly recounted the fourth and fifth ACGNJ meetings that I hosted. Because it was Halloween Season, I described how the Gremlins "got" me

at each meeting; but I actually *forgot* to mention the *topics* of those meetings. For our June 5th, 2009 Main Meeting, my topic was *Using Scribus to Create a Newsletter*. As part of my demonstration, I began constructing my actual July 2009 newsletter, using Scribus (the fun, fabulous and FREE desktop publisher) running on an Ubuntu 9.04 computer. However, I didn't get as far along as I'd hoped. For our June 19th Window Pains Meeting, I did a *Cool/Useful/Fun Web Sites* presentation, which (once I managed to get started) ran rather smoothly. Please refer to *Something Spooky?* if you want to find out exactly *what* the Gremlins did to me each time.

Now we get into new (that is, previously unpublished) territory. Due to its proximity to the Labor Day weekend, our Main Meeting on September 4th, 2009 was canceled. Then, at the *very* last minute, the scheduled speaker for our September 18th Window Pains Meeting dropped out. With just *one* day's notice, I stepped in and hosted my sixth meeting, an *End of Summer/Welcome Back Party*, serving ice cream cake and showing videos. I had one main video and two reserves in mind (*all* on the Internet). My main selection was the *Computer Chronicles Gary Kildall Tribute*. Unfortunately, due to slow download speed, the picture kept hanging up; and (because of the absolute ingeniousness of the HD video design) when the picture freezes, you loose the sound as well. Since we had switched to Verizon FIOS

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only about a week before, this speed problem was a *big* disappointment. After we got through that, I had a different problem with my two reserve selections. I was working from the club computer, and for some reason I can't explain, *neither* of them would switch to full-screen mode (as they'd *both* done on my home computer). At least the ice cream cake still went over big. If we ever do this again, I'm going to stick to videos that have previously been transferred to CD or DVD.

I was already scheduled to be the speaker at our October 2nd Main Meeting. My topic for my seventh ACGNJ lecture was *More About Scribus, the free Desktop Publisher*. I planned to pick up where I'd left off on my June 5th Scribus presentation; and that's what I did. Things went pretty well, too. Until, that is, I got to what was supposed to be my big finish. There, the Gremlins got me again. Now, Scribus can place various elements on its pages to within one *ten-thousandth* of an inch. I thought I'd use this amazing feature as my "closer". However, when you're working by yourself, you can get into "the zone", and become really interested in positioning and repositioning your stuff until everything is absolutely perfect; but if you try to demonstrate this to an audience, you'll find that it becomes *mind-numbingly boring* for all concerned (including you). Well, you live and you learn; and you try to avoid those pesky Gremlins.

If you've been keeping track, you may have noticed that from our May 1st Main Meeting to our October 2nd Main Meeting, I was the featured speaker *six times in a row!* Now, I don't have any hard data to back me up here (not yet, anyway); but I'm sure this must be some kind of club record. Also, in the period from April 18th (one day *after* our April 17th Window Pains Meeting) to October 15th (one day *before* our October 16th Window Pains Meeting), I was the *only* speaker at any of the club's "speaker" meetings. That's just three days less than *six months!* Another club record?

We'll close with an "attitude" overview: When 2009 started, I was excited about Foxit Reader, a new PDF viewer that ran under Windows. When 2009 ended, I was interested in Image for DOS and Image for Linux, two new *non*-Windows programs from TeraByte. However, there was also a third program, Image for Windows. I didn't even bother looking at it. I don't have either the time or the stamina to do everything; and I'm *absolutely* fed-up with Microsoft. In the future, while I may give voice to an occasional rant about their numerous transgressions, I don't intend to waste much of my limited resources investigating Windows products. As Walter Cronkite used to say; "That's the way it is".

See you next month. 💻

From The DealsGuy

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

*Problems Never Cease

A while back, I mentioned my lightning strike and replacing my damaged router with a new one by D-Link. I'm told that D-Link has many glowing reviews, but my experience has been just the opposite. It stops working whenever it feels like it and if I switch the Ethernet cable from the router directly into the modem without rebooting either the modem or the computer, the computer accesses the Internet OK, and faster than it did before. When I get the router running again, my network connected printer no longer prints and I have to get Ricoh's help to reconfigure the IP addresses so my printer works. The Ricoh techs have been great. I've tried reconfiguring the printer using the printer's manual, but have not mastered working with IP addresses. The D-Link router tech support leaves a lot to be desired; in fact, they sometimes brush you off whether they get the router working or not, and they're sometimes hard to understand. Once they advised me to upgrade the firmware and quickly got rid of me. Updating the firmware didn't help.

Last week that router quit working twice and I decided I'd had enough of that piece of junk, so I bought another router on sale, but this one is a Netgear, as was my last one, which worked great for a couple of years, until the lightning strike. The Netgear has a disk to help set it up (so did the

D-Link) and this Netgear is working fine, but my printer again had to be reconfigured. I'll see if D-Link will let me return the router for them to check, but at this point, it doesn't matter to me. I've had enough of D-Link.

*Gotta Keep Those Costs Down

How many people do you know who have been let go by their employer lately, even though they might have been with them for years and have an excellent attendance and work record? Lately, I know quite a few of those people. They go to work one day only to be told that a cut is being made, and it is them. Usually the employee has been with the company the longest. I believe that's the corporate way of keeping the bonus up by getting rid of employees who are paid the most. Disregard knowledge, dependability, and experience they have for taking good care of customers. All those years of being a responsible and prudent employee mean nothing. Most of those I know had to immediately collect personal items and were escorted off the property like some kind of criminal, which doesn't make them feel good. An older person has a difficult task finding a job, unless you get lucky, and older can mean over 35 these days.

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*Time To Help Pay Back The Stimulus Loans

I'm sure there will be several articles soon about doing your income tax return free, but I'll add my two cents worth on that topic now. There are several ways to do your income tax at no cost, but my favorite is "Tax Act," *http://www.taxact.com* which has a free version and a pay version. The free version does your tax return just fine, except that it pesters you frequently about the advantages of their pay version. I used the free version the first year I tried it and it did what I needed just fine. I had already taken my data to a free preparation service and just wanted to compare the results. Tax Act actually found a mistake in the one I just had done for free.

The following year I decided to use the deluxe version (right now they are offering it to me for $12.95) because that one brings forward all of the information from your previous year's return, saving a lot of typing and possible errors. I also called their tech support a couple years ago for help with my "green" credits and had good response with it.

Also, don't forget AARP's free tax help for seniors. We really need to pay our taxes so we can repay the Chinese and keep them from repossessing the USA for nonpayment of our loan. I doubt I could learn to speak Chinese.

*This One Can Improve Your Photos

AMS Software announced release of Home Photo Studio, a new program for photo editing, creating original greeting

cards, and decorating ordinary pictures. It offers plenty of frames, tools, masks, filters, and effects (such as 3D and plastic effects). The number of effects may be confusing at first, but it offers opportunities for making every photo special. Greeting card templates can be colorful, darkish, funny, or romantic, and will help the user create a proper greeting card for any occasion. Home Photo Studio offers all necessary functions for uncomplicated photo editing.

The most popular feature, besides greeting card templates, is probably Effects&Filters that allows adding natural phenomena (such as stars, clouds, rain, snow and lightning). You can also add noise and blur, stylize a picture (ancient photo effect, pencil drawing, lithograph, etc.), adjust brightness and saturation; and make complex combinations. The user can adjust the transparence of the effects and set the area to be processed (the top, bottom, center, borders, etc.). There are a variety of picture frames.

Home Photo Studio Deluxe edition costs a bit more than Standard Edition, but is rich with extra features. It is the right variant for those who want to create 3D compositions, get automatically created collages, use plastic effects, and import PNG/Photoshop™ templates. Deluxe edition is also remarkable for it's over 100 professionally designed frames and greeting card templates.

Working with Home Photo Studio is usually trouble-free thanks to the intuitive interface. But if the user still faces a

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problem while mastering the program, the detailed Help system is ready to explain how to deal with it.

Features: (Some features are only in the Deluxe Edition)

• Support of more than 20 graphics formats;
• Convenient image explorer;
• Hundreds of filters, effects and masks;
• Fast photo enhancement and retouch;
• Creation of slideshows with smooth transition effects;
• Greeting card templates and picture frames;
• Automatic creation of collages and 3D compositions;
• Auto enhancement and red eye removal.

Home Photo Studio runs under Windows 2000/XP/Vista and 7. The Standard edition costs $39 USD and the Deluxe edition costs $59 USD. Here's a special offer for user group members. Order the Standard Edition, and then write to *ams-soft.com*. The message must include the order ID and the text "DealsGuy Special Offer." AMS Software will then ship the "Deluxe" Edition with 100 extra templates and extended functions. Further product information, as well as its free trial version, is available at *http://home-photo-studio.com/*.

Download link: *http://home-photo-studio.com/PhotoStudio.zip*

Company website: *http://ams-soft.com/*

*Some Popular Sites With Low Prices

Some of you probably know about these, but some may not. Here are some URLs for great deals that are popular with the local user group members, and something I check frequently. One is *http://www.1saleaday.com/*, where the sale is good for 24 hours only. The price might even be FREE with the only cost being the shipping. I've bought a few items there and some were fantastic deals while others were good, but the item wasn't quite as I expected.

Another very popular one is *http://www.giveawayoftheday.com/*, where the item is absolutely free by download for just 24 hours. Some of these free items are reputable ones that normally have a retail price and are rated good software. When it's free, I sometimes download it even though I have no use for it at the time, but I take the attitude that "you never know." I think that men can change their minds too.

http://www.software-dod.com is another interesting site where you might find a bargain, but I've only found one I wanted so far, and I'm not sure I really needed it.

If you find something that interests you, I suggest you read it thoroughly because I had something I thought I wanted on 1saleaday, but ended up not getting what I thought I was ordering. Read the description over thoroughly to avoid that.

That's it for this month. I'll soon have more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. 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 me at *www.dealsguy.com*. 💻

What You Need for that New Christmas Computer

Ira Wilsker

Now that Christmas and Hanukkah are past, many of you have opened that new computer and delved deep into its features. Preliminary estimates are that a huge number of new computers were purchased this holiday season, and a refresher is in order such that you have some idea of what you may need with that new computer in order to maximize your computing security and safety.

Most new computers came with some edition of Windows 7 installed, which appears to be a vast improvement over the Vista which was installed on last year's holiday computers. Despite its improvements, Windows 7 still has vulnerabilities that need to be addressed. Contrary to some allegations floating in cyberspace, I am utterly convinced that some comprehensive security software is an absolute necessity. Almost all new computers come with a limited trial version of security software, such as Symantec's Norton, or a McAfee security product. While these trial versions are functional for their short life expectancies, the clear intent is to sell you a paid subscription, often at an un-discounted full retail price, once the limited version expires. Be aware that it is not the unbiased recommendation of your computer manufacturer that you purchase that particular software, but a crass commercial activity, whereby the computer maker may have been paid to put that trial version on the computer, and may receive a hefty commission in the event that you pay for a subscription. One major computer maker even offers not to install this commission bearing software on new computers for a $50 fee! That should be an indication of its value to the computer maker.

You need decent protective software, consisting, at a minimum, of antivirus, anti-spyware, and a firewall. While you may be protected for a short time by trial versions of security software factory installed on your computer, you have time to shop around for deals on security software, or to try some of the free titles that are available. Watch the Sunday sale books for the big box electronics stores and office supply companies, as many are offering deals, including high value rebates on major security titles. As I type this, one big box store has three major comprehensive security suites advertised for between free and $10 after rebates; each package good for up to three licenses, meaning that you can legally install it on up to three computers. Two of those three titles are the exact same products that are commonly installed as trial versions on new computers that offer an annual subscription for $40 to $70, but are available almost for free (after rebates) from the big box store. Maybe

holiday bills are coming due, and you would like to save some money by using some of the free security software that is available. There are some excellent freeware products available that will do as good a job protecting your new computer from cyber threats such as viruses, spyware, and malware as the expensive commercial software, and sometimes even better! One such free product is Microsoft's new "Security Essentials" which is a no frills but competent security product that can protect that new computer from viruses, worms, Trojans, and most other malware attacks. Fully compatible with Windows 7 (and Vista), this product can be downloaded free directly from Microsoft at *www.microsoft.com/security_essentials*. Another excellent free product that can protect your new computer from malware threats is Panda's new Cloud Antivirus, available at *www.cloudantivirus.com*. Other reputable free products are AVG's AntiVirus Free Edition (*free.avg.com*) and Avast's Free Home Edition (*www.avast.com*).

You need to have a firewall to protect your computer from intrusions by outsiders, such as hackers and crackers. Users are often blissfully unaware that while online, inadequately protected computers are very commonly probed or attacked by miscreants looking for weak spots. A good firewall makes this more difficult as it acts like a guarded and locked gate that greatly restricts unauthorized access from others in cyberspace. The firewall built into Windows 7 is minimally adequate, and should be turned on unless

supplanted by a third party firewall. Many of the comprehensive security suites include a firewall, and there are several free firewalls available. The most popular free firewall is ZoneAlarm Free Firewall, available for free download from CNet's Download.com *download.cnet.com/ZoneAlarm/3000-10435_4-10039884.html*. With almost 50 million downloads from CNet alone, the ZoneAlarm Free Firewall is probably the world's most widely used free firewall, and it has earned that distinction.

One very strong warning is appropriate here; do not, under any circumstances, purchase security software that first appears as a popup window on your new computer and informs you that you are infected with a raft of viruses and Trojans, and that for a fee, you can download its product and forever rid yourself of the threats. This is a scam known in the trade as "scareware" or "scumware" and is often worse than useless, as it often installs even more malware on your computer and protects you from nothing, and possibly even opens up your computer to a wider attack by key loggers, password stealing Trojans, and other terrible threats.

Something that is often overlooked that is a threat to computers is the electricity that is essential to operate them. In reality, we do not always receive "clean" electricity, but instead receive power that varies and has surges, spikes, and other forms of electrical noise. Bad electricity, mostly in the form of power surges can kill a computer quicker than a

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bullet can. Another imperative is a good quality surge suppressor which should infallibly be used between the computer's power plug and the wall socket. A surge suppressor may look somewhat like a common power strip, but its internal electronics are dramatically different. Look for a "UL 1449" label indicating that the suppressor meets UL standards, and the higher the "joule" rating and faster the response time, the better.

I carry a small surge suppressor in my laptop case, and have a larger one (actually a "UPS" or Uninterruptible Power Supply) attached to my desktop computer. Many surge suppressors also come with connections to protect phone (and fax) lines, network cables, and TV cables, all of which can carry electrical noise and power spikes to the equipment.

Bad electricity can instantly fry sensitive computer components, and a good suppressor offers some valuable protection. Most of the time the user will never know that a suppressor just saved their precious electronic equipment from certain destruction, as it typically performs its tasks silently. Suppressors do wear out and need to be replaced periodically, with failure often indicated by an LED showing that the suppressor is no longer protecting the equipment.

There are other useful items for that new computer that will increase its functionality and longevity. More memory will improve performance up to certain limits; 32 bit Windows 7 can use up to 4 gigs of memory, and the 64 bit Windows 7 can utilize much more than that. Memory is readily available and can often be installed by the user, but may not be cheap. I recently spent about $50 (after rebate; $75 before rebate) for 4 gigs of additional memory for my 64 bit Windows 7 machine, and there was an increase in performance.

That new laptop really needs a good case to protect it from bumps and physical shocks. Laptop and notebook computers are often fragile creatures, and need substantial protection from physical harm. Get a good carrying case for your size laptop, and be sure that it has a lot of padding on all 6 sides and gives the computer adequate protection from all directions. You may never know when that case protected you from a cracked screen or worse, which would have either been a very large repair bill, or an otherwise useless computer. Play it safe, and get and use a good case for your laptop.

My late grandmother Dora had an old-world expresion that she said anytime anyone in my family made a major purchase or received a major gift, and I am wishing the same for you and your new computer, "Use it in good health!" 💻

2009 Come and Gone

Elizabeth B. Wright (wright599new@sbcglobal.net), Computer Club of Oklahoma City(www.ccokc.org)

Yes, another year hass come to a close. And what do we have to show for it? Another Microsoft OS for those who are not already confused, limited software and a world gone wild on the internet. Is that what we had hoped for as 2010 looms on the horizon? While all of the above were probably inevitable, how can we make the most and best of it?

First: the new MS OS, fondly known as Windows7. It's really not too bad, considering the fact that all Windows based computers work under the original handicap of the hardware created by IBM for its personal computers. I have seen my friends and loved ones switching to Apple based computers and loving every minute of it, even though Apple creates new operating systems about as often as does Microsoft. But then, most people switch for the graphics and possibly the word processing capability of Apple (Mac) machines, and perhaps are not as compelled to upgrade to a new OS as Windows customers are. Yes, our photographs are very important to us and Apple made that kind of computing a good experience many years ago.

But what about those of us who like to work with both graphics and number-crunching software? Best to stick to the unending procession of Microsoft operating systems. With powerful enough hardware, including RAM memory and a good graphics card, even Windows can do a passable job with graphics. It has always done exceptionally well with the numbers stuff. And if we can get version 7 and

whatever comes next to work with our older software, then maybe we can carry on business as usual. I for one plan to give it a try. But to utilize additional RAM, we are faced with using the 64bit version of Windows 7 with a 64bit processor.

So we might not actually get as much good out of the new OS and newer photo editing software if our hardware can't meet those standards.

Second: limited software. By now most average users have all the programs they will ever use. About the only thing new many people buy is the latest, greatest antivirus program. Businesses use number crunching, word processing and data manipulation software; individuals tend to use graphics, word processing and the internet. Microsoft and Apple, and to some extent Sun Microsystems, have both categories firmly in hand, and we likely will see no new software for average users. But the old MS and Adobe stuff will continue to be "improved" in order to keep those companies in business. No need to beat that dead horse. Programs for Linux based computers are more of the same. As for huge corporations, they depend on specialists to continually fine-tune their programs in order to keep up with the competition. The industry that has developed for just that purpose is something of which most of us are not likely to have much knowledge or interest.

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Third: The World Gone Wild. That is the one that worries most thinking people more than anything else. Again, it doesn't need explaining since most of the people reading this are well aware of the idiocy available on the internet. Yes, there is still some really good stuff out there, but so few people are taking advantage of it. The bad stuff, and everyone knows just how bad it is, may be the ultimate downfall of civilization as we now know it. From selling iffy goods to selling sex and extreme violence, the internet is a place where legitimate learning and business is losing the battle. Even the so-called online universities are often nothing but sham corporations. They tie people up with debt as soon as they enroll, knowing full well that many of their "students" will never finish even the first course, much less graduate. And what are those degrees worth? I guess I can expect a lot of dissent on that subject, but first hand experience with relatives has shown me that my theory is on target.

But of course, the upside is that the internet system will probably implode in perhaps the not-too-distant future. Either governments will hijack it or it will just crumble from its own weight and greed. Do you remember the world before the internet? What you may not remember, or possibly don't know about, was the existence of computers connected via phone lines and other cabling systems which

were military and scientific in nature. Then the rest of us got into the act.

Outlook for 2010: For computer users who want something more than email and surfing, there continue to be ways to improve skills. And many of those choices are still available free on the internet. Check out your favorite program to see what and where you can find training programs, then DO IT!! Make the effort to at least make Microsoft, Apple and all others work for you instead of the other way around.

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Book Review: Googlepedia

George Harding (georgehardingsbd(at)earthlink.net), Tucson Computer Society (www.aztcs.org)

This book is the greatest! If you are interested in anything Google, this is the place to go to find out about it. This is a Que book, the 3rd edition, by Michael Miller, who is a prolific author for Que. He's written some 80 non-fiction how-to books, mostly about computer-related subjects.

The book has over 700 pages, including a comprehensive index, a very complete Table of Contents, 46 chapters and 3 appendices.

I suspect that a 4th edition is not far off, because Google is constantly developing new tools that you will want to know about.

The best known Google tool is the Web Search engine. In the olden days, say five years ago, there were several search engines, all of which produced a list of results that contained many duplicates and may not even have produced something useful to you.

Google took a new approach to produce search results that do not have duplicates, are up-to-date and are sequenced by probable usefulness to you. They do this by the following process: Periodically, usually every few weeks, their GoogleBot crawler searches the web for each page, tracks every link in the page and saves a copy of each page it encounters on its servers. Google creates an index to each of the saved pages, storing every important word on each page. Once a search of the pages is complete, the results are ranked by methods known only by Google.

The rankings are displayed on the search results page in order by what is likely to be the most important to you, to the least likely. There are many techniques to making a successful search, and these are described fully in the book. Using quotes or operators can significantly improve the accuracy of your search.

What's most interesting, though, is all the other services provided by Google. I suspect you, like me, are not aware of many of these:

- GOOG-411. Search for businesses by voice from your cell phone. Dial 1-800-GOOG-411 to try it out.
- Google Desktop. Create a home page environment that has just what you want on it.
- Google Docs. Word processing, spreadsheet and presentation documents on the web, sharable with others.
- Google Earth, Sky and Mars. Tools to explore these areas.
- Google Gmail. An email portal.
- Google Groups. Create and join specific discussion groups.
- Google Maps. View maps and driving directions.

- Google Notebook. Store web information you come across.
- Google Reader. Display articles and headlines from blogs and RSS feeds.
- Google Scholar. Read and search scholarly journals and articles.
- Google Transit. Plan your trip using public transportation.
- Google News and Web Alerts. Be advised of new material that meets your criteria.

And more…

Each chapter tells you about a Google service and how to use it. Each description is described simply to begin with, but continues with more details about how to make use of special features. You can easily be an expert user of any of their tools through this book.

All of these services came out of the Google Labs, which is essentially an R & D facility. It is constantly on the search for new, useful tools for users. One recently announced service is Google Voice that gives you free phone calls within the US, but also forwards calls to your cell phone and land line and transcribes voice messages into email.

I found this book fascinating, because it opened my eyes to all the things that are available from Google. It will take me some time to learn about the ones in which I'm interested.

About: Googlepedia

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Broadsides

Compiled by Ron Broadhurst (shiron (at) cfl.rr.com), Space Coast PC Users Group (www.scpcug.com)

These ideas are compiled from years of accumulations from various magazines, books, on-line sites and my own personal experience. I claim neither originality nor ownership to any of its contents. My only intent is to share the various "tips, "tricks", & "hints" in hopes of helping & maybe enhancing your computing experiences. They are all intended for anyone who uses a PC. It is for beginners as well as advanced users. Enjoy and use as you will.

Turn off Indexing to Speed Up XP

Windows XP keeps a record of all files on the hard disk so when you do a search on the hard drive it is faster. There is a downside to this and because the computer has to index all files, it will slow down normal file commands like open, close, etc. If you do not do a whole lot of searches on your hard drive then you may want to turn this feature off:

- Open My Computer.
- Right-click your hard drive icon and select Properties.
- At the bottom of the window you'll see "Allow indexing service to index this disk for faster searches," uncheck this and click ok.
- A new window will pop up and select Apply to all folders and subfolders.

It will take a minute or two for the changes to take effect but then you should enjoy slightly faster performance.

Correcting System Hang Up at Startup

If your system hangs about 2 or 3 minutes at startup, where you can't access the Start button or the Taskbar, it may be due to one specific service (Background Intelligent Transfer) running in the background. Microsoft put out a patch for this but it didn't work for me. Here's what you do:

 Click on Start/Run, type 'msconfig', and then click 'OK'.

 Go to the 'Services' tab; find the 'Background Intelligent Transfer' service. Disable it, apply the changes & reboot.

Change the Start Menu Style to Classic

Does the new Windows XP Start menu take up too much space on your desktop? You can easily change the look back to the Windows Classic Start menu by following these steps:

- Right–click the Start button, and then click Properties.
- Click Classic Start menu.
- Click the Customize button to select items to display on the Start menu.

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By default, selecting the Classic Start menu also adds the My Documents, My Computer, My Network Places, and Internet Explorer icons to your desktop.

Display Your Quick Launch Toolbar

- Right-click an empty area on the taskbar, click Toolbars, and then click Quick Launch.
- Easy as that your Quick Launch bar appears.
- To add items to your Quick Launch toolbar, click the icon for the program you want to add, and drag it to the Quick Launch portion of the taskbar.

Keep Favorite Programs Near Top of Start Menu

Do you have a favorite program that you frequently use? Elevate its priority on the Start menu by putting it at the top of the list. This ensures that the program will remain on the Start menu and cannot be bumped by other programs, even if you use the others more frequently.

Right-click the link to your favorite program on the Start menu and select Pin to Start Menu. Your program will be moved permanently to the top part of the list, just below your browser and e-mail programs.

Change Out Your Pointer Scheme

Tired of seeing your pointer as an arrow or an hourglass all the time? Windows XP offers a number of alternative pointer schemes, such as Dinosaur, Ocean and Sports:

- Open the Control Panel, double-click Mouse, and select the Pointers tab. (If you start in Category view, select Appearance and Themes, then click Mouse Pointers under "See Also").
- Next to Schemes, click the down arrow and select a scheme to preview its pointers.
- Click OK to apply the scheme to your desktop.

Create a Personal Screen Saver

For a great way to put your digital photos to work, try creating a slide show presentation for use as a screen saver.

- Right–click an empty spot on your desktop, and then click Properties.
- Click the Screen Saver tab.
- In the Screen saver list, click My Pictures Slideshow.
- Click Settings to make any adjustments, such as how often the pictures should change, what size they should be, and whether you'll use transition effects between pictures, and then click OK.

Now your screen saver is a random display of the pictures taken from your My Pictures folder.

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Finding Our Roots

Constance Brown (constance (at) mystepco.com), Canton Alliance Massillon UG (http://camug.apcug.org)

Finding our roots has become important to many families as they begin realizing that much of the past will be lost as those who have been a part of our lives forever begin to slip away. Capturing the information the older generation knows about our families, recording the stories of their joys and struggles, and discovering the strength that sustained them is an important part of preserving our family history. Not everyone has the patience to research their family roots, but those who do may find surprises along the way: family members they have not met in the past, ancestors who actively created history, others whose lives were an embarrassment to their families and society. When you research genealogy, you have to be prepared for it all!

If you are ready to find out more about your roots, the Internet offers an abundance of materials to help you locate information that will shed light on world events that shaped the lives of your ancestors. Other sites will help you locate missing pieces of the genealogical puzzle. Here are a few sites you will want to visit. First is *FamilySearch.org*, the official genealogy records site hosted by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City.

Not only do they provide free genealogical software, but also a huge database of records including census, military, marriage, and death records. If you are looking specifically for death certificates, they can be found at *http://familysearchlabs.org/*. The records are for dates after 1908 & prior to 1953.

Newer death certificates can be found at the County Health Department of the county where the individual died or your state's health department. The records at Family Search are free. Newer records typically cost $17.95. Family search also provides at no charge the ability to permanently archive your family tree, making it available for download or on CD.

Another of my favorite sites is *http://www.usgenweb.org*. The UsGenWeb project is developing as volunteers add information to the site. The amount and type of information for each state varies. If you click on Ohio, you will find each county listed. Under them is the information that has been preserved for that county. More is added regularly. I checked Clinton County where my paternal grandparents lived and was delighted to find the old Clinton County history book preserved and readable there.

Yes, I read about my great great grandfather Jonathan McKay! As I searched Vigo County in Indiana, I was surprised to find the newspaper obituaries for my grandmother Harvey who died in 1982 as well as my aunt whom we buried on Christmas Eve in 2001.

I found that watching Robert Ragan's 5 minute Genealogy Courses was a great help. He gives a number of tips on how

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to find information about your family using specialized Google searches. Here are links to some of his materials:

- *www.5minutegenealogy.com*
- *http://www.youtube.com/user/5minutegenealogy*
- *http://amberskyline.com/treasuremaps/*

If understanding the political, economic, and scientific events that were shaping the times in which your ancestors lived is important to you, you will want to visit Google's Time Line at *http://newstimeline.googlelabs.com*. You may also want to check through the lists of Google Books to see what books were read and shaping the lives of that generation.

Here are a few a few more helpful tips. Robert Sizelove has spent a life-time photographing cemeteries with a special focus on stones that are difficult to read and cemeteries that are not visited frequently. If you have pictures of any tombstones, he appreciates your sending them to him so they can be uploaded to the USGenWeb project and other sites to preserve these memorials. To look at cemetery pictures he has collected, do a Google Search for Robert Sizelove along with the county and state name, putting both into the search box, e.g. robert sizelove stark county ohio.

Not all research can be done free. One of my distant cousins works at a family history center for the Latter Day Saints. She has created 60 family genealogies and has researched and traced the family tree to 168 AD. The only site for which she pays a fee is *Ancestry.com*. Most other paid sites eventually send you there, so you might as well pay that fee. When you upload your GedCom file, Ancestry.com looks for possible connections to other uploaded ancestral files and places a leaf by the name on your family tree that may be connected to a name on another family tree. This feature allows you to expand your tree much more quickly than doing all the research yourself. Caution. Make sure the information you connect to your tree is as accurate as your own!

Another of my favorite sites is found at *tribalpages.com*. Here you can upload your tree, add pictures, create slide shows, add family memories and connect with others. This is a wonderful place to host the wealth of family memories. It is free until you have more than 50 pictures. At the highest hosting charge, you get 5,000 pictures and pay less than $60 per year. The site is amazingly inexpensive, simple to use, and very well designed!

Do you need ship lists? Here are a few sites to check.

- Ellis Island Free records of ship lists *Ellis Island Ship Lists*
- *www.Olivetree.com*
- Cindi's List: *http://www.cyndislist.com/*

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From Our New President

I am honored and look forward to serve as president of ACGNJ starting in 2010. Many thanks to Mike for his service as president. There are many challenges facing our club. My goal is to work with the officers and the board to increase membership and improve our financial position. Any help will be appreciated. I encourage all to attend the monthly board meeting and email me with any questions or issues. We are looking for volunteers to help at TCF in April 2010. This is our largest fundraiser of the year. See me or our website for details. Regards, Paul Syers 🖳

From Our Departing President

I enjoyed my tenure as President of ACGNJ for the past three years. It was indeed an honor to hold such a position with an organization having a very rich and long history. These are challenging times for computer organizations, and I hope that I served the club as best as possible. I realized that it was time for me to step down as my change in family status evolved over the past year. I wasn't as focused on club activities as I should have been. I would like to congratulate Paul Syers being elected as the new ACGNJ President. I know the club will be in excellent hands. I will, of course, continue my duties as Java User Group leader and as Past President. I also look forward to continue my contributions to TCF. Best regards, Mike Redlich . 🖳

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, and.thanks to Alex Goldfinger for his contribution of five missing.issuesand hard copies of many we had previously borrowed. Below is a list of what we still need.

1985: June, July, August, September

1984: August

1976: January

1975: #2 and #3 (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. 🖳

SIG News

Hardware Activity
Mike Reagan (hardware@acgnj.org)

This group is dedicated to repairing, refurbishing and/or recycling older computers.

On *May 28th*, ten people attended the first meeting of the ACGNJ Hardware Activity; showing that there is, in fact, still a market for this type of event. One guy even came all the way from the Bronx! Although we did look at some of the older equipment stored in the back room, most of our time was spent in "random access": talking about past experiences and planning for the future. Hopefully, we can establish a viable long-term schedule of projects, and keep the interest of those who attended this inaugural meeting.

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. 🖳

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 January 18. 🖳

NJ Gamers
Gregg McCarthy (greggmajestic@gmail.com)

http://www.NJGamers.com

www.lanparty.com

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

BYOC - Bring your own computer

BYOF - Bring your own food.

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

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 as well. We meet on the first Monday of the month at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information.

Our next meeting January 4. 🖳

C/C++ Programming

Bruce Arnold (barnold@ieee.org)

http://acgnj.barnold.us/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.

December: Clock2009Saver - A Small Clock Screen Saver for your Desktop: New for this month is the following. The code for the Clock2009 program has been left intact but extra code has been added to create a screen saver that uses the same graphics as before. This is a normal sequence of events. When a programmer writes code, the concept of the graphics must be developed. Then, if the application is to become a screen saver, the code can be modified.

The new screen saver has a number of nice features. When it is first triggered, the opacity of the graphic is set at zero. This means that whatever is on the desktop is still seen and the clock and background are completely transparent. Over the next 10 seconds, the opacity is gradually increased to 100 percent at which time the screen is completely black except for the clock. This gradual dimming is very pleasing to the eyes. For example, as I am reading this text I notice that the screen is starting to dim as the screen saver tries to take command. I can then touch the mouse to continue working without missing a word in the text. Other features include a random positioning of the clock every 10 minutes.

For a comparison see the clock program from March 2001.
http://acgnj.barnold.us/Csig0103.htm

Our *download site* has code and programs from most meetings. ***Our next meeting January 19.*** ⌨

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.

January 12: Subject to be announced ⌨

Web Dev

Evan Willliams (ewilliams@collaboron.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 langages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola - MAC etc. ***Our next meeting January 13.*** ⌨

Window Pains

John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

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

Our intent is to provide members with Windows oriented application discussions, Microsoft and Linux style. Presentation to be directed to more heavy technological level of attendee, although newbies are welcomed.

January 15: Thomas Maffei on Wireless Networking Tips & Tricks. ⌨

Main Meeting

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

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

January 1: No Meeting - Have a Happy New Year!

February 5: Subject to be announced. ⌨

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: January 14. ⌨

Guru Corner

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

Software

HTML	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
ColdFusion	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
CSS	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
Java	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
C++	Bruce Arnold	908-735-7898
	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
ASP	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
Perl	John Raff	973-560-9070
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
XML	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
Genealogy	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Home Automation	Frank Warren	908-756-1681

Operating Systems

Windows 3.1	Ted Martin	732-636-1942

Discount Computer Magazine Price List

As described by the DealsGuy

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

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

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

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

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

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Dues

	US/CANADA	FAMILY OF MEMBER	STUDENT	SENIOR CITIZEN (Over 65)
1 Year	$25	$10	$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.

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

http://www.apcug.net

Radio and TV Programs

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

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

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

PC Talk, Sunday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., 1210 AM Philadelphia. 1800-876-WPEN, Webcast at *http://www.pctalkweb.net*.
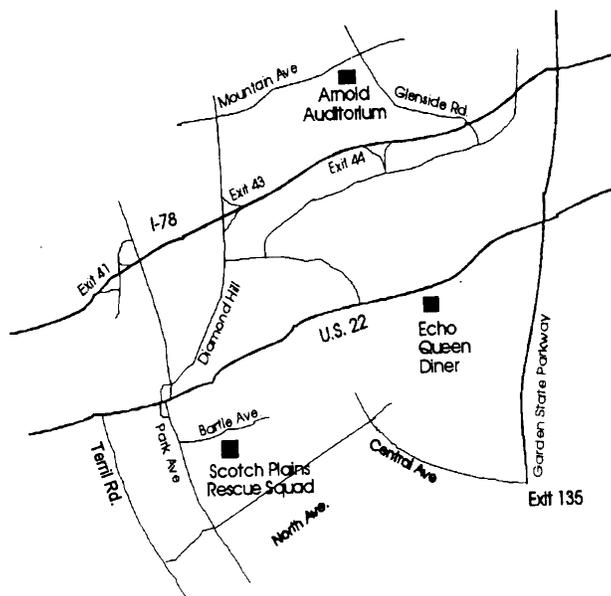
Directions to Meetings at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains NJ

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.

Computer Tips for Seniors

Gregory West (prospector16@gmail.com), CO of Marysville & Port Huron (http://www.bwcomp.org/)

- Author Pamela Tabak
- Published by Computer Tutor Inc. 2009
- Cover Design by Linda Gonse
- Pages: 204
- USA: $24.95 plus shipping
- *www.computertutorinc.net/order.htm*

All too often we find ourselves sinking in the mystery sea called Windows. We know what we would like to do but just can't figure out the "how". The further we click through our computers the worse our adventure becomes. We end up at a DEAD END, completely frustrated to the point of never wanting to turn the computer on ever again.

Several years ago Pamela Tabak, better known as "The Computer Tutor" started helping seniors with computer issues. Pamela began offering a free 24/7 help desk. She would have people email her their computer problem and guaranteed to return an answer within 24 hours. Of course this took off quickly and became a huge success.

Born from this concept of an email help desk, Pamela developed a book comprising some of the most popular, nagging, questions that were asked. In Pamela's words she explains the book's conviction as "easy answers to frequently asked questions."

The book comes with easy to view colored graphics depicting each step in the solutions process. There are three main sections: Knowledge Base, How To and, of course, Answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

The "Knowledge Base" section deals with topics such as ergonomics, the health of both you and your computer. There is an interesting section on whether to "Recycle or Reuse Your Old Computer;" a section we all should read. The book does an excellent job of covering most other areas of computing topics including computer maintenance, Internet security, Flash Drives, Web Browsers, eBay and Emailing.

As I went through this book finding things I already knew, I found myself wondering what type of answer would go with the question, and then finding out various things I had either forgotten or didn't know existed. Going the extra mile, as Pamela does in this book, she has include several little "Tip" bits where you find yourself gathering even more quick and helpful information.

Whether you are a senior who is just starting out in the world of computing, or you have been around the block a few times with your hard drive; this book is a great read and a good reference book to keep nearby the desktop.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Tuesday, December 29
7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, January 1
8 P.M. - Main Meeting is cancelled, Paul Syers (paul.syers@acgnj.org).

Monday, January 4
8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*)

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

Monday, January 11
8 P.M. - Layman's Forum, Matt Skoda (*som359@aol.com*), 908-359-8842. No meetings in July or August.

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

Wednesday, January 13
7 P.M. - WebDev SIG, Evan Williams (*ewilliams@collaboron.com*)

Thursday, January 14
8 P.M. - Investing, Jim Cooper (*jim@thecoopers.org*).

Friday, January 15
8 P.M. - Window Pains, John Raff (*john@jraff.com*).

Monday, January 18
7 P.M. - Firefox Activity, David McRitchie (*firefox@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, January 19
7:30 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold (*barnold@ieee.org*), 908-735-7898

Thursday, January 28
8 P.M. - Hardware, Mike Reagan (*hardware@acgnj.org*)

Monday, February 1
8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, February 2
7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, February 5
8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Paul Syers (paul.syers@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.