Son of Thirteen Things

Bob Hawes, ACGNJ

I couldn't resist using this title. I realize that it's sort of sexist, but what can I say? I'm a man, and men *are* pigs. (Can I hear an *Oink* or two from some of you guys out there?) In a second or so, I'm going to be citing precedent; but it's a fact that there are **always** precedents for male chauvinism. It's traditional. So let's get right down to it. I'm referring to classic horror movies. Namely, *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931) and *King Kong* (1933). Kong gets the credit for first sequel: *Son of Kong* (1933) was released only **nine months** after the original film; but apparently he never had a daughter. (Or at least not one who got her own movie, anyway). Turning to bat sequels, *Dracula's Daughter* (1936) was released first, then *Son of Dracula* (1943). On the other hand, *Son of Frankenstein* (1939) came out eight years after the original, but fans had to wait a **really** long time for *Frankenstein's Daughter* (1958). I purposely left out Frankie's first sequel, *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935). I just didn't want to go there. To me, *Bride of Thirteen Things* sounds quite creepy, and **not** in that good old horror movie way, either. Be that as it may, though, I'm not actually talking cinema here. I'm talking Ubuntu Linux.

Usually, it would be my opinion that all of the above movies should be classified as Fantasy rather than Science Fiction. (Except maybe for *Frankenstein*. I could argue that one both ways). This time, though, I'm compromising my principles because I need that analogy for my next segue. So: Continuing in the Science Fiction vein, let's do some time traveling. In May of 2005, I wrote my first article for this newsletter (*Linux Dual Boot Experiments*), and Ubuntu 4.10 was one of my first ~~victims~~. (Oops. I mean "subjects"). It passed the "standalone installation" test, but it **failed** the

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second (and more complicated) of the two "dual boot with XP" tests. Some of my subsequent articles touched on Linux in various ways, but **not** Ubuntu. Almost two years later, I looked at Ubuntu 4.10 again, in *Dual-Boot Revisited, Part 1* (my article for our February 2007 issue). Then, in *Dual-Boot Revisited, Part 2* (my March 2007 article) and *Dual-Boot Revisited, Part 3* (my May 2007 article), I jumped up to Ubuntu 6.10. (Because our April 2007 newsletter was a Trenton Computer Festival issue, I had to write a small unrelated article for it, thus postponing *Part 3* until May). After that, Ubuntu 4.10 got mentioned again (as part of a recap) in *Three Strikes and You're Out!* (my June 2007 article).

In *Your File's Too Big*, (my September 2007 article), I mentioned making my first semi-permanent installation of Ubuntu (release 7.10). Unfortunately, in *Further Adventures in Time Travel* (my article for our December 2007 issue), I noted that one of my hard disks had "just recently succumbed to the 'click of death' (and it took my new 'semi-permanent' Ubuntu Linux installation with it)". A barely two month lifespan really didn't even qualify that installation for "semi" status, much less "permanent", did it? I didn't do much with Linux during 2008, due to my participation in the By-Laws revision project (among other things),. However, by May of 2008, I'd added Windows versions of two Linux programs (OpenOffice.org and Scribus) to my computer. (I'd **already** installed the Windows version of FireFox, back in December of 2004). In *OS Wars: The Penguin Strikes Back* (my March 2009 article), I finally got back to Ubuntu; but I **didn't** actually install it anywhere. I booted my computer from the **Alpha 4** release of the Ubuntu 9.04 live-CD, and I did everything I needed to do from there, instead. Then, in *Moving into the Future* (my article for our April 2009 issue), I described how I modified my main computer to use removable drive drawers, so I could easily switch between Windows XP SP2 and a new hard disk installation of Kubuntu 8.10. (Kubuntu is

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Ubuntu with the KDE desktop environment installed instead of the usual GNOME desktop).

Now, at last, we tie into our title. In *Thirteen Things?* (my May 2009 article), I recounted how I followed about half the steps in *13 Things to do immediately after installing Ubuntu* (posted on the *Linux on Desktop* website by Ambuj Varshney on February 24, 2007) as I created an **even newer** hard disk installation of Ubuntu 8.04 LTS (**L**ong **T**erm **S**upport) for my main computer. (I'm **not** going to repeat my reasons for doing so here. If you're curious, you can refer to *Thirteen Things?* and find out why; but as you'll soon see, that particular installation didn't last very long, either). I was the scheduled speaker for the May 15th, 2009 Window Pains Meeting, and my topic was *Installing and Using Ubuntu 9.04*. By that meeting, Ubuntu 9.04 had been out for about two weeks. So I had enough time to create a new installation, and to enhance it according to the *Thirteen Things* list. Then, since I **had** it, I **used** it; thus dumping my 8.04 LTS version. In October, when Ubuntu 9.10 came out, I tried a direct upgrade. It took about an hour; but it **worked**. In April 2010, when Ubuntu 10.04 came out, I tried an upgrade again; and it worked again. In October 2010, when Ubuntu 10.10 came out, I tried a third upgrade. This time, it seemed to work, but then it crashed. I restored my 10.04 version from its last backup, and tried once more. As before, it seemed to work at first; but then it crashed,

too. So I restored it again, and I've kept using 10.04 ever since. Now, I've got **four** computers that need new Ubuntu installations, so it's time to start all over.

For **this** article, however, I'm only going to install Ubuntu 11.04 in **one** of those machines. (My current main computer is working just fine on 10.04, so I'm leaving it that way for another month or two. Then, when Ubuntu 11.10 comes out, I'll go right to that version. Ideally, the other two should both dual boot with XP. Unless I get distracted by something else, I'll be doing one or both of those installations **next** month). Anyway, let's get some details about our current ~~victim~~ subject. It's an Asus motherboard that was given to me by Allan DeGroot (son of our Editor, Barbara). It's not new, but it **is** better than anything else I've got. My long term plans call for it to replace the motherboard in my main computer case. (That board will then, in turn, be installed in a smaller case and moved to my kitchen, where it will become a dedicated Internet TV watching computer). For now, though, I stuck Allan's board in a spare case, gave it a spare CD reader and a spare hard disk, booted from the Ubuntu 11.04 CD, and created a default installation. (Actually, I did this twice, because I noticed that it was downloading files, even though I purposely **hadn't** checked the "update while installing" box. So I did it over again, with my network cable disconnected). The **first** time, it took 26 minutes to install. Then, after it

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rebooted, Update Manager popped up and listed 206 updates totaling 152 MB. They took 21 minutes. The second time, installation took 15 minutes. After I'd reconnected the network cable and rebooted, Update Manager listed 223 updates totaling 208 MB. They took 25 minutes. After the second time, I made a Clonezilla backup before continuing. (I know. I know. I should have done this before I deleted my first installation as well; but I forgot. Shame on me).

The first non-default addition I made was *GParted* (the Gnome Partition Editor). After installing it, I used it to look at my partitions. My operating system was in an Ext**4** partition, with only 3.14 GB used (so far), plus I had a 2.0 GB swap partition (**much** too big, but I'll leave it alone for now.). Except for adding GParted right away, I repeated (or didn't repeat) all the steps from my original *Thirteen Things?* article. Following *Step 1: Enable Additional Repositories,* I opened Synaptic Package Manager and did so. Next, I skipped *Step 2: Enable Cool Graphics Effects*. After that, I did *Step 3: Install Audio/Video Codecs*, but once again skipped *Step 4: Install Adobe Acrobat Reader*. (I use Okular instead). Even though both programs now come from different manufacturers, I repeated *Step 5: Install Macromedia Flash support and Sun Java JRE*. Also *Step 6: Install Scribus*. I love Scribus. It's one of my "must have" programs, so I would have installed it anyway; but since it was on the list, I installed it then. This time, I ran into a problem with *Step 7: Install Downloader For X*. It caught my interest in 2009, so I installed it; but I **never** actually

used it. This time, I couldn't get it to install. I intend to try for it again later, but if I can't get it then, I probably won't miss it. As before, I skipped *Step 8: Install Google Desktop, Step 9: Install Google Picasa, Step 10: Install Google Earth*, and *Step 11: Install gdesklets*. Also as before, I did *Step 12: Install MPlayer with all codecs and DVD playing support*; and I finished by skipping *Step 13: Install RealPlayer*. Finally, I wound up my then current personal list by installing *Okular* and *K3b*. I've included the link below mainly for copyright acknowledgement. However, for further details, you can refer to **my** *Thirteen Things?* (in our May 2009 newsletter), or you can follow this link to the article that started it all:

http://linuxondesktop.blogspot.com/2007/02/13-things-to-do-immediately-after.html

Now, back to me. After making another Clonezilla backup, I ventured into new territory. Well, relatively new, anyway. I've **always** had *Abiword*, because it **used to** be bundled by default with each release of Ubuntu. Nowadays, it's not. In the past, it came in handy quite a few times as an alternative word processor, so I installed it manually now. I must have installed *the GIMP* (**G**NU **I**mage **M**anipulation **P**rogram) immediately after I installed Okular and K3b above, because by July of 2009, when I wrote *Fun With Fonts* (my article for our August 2009 issue), I'd obviously become **very** familiar with it's use. Be that as it may, I installed it in my new Ubuntu 11.04 system now. *Wine* came next (the Windows emulator/compatibility layer, not the booze),

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because I need it to run *MD5summer.exe* under Ubuntu. MD5summer is one of my most vital "must have" programs, and I probably couldn't have made the move to Linux without it. *Fonty Python* allows me to add Baskerville Old Face Regular and Wingdings to my font list, so I added it next. *AcetoneISO* allows me to mount various disk image formats as if they were drives. Adding it filled the last big hole in my Linux system. After that, I hardly ever needed to run my Windows XP SP2 system again. (Though I have to admit that I still occasionally run my Windows 98 SE system when I have backwards compatibility issues that I need to address). *Gnumeric* has sometimes come in handy as an alternative spreadsheet, so I installed it, too. The three most recent additions to my system are *FileZilla*, an FTP (**F**ile **T**ransfer **P**rotocol) client, *KompoZer* (a web page authoring system), and *OggConvert* (which converts media files to the patent-free Ogg Vorbis/Ogg Theora formats). I haven't used them much yet, but I expect to do so frequently in the future.

Of course, the biggest difference between my new Ubuntu 11.04 system and my tried and true 10.04 system is the replacement of OpenOffice.org with LibreOffice. (As you're no doubt aware, this was a **really** big deal). Unless something goes **very** wrong, this article will be the last one that I write with OpenOffice. I'm going to continue doing most of my computer stuff on the 10.04 system in my current main computer; but I'll try to do all my writing in LibreOffice (running under Ubuntu 11.04 on my new motherboard in its temporary case). This way, I'll have time to adjust to any quirks or incompatibilities in LibreOffice while I've still got my existing OO.o setup to fall back on. For now, though, we're almost done. As my next to last step, I ran GParted and looked at my operating system's Ext4 partition again. This time, it was using 4.55 GB. So that's it. I'll do one more Clonezilla backup (just in case), and then I'll shut everything down. See you next month. 💻

Music— Capture it, Organize it and Enjoy it

Phil Sorrentino, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc. (http://www.spcug.org/)

Music in the past was captured and made available on analog sources and played back on analog devices. Those analog sources were tubes (in Thomas Edison's times), record disks (78s, 45s and 33 1/3 vinyl), and finally tapes (reel-to-reel, 8 track, and cassette). And they were played on a phonograph (circa late 1870s), a turntable (spanning

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the 20th century) or a tape machine (spanning the late 20th century). All those devices were engineered to convert the analog music on the source media to sound that eventually hit our ears.

Analog music was the capture of some sort of wiggle, like the wiggle of a turntable needle or stylus, or the wiggle of a magnetic field on a magnetic tape. The quality of the music we experienced improved all along the time that analog music was available, finally culminating in High Fidelity, Stereophonic Sound. Stereophonic because there are two tracks, one for the right and one for the left, to match the hearing mechanisms on our head, one on the right and one on the left. High Fidelity is the property of reproducing all of the music frequencies that were originally produced by the original source, like a singer's voice, or a rock and roll band, or a symphony orchestra.

The frequency response of the human ear is about 20 Hz to around 16,000 Hz (although sometimes it is stated as 20 to 20k). These are general ranges and as we age, the lower limit tends to rise and the upper limit tends to be lowered. (By the way, if someone is exposed to very high intensity sounds or noises {measured in decibels}, their hearing range could be affected. In fact, sounds greater than somewhere around 100 decibels {db} can produce permanent damage to ones hearing range.) So, High Fidelity Stereo was developed to deliver two channels, each with about a 20 to 16,000 Hz frequency range. What more could you ask

for. (Well, actually now with digital reproduction you can have much more, like 5.1 surround sound, but that is a subject for another time.)

Enough of the past, now on to the digital music age. One of the differences between analog and digital sources of music is the fact that with an analog source, the music quality deteriorates with each play. Each time a record or tape is played, some of the range of the music is lost. But with digital sources (digital files), the quality always remains the same. Go ahead and play away. The reason for this is that the digital representation for music is just a series of ones and zeros (which is reproduced exactly with every Copy). As long as that series is reproduced (and the process that interprets the ones and zeros doesn't change), then the results, the music, will always be the same. So, once we get the music, we have it at that quality, for good. But how is digital music created? What is the source? And what devices are used to reproduce it.

The recording process starts with (analog) microphones which produce a small analog signal. This signal is amplified and then digitized. From this point on everything is digital, therefore perfectly reproducible. Digitization produces a file that has been engineered to contain the complete audible frequency range. This is the .wav file that is on the CD that is purchased.

The CD becomes the source for the music. (Today, most music is distributed on CDs, although more and more music

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is being downloaded to computers for eventual listening.) Typically there are about 15 songs on a CD, but with the capacity of a CD (700 MB) and the average size of a song (35MB), you might get as many as 20 or 21 songs on a CD. So, if CDs are the source of the music, a CD player is the device that is used to reproduce the music. CD players come in two basic varieties, stereo cabinet type to be used with a stereo system maybe in the family room, and portables for use on the go. Some larger stereo cabinet models can hold as many as 400 CDs and provide a place to store all the CDs (without their cases). Now that's how the digital music is produced, distributed, and played, but what about MP3s?

Well, an MP3 file is the result of processing a WAV file with an MP3 conversion program, the product of which is much smaller than the original. (WMA is another file type similar to MP3 that has been introduced and used by Microsoft.) MP3 files are typically one tenth the size of the corresponding WAV file. The resultant file size can vary because there are settings used by the MP3 conversion program.

The MP3 conversion process is a "Lossy" conversion, that is, some of the quality can be lost in the conversion. The quality is selected by choosing a bit rate for the conversion. For music this rate typically goes from 128 kbps (considered near CD quality) up to around 320 kbps (for those audiophiles that have very good hearing and reproduction systems). There are also lower qualities for low frequency

range (voice only), files which are 32 kbps and 64 kbps. The lower the quality, the smaller the size of the MP3 file, and similarly, the higher the quality, the larger the file size. Some people might be able to detect the difference between a 128 kbps quality and a 320 kbps quality, but if you cannot then the smaller file would be a better choice. (If you're not sure if you can detect the difference, create an MP3 of one of your favorite CDs at two different bit rates and then play each one and see if you can tell the difference. If you can tell the difference, use the higher bit rate as your quality setting.)

So, with that bit of background, we are able to discuss the process of converting songs on a CD to MP3 files. This process is called Ripping a CD. (Don't blame me, I didn't name it.) The process does nothing like its name implies, it simply converts the WAV file on the CD to an MP3 file on the computer, at the chosen quality.

Ripping can be done with many programs like Windows Media Player, Musicmatch Jukebox, Audacity, and Winamp. (Windows Media Player (WMP) which comes with all Windows Operating Systems will be used here in examples.) To Rip a CD, place the CD in the CD/DVD reader/writer tray, start WMP, and click Rip on the top Selection Bar. It's that easy. A list of the files on the CD will be shown with a checked check box for each. If you don't want one of the songs, uncheck the box. When the conversion is finished you will have an MP3 file for each of the checked songs. Typically, the MP3 files will be in a Folder

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with the name of the CD Album, within a Folder for the Artist within the folder that was setup as the Rip Folder. From this folder, you can move or copy the songs to a library folder. Most people will probably use the Music (or My Music) folder that is part of Windows for this.

Next month we'll discuss organizing the Library to take advantage of the fruits of your (possibly) considerable labor in creating the music files. And don't forget: backup all that

music regularly, so you don't have to go through that process again.

Testing Memory

Vinny LaBash (labash (at) spcug.org), Sarasota PCUG FL (www.spcug.org)

From a strictly technical perspective, memory is any form of electronic storage. You probably know the computer you use every day has memory. Other everyday devices also use similar types of electronic memory. Your TV, car radio, washing machine, wrist watch, and cell phone are a few examples. Physical memory is both a necessary and useful component of modern computers. If your computer's CPU were compelled to access the hard drive for every piece of data it wanted, its speed would be glacial. Memory is so useful that when something happens to affect it we notice it immediately. It's a little like atmospheric oxygen, unobtru-

sive and invisible. Take it away and we know instantly that something has gone horribly wrong.

Memory failures can be among the most difficult hardware problems to diagnose because so many other things can act like memory malfunctions. If your system was put together with a motherboard populated with less than first-class components like low quality liquid fueled capacitors, they might swell and burst even under normal usage. Lockups, USB ports which refuse to work for no apparent reason, blue screens of death, and error messages pointing to memory failures are among some of the breakdowns that can

occur. Video pauses and application crashes are additional symptoms that can afflict your PC, and their cause may not have anything to do with a memory crash.

Excess heat can cause the CPU to malfunction in ways that generate error messages flatly stating that memory is the culprit. The CPU will inexplicably drop pages from memory after the CPU just asked for those pages. The CPU gets confused and produces an error message accusing the memory chips of causing a "Fatal Exception". If that's not misleading enough, messages stating that certain memory pages were never received can appear on the screen.

Strange behavior alone is not proof of a memory problem, but don't be hasty to dismiss the possibility. Memory problems do cause lockups and blue screens of death for no apparent reason. How can one differentiate between a memory crash and something doing a plausible imitation?

Sometimes the BIOS can help. Your BIOS should tell you how much memory you have installed. Many memory failures show up in the BIOS as a loss of installed memory. A high-quality motherboard will have a BIOS that will report the amount of memory in each slot. With some careful sleuthing you can easily calculate how much memory should be in each slot, and use that information to find the memory module that's causing the problem.

There is a free advanced memory test available based on the original Memtest86. Download it from *www.memtest86.org*. This is probably the best memory testing tool you could hope to find, free or otherwise, but with all things that seem

too good to be true, there are trade-offs. Some of your computer's memory must be accessed by the utility while the tool is running and that range of memory can't be tested. Another downside is that the tool requires you to shut down the computer and run the test from a boot disk. Don't let that stop you from using Memtest86. Use it according to directions and you will resolve problems that would otherwise be beyond the capabilities of ordinary mortals.

Memory failures can prevent the system from starting completely. Your machine may attempt to help you by issuing a series of diagnostic beeps on attempted startup. There is no standard for diagnostic beeps, they vary with each manufacturer. You must access the manufacturer's web site to translate the series of beeps to meaningful information. It's essential to read the documentation for motherboard and BIOS. Some machines don't beep at all; for others a single beep indicates a memory refresh failure.

In many cases a memory module has merely worked its way loose over time and is no longer seated properly in its slot. It takes minutes to reseat the memory. If that doesn't help, remove one memory module and turn the machine back on. If the problem persists, replace the module, remove a different module, and repeat until the system starts again. The module most recently removed is the guilty party. You may not be able to use this method if your machine insists that the modules be installed in pairs.

Lastly, don't over-clock your PC without proper ventilation or a reliable method to keep your vital components cool. 🖳

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The Three Most Important Words in Computing
Backup! Backup! Backup!

Ira Wilsker

We have all heard the common and trite clichés that the only things that are for sure are "death and taxes". For computer users, regardless of operating system or brand of computer, there is a third "truth" and that is that computer hard drives will eventually fail. Hard drives, regardless of brand and reputation, are electro-mechanical devices with a lot of very fast moving parts, motors, and some type of electronic controller that makes it work. Heat, physical shock (like dropping on the floor), electrical problems (power surges), and normal friction and wear can cause hard drives to deteriorate followed by a likely catastrophic failure.

Many more modern hard drives incorporate "SMART" technology (Self-Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Technology) which monitors the hard drive for reliability issues, and notifies the user if it detects a pending failure. Once warned, the user should immediately verify that the drive is properly backed up, and then quickly consider replacing the drive. Many of hard drive manufacturers provide free SMART monitoring software, or a similar utility. Seagate, for example, offers its free "SeaTools" utility that " ... in-

cludes several tests that will examine the physical media on your Seagate or Maxtor disk drive and any other non-Seagate disk drive." A 17mb download, this free utility will run on almost any brand of hard drive, and display its findings so that the user can have real-time information about the condition of his hard drive. There are many other hard drive monitoring utilities available, both free and commercial. For free hard drive monitoring software, consider any of the top rated hard drive monitoring utilities listed at *hd-health-monitoring-&-diagnostics*. I have been happy using a $15 program (sometimes offered as a free promotional download) "Ashampoo HDD Control", which provides comprehensive hard drive monitoring services, as well as drive cleaning and defragmentation functions.

One of the earliest fables (with some truism) about hard drives is a component of Murphy's laws, which says, "A properly backed up hard drive will never fail; but the first time that you do not have a current backup, it will always fail at the most inopportune time." This has evolved into the current truism that says, "The three most important words in computing are Backup! Backup! and Backup!"

On my computers, I routinely copy my critical data files to USB flash drives, burn them to CDs, and use a file copy backup utility with a high capacity USB external hard drive. Actually, I use multiple backup devices for critical data files, because I like the idea of redundancy, and backup media and devices have become incredibly inexpensive. During the hurricane evacuations for Rita, Gustav, and Ike, the very first item I packed was my external hard drive with my latest backup, along with some backup CDs with additional copies of the most critical data files from my desktop computer.

There is an abundance of good quality backup software available, and for several years I have been using NTI Shadow (*www.nticorp.com*), a $40 product which transparently maintains backups in real-time of all of my critical data files on my external USB hard drive. When first installed, Shadow automatically copies all selected file types to the chosen backup device, and then maintains the backup set without any necessary user intervention. As soon as I save a file to my hard drive, Shadow instantly copies the file to my backup device. For sequential files, such as word processing or spreadsheet files, Shadow can selectively save each version, as it is updated or saved, preserving the older versions in case they are ever needed. I use Shadow to automatically maintain or "synchronize" data files, pho-

tos, videos, music files, email, and other non-system information. Since all of the files are saved in native format, the backed up files can be read, copied, or opened, with no special or proprietary software required. Over the years, I have been very satisfied with NTI Shadow, and continue to use it.

For those who prefer free software, there are many excellent programs available, all with different feature sets and offering different types of backup (*best-free-backup-program*). TechSupportAlert.com has guidance to help the user select the type of backup program desired. A file backup program does precisely that, maintains copies of files. A full backup is a type of backup where the entire hard drive is copied, often by creating an exact digital image of the hard drive. A differential backup, after a full backup is created, only backs up new or modified files. An incremental backup is somewhat like a differential backup, but only backs up the files that were created or modified since the last full or incremental backup.

Using a free software product, Paragon Backup and Recovery (Advanced) Free edition (*home/br-free*) I periodically create an "image backup" which basically creates a bit by bit digital image of my entire hard drive as it is at that instant, and writes that image to my external USB hard drive. The software provides for creation of a bootable Linux re-

covery CD which contains the drivers and utilities necessary to restore the hard drive. In the event of a catastrophic hard drive failure, I can purchase a new hard drive, install it in my computer, boot the computer with the recovery CD, and using the image file on the external drive, recreate my hard drive precisely as it was at the time of the backup, with all programs and data files intact. Once the image file is installed, the computer will boot and run just as it did before the hard drive failure, but with a new hard drive. Other than the time, expense of a new hard drive, and a little aggravation, my computer will be fully functional just as it was prior to the hard drive failure. This is explicitly the primary reason for having a current image backup. This Paragon Backup and Recovery software can also create and maintain file level backups, perform other backup functions, and is a comprehensive backup utility. For most users, this Paragon software will be most adequate, as it is capable of performing all desired backup and restore functions.

Other top-rated free drive imaging programs are listed at *www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-drive-imaging-program.htm*. I strongly encourage all computer users to frequently create an image backup, such that a failed hard drive can be easily replaced and all files and programs restored. Since I use multiple external USB hard drives, I sequentially create an image on one external drive, and then use a different external drive for my next image backup. By doing this I always have at least one functional image capable of being restored, just in case there is a problem on one of the external drives. If that happens, I may not have the most recent

image file, but at least I can be back in service with minimal loss. Since my data files are continuously backed up by Shadow (I keep a redundant set of those files as well), between the image file and my Shadow files, it is unlikely that I would lose anything of significance.

There is no need to suffer a hard drive failure with the resultant loss of all programs and data files. With the availability of several excellent free hard drive monitoring and backup utilities, as well as several comparable commercial products, and the declining cost of high capacity storage media, lost data should be a crisis of the past, as it is easily preventable or recoverable. ⌨

Photo Stitch

Daves Computer Tips (*http://www.davescomputertips.com/*) provides free tips, help, and tricks for computer users, along with a free newsletter for computer users.

http://www.myphotostitch.com/

With this site It's easy and free to convert any photo, sketch, drawing, or other image into a cross stitch pattern. Photo cross stitches make fun projects, impressive gifts, and unique keep-sakes. Make cross stitches based on children's drawings, vacation photos, famous works of art, and more. Best of all, this service is completely free! You can make as many cross stitch patterns as you'd like, and stitch them yourself or send them to friends and family.

Submitted by George Holloway

Image Retention on an LCD Monitor

Linda Gonse (editor (at) orcopug.org), Orange County PCUG CA (www.orcopug.org)

I just bought a brand new HP ZR22w LCD flat screen monitor. My understanding always has been that burn-in (also called image retention or image persistence) does not occur on LCD screens. But, an HP help file that came with my monitor dispelled that notion.

"Image retention occurs when the monitor is left ON while displaying the same image for an extended period of time, leaving a 'shadow' of this image on the screen."

I researched the burn-in problem further and About.com, *http://bit.ly/k05clD*, said "Image retention can be corrected in most cases and is easily prevented." That statement was a relief!

The article went on to list methods that could be used to prevent image retention/persistence.

1. "Set the screen to turn off after a few minutes of screen idle time under the Power functions in Windows. Turning the monitor display off will prevent an image from being displayed on the screen for extended periods of time. Of course, this could be annoying to some people as the screen may go off more than they wish."

2. "Use a screen saver that either rotates, has moving graphic images or is blank. This also prevents an image for being displayed in screen for too long."

3. "Rotate any background images on the desktop. Background images are one of the most common causes for image persistence. By switching backgrounds every day or few days, it should reduce the change of persistence."

4. "Turn off the monitor when the system is not in use. This will prevent any problems where the screen saver or power function fails to turn off the screen and result in an image sitting on the screen for long times."

The bottom line is not to be too worried about image burn-in, but keep it in mind when using your LCD monitor and you can easily prevent it from happening.

If somehow it does happen, see *http://bit.ly/k05clD* for instructions on how to correct existing image retention on LCD monitors.

Finally, the HP text helpfully revealed another problem not known to all LCD monitor users, "the fluorescent lights inside the display have a limited lifetime and will gradually degrade." This is reason enough not to leave a monitor on 24/7, even with a screensaver enabled. Use the timed Energy/Power setting to automatically turn the monitor off when your system is idle for a while. ▣

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Drop it in the Box
Dropbox, what it is, how it works

Jo Grazide, Brookdale Computer Users Group (http://bcug.com)

What is Dropbox?

Suppose you were able to save work without using a flash drive, a disk (CD or DVD-R or RW), or an external drive, or even email, and move files between your laptop and desktop? For many years, I, like so many of us, had developed methods and procedures to upload, download, and save documents, music and pictures to a storage device, only to have to rely on memory to locate it afterwards. Another irritating problem for me, especially when I was working, was to identify the "latest" version, so that an older file would not overwrite my work during a "Save As."

Enter Dropbox, a useful application that eliminates lots of work and uncertainty.

Dropbox is a free download that offers protection and convenience and is easy to use. There is basically no learning involved. You should, however, be familiar with Drag & Drop and Move vs. Copy. Why not give Dropbox a try and see whether this is for you.

I first heard of Dropbox during a meeting of my camera club. Some members seemed happy with it; there were no negative comments, leading me to investigate. Having a way to store photography files without worrying about loss or corruption seemed an ideal solution to the problem of travel pictures. I got to test this, when I maxed out the Dropbox folder at around 2 GB during a vacation in Boston. There are two ways to increase your storage capacity – you can purchase the program on a monthly or yearly basis, or you can have friends join the service and be rewarded a few more MB's up to a whopping 8 GB.

Get the App

To acquire Dropbox, you need to go to the website at *www.dropbox.com*. The download is quick and easy. Just run it, and follow the instructions. There are six initial steps:

1. Take the tour
2. Install Dropbox
3. Put files in your Dropbox folder
4. Install Dropbox on other computers
5. Share a folder with friends or colleagues
6. Invite friends to join

It is necessary to install the program on all computers that you will be using. The setup is done on the website, and the instructions are easy.

In my case, this is my laptop and my desktop. As I move around with the laptop, to meetings or anywhere I use it, I'm able to save files as they are created, directly into the Dropbox folder, which sits in the system tray area. By clicking on its icon, Dropbox will provide easy and helpful commands.

In addition, I know that once I reach home, altered files will be available and updated on my desktop machine. They can be dragged into their proper locations on the storage drives. This has been extremely useful. Instead of dealing with two documents, a newer version and an older version, there is only one synchronized version.

Another nice aspect is that I don't have to worry about misplacing storage disks or flash drives, which does happen. I also would think that it lessens stress, as there is nothing to lose!

On the Website

There is plenty of information on the Dropbox website. There are videos and explanations of the synching process. Basically, anything that is put into the local folder is also recorded on the Internet. You can also access your files and upload them directly onto the Dropbox server.

It can be compared to using GoogleDocs or Windows Live Mesh. Collaboration, by the way, is possible. I haven't delved into this, because I simply need a way to move data between computers. If you want to learn more, you need to visit the Dropbox website and study this feature.

The Dropbox website has five tab:

1. "Get Started" walks you through several chores before you can earn some extra space. This is simple and easy to understand.

2. "Files" is the online list of your current Dropbox inhabitants, their sizes and the dates they were modified. You can sort each column by clicking on its heading. There are buttons here that let you do even more. A basic knowledge of file management is all you need to comprehend this part of the application.

3. "Events" is a listing of various edits, deletions, and other information about your files.

4. "Sharing" allows you to create a new folder to share, or share an existing folder. By following the prompts, you can identify who you want to share the folder with. In my case, I began typing my husband's email address, and it was prefilled for me. This would make it easier for multiple shares in a business or committee setting. Perhaps our next Board meeting minutes will appear in a Dropbox folder! I also found that once the shared folder appeared in my local Dropbox folder, I could rename it

and manage it locally. A refresh caused the change to appear on the website immediately. I like this type of efficiency. There is no lag time, and information can be relayed quickly between computers.

5. Finally, "Help" is all the rest. It seems that the Dropbox website is complete; you can spend much time learning about it. I would suggest that you jump in and try out the program; you can learn by doing as well.

There are a couple of things I would warn you about as a new user. If you simply drag and drop the file back and forth, it copies the file. You may want to right-drag and choose move to ensure you have the latest version of your work or photograph. Also, having a comfort level with storage online to some extent, and not adding things like your Social Security number or banking information, goes without saying. Aside from that, there are no problems I can see with using this reliably.

One Last Thing

I do have one favor to ask you if you do join Dropbox; please use the link! It will enable both of us to get some extra space, a great reward and well deserved! The link to join on my behalf is *http://db.tt/sHvgWQp*. I promise I will not waste that space!!!!!!

System Requirements

Hardware: At least 512MB of RAM; free space on your computer equal to your Dropbox storage quota.

Software: Windows: Windows 2003, Windows XP, Windows Vista, and Windows 7 (32 and 64-bit).

Mac OS X: Tiger (10.4) or later.

Linux: Ubuntu 7.10+ and Fedora Core 9+.

Also iPhone iOS 3.1, Android 1.5 and Blackberry 4.5.

Pricing: Up to 2 gigabytes of free storage space; DropBox 50, up to 50GB storage for $9.99/month or $99/year; Dropbox 100, up to 100GB storage for 19.95/month or $199/year.

For more information:
https://www.dropbox.com/plansproducts/desktop 🖳

SugarSync – Sweet Synchronization Solution

Vinny LaBash (labash (at) spcug.org), Sarasota PCUG FL (www.spcug.org)

There was once a time when having a rotary telephone put you in the front lines of innovation. That was long ago and modern communications technology is as far advanced from that day as communicating by smoke signal. If you have any combination of desktop computer, laptop, smart phone, tablet, and whatever, you need some way to coordinate information so that every device you own has the same up-to-date information.

One way to make sure all your files are equally up-to-date is using a popular cloud based utility known as Dropbox. However, there is another lesser known tool that gives you more for less. We're talking about SugarSync which is constantly evolving into a service similar to Dropbox, but with better mobile support, advanced file control, and superior price performance.

When you open your account at *www.sugarsync.com*, you supply a user name and password and then install the application. As long as you're connected to the Internet, the files you drag into your local Sugarsync folder magically appear on all PCs, laptops, phones, and iPads that also have Sugarsync installed and are attached to the same Sugarsync account. The files also appear online when you sign into the Sugarsync site and specify the same user name and password.

SugarSync sets up your system to start backing up your data as soon as you initiate the program. Don't worry, it won't do anything without your permission, and there is no need to be concerned about your information getting out of control. The interface is clunky compared to the more intuitive IE browser window which is one of few downsides to SugarSync. The developers are probably still concerned about legacy issues, a fear that will probably disappear over time, but may cost them customers before it's eliminated.

Support for mobile devices is nothing less than outstanding. It supports more mobile devices than any other product. If you're using Windows 7 or Symbian, SugarSync is there for you. These platforms may be relatively unimportant in the grand scheme of things today, but if you happen to use one of them SugarSync should be of interest.

SugarSync has a unique design feature for your Pictures folder. Of course synchronizing and viewing pictures from mobile devices is supported, but the process is treated as much more than a casual concession to photo buffs. It does more than backup your pictures. It creates online galleries to share with colleagues and friends. You don't have to back up your photographs to one location and upload them. If you take a picture with your mobile device it's automatically sent to SugarSync and downloaded to your computer. The gallery layout is superb for a web-based product, and the photo viewers are excellent.

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Music lovers will appreciate their MP3 files following them like puppy dogs. The computer does not have to be turned on because music files are being streamed from SugarSync. Audiophiles can listen to music no matter where they are.

SugarSync continuously backs up your files in real time, not just once or twice a day. So if you edit a document in the morning, and accidentally delete it in the afternoon you can restore it quickly with no hassles. The program stores the five latest versions of any backed up file so it's not a quandary if you need an earlier version. The downside to this is that five versions of multiple files can take up a lot of storage. The upside is that only the most recent version of a file is counted toward your storage quota.

If you are having trouble thinking of some uses for SugarSync here are some suggestions:

- Inadvertently overwriting a file is no longer a potential disaster a SugarSync keeps a copy of the older file making restoration easy and painless.

- Many people treasure their old photographs. Keeping pictures safely backed up in digital format means storing them as long as necessary with no deterioration in quality.

- Roboform users can synchronize passwords safely and securely.

- You can retrieve files no matter where you are or what device you happen to be using.

- Share folders with family members. Any great vacation pictures, new additions to the family, celebrations, and other memorable events are instantly available.

- Listen to music anywhere.

- Synchronize documents such invoices across multiple devices. Accountants will love it.

- SugarSync can act as an insurance policy against losing important information. Backups are no longer a hassle or a nuisance. 💻

Are you Secure?

Constance Brown (president (at) camug.org), Canton/Alliance/Massillon User Group (www.camug.org)

Security is one of the most common concerns with today's computer based communications and transactions. How can I secure my personal computer? Should I do banking online or is it safer to write checks and mail them? Is it safe to purchase products online? How much can people learn about me through online access? These questions are some of the most common I hear expressed by my students. Let's look at some of these concerns.

First of all, we need to secure our personal computers. Most of us have high speed access in today's world. If you leave your computer turned on and internet access turned on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, you are more vulnerable than someone who has dial-up access and has to get offline in order to place phone calls. Dial-up is so slow that hackers don't usually want to fool with it and users with that type of service are usually online only short periods of time. Those with high speed connections through DSL or cable can shut off their modems or turn off their computers. I have high speed access and VOIP phone service. So shutting off my modem is not an option for me.

That is one reason I turn off my computer if I am not going to use it for several hours. I also prefer to place my documents on an external drive that I disconnect if I choose to leave the computer running while I go to town.

Your personal computer needs to be protected with anti-virus and anti-spyware programs. It should also be pro-

tected with a firewall. One is included with Windows. A router provides an additional level of protection. It plugs into the modem and your computer plugs into it. When some would-be hacker tries to get to your computer, it finds the address of the router instead. Most routers come with programs to protect you. It is often necessary to update the router software to keep the protections as up-to-date as possible.

If you are using a wireless router in order to send signal to other wireless devices, you will want to secure your wireless network with strong encryption and a strong password. When you choose passwords for your network or for your bank accounts and online stores, be sure to choose a strong password with meaning to you but not to others. A word that is not in the dictionary is best.

You will want to mix upper and lower case letters, include numbers, and a special letter if the site allows it. Let's look at a couple of passwords. Here are examples of two commonly chosen passwords that are dreadfully insecure: 123456; abcdefg. Here is an example of a strong password: E4g$jwQy. Normally passwords should be 8 characters or more.

Is online banking secure? Many people pay their bills and monitor accounts regularly online. Banks require the use of a browser with specific standards of security. For example, if you are still using Internet Explorer 6, your bank most

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likely will not allow you to set up online banking. If anyone uses your computer other than yourself or your spouse, you will most likely NOT want to allow the site to remember your login information. Over the past two years, banks have added levels of security including a picture id of your selection from choices they provide in addition to the login name and password. The only time I would not be comfortable doing banking or providing credit card information for other types of transactions would be in places providing free public Wi-Fi.

Is it safe to make purchases online? Buyer be informed! All major retail companies have online stores. These have securities in place. After all, these corporations have much to lose if their names were soiled by identity theft.

There are quality "Mom and Pop" stores online. And there are thieves, just as in the real world. If you have questions, check with someone more experienced than you before placing your credit card or bank card information with a company online. There are multiple, wonderful companies. There are some frauds.

Beware of emails that pretend to be from the FBI, PayPal, and Amazon, Chase bank or other well-known financial institutions claiming that there may have been fraudulent activity on your account and telling you to click on a link provided in the email to verify your account information. DO NOT DO THIS! If you have questions regarding your account, open a separate browser, type in the address your-

self, and then login and check on things. Be sure to forward the email to the fraud division of the company it claims to represent. That is the best way to track down these identity thieves.

How much can people learn about you online? More than you think! Public information has always been available. You used to look up addresses in telephone books. And you could go to the auditor's office to look up information about someone's property. You could look up addresses on maps. Now all that information is readily available through the online white pages and the auditor's web sites. Of course there are many map services. A GPS can guide you precisely to the locations you program into the system. Try "Googling" your name and the city in which you live. You will find references to your comments in the local paper, information about you that is included in online publications and anything else that is public.

Salvage a Wet Mobile Phone

Tips & Tricks from the Cajun Clickers (www.clickers.org)

If you drop your mobile phone in water or get it wet in a heavy rain; don't panic; it's possible to save it. Consider these easy, simple steps:

1. Act rapidly: First, quickly remove all covers and as many detachable parts as possible, such as the back cover, battery, SIM card, memory card etc. Next, take a piece of cloth or tissue paper and absorb as much excess water as possible. Make sure to dry it completely, before water soaks into difficult to reach places. If your phone was under water for just a short time, this quick drying procedure alone might save it.

2. Use a hair-dryer: Then, use a hair-dryer to thoroughly dry the phone and components; but don't hold it too close to the phone, as that may harm the electrical mechanisms. Pay extra attention to the battery area. The battery housing usually consists of tiny holes to let air (and consequently, water) into the phone.

If steps 1 and 2 fail, then continue to step 3.

3. **Drying for long duration**: Place the disassembled phone and parts in a dry, warm place and allow the water to evaporate gradually. Also see: *wikihow.com/Save-a-Wet-Cell-Phone* 🖥
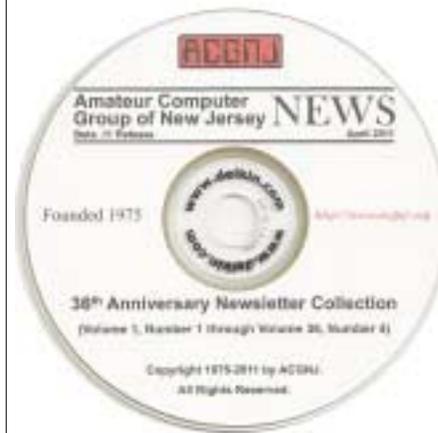
SIG News

C/C++ Programming

Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net)
http://acgnj.barnold.us/index.html

This is a forum for discussion of programming in general, beginning and intermediate level C, C++, C-Win programming, hardware, algorithms, and operating systems. We demonstrate real programming in a non-intimidating way, presenting complete code for working programs in 3-5 sheets of paper.

June: File Input Demo with Exceptions: Visual Studio C++ has many ways of reading and writing information from/to a disk file. A search in Wikipedia reveals ±50 different functions in several major categories. The topic can be daunting. Sometimes the task is simply to read a text file consisting of relatively short lines of human readable text. This can be accomplished using some simple, high level C++ Classes. Only a few lines of code are actually required. The main library function that we will use is named "ReadLine()". We will use a simple ListBox to display the file. One issue that the novice often misses is handling of errors. For example, what if the filename is wrong or if there is a disk error? A simple program was used as a starting point for a discussion. The program creates a Windows Dialog box, then allows a text file to be viewed on a Windows screen. The program is called "File Demo".

For details and sample code, visit our Website. ***Our next meeting September 20.*** 🖥

Mobile Devices

Brenda Bell (mobdevsig@acgnj.org)

The Mobile Devices SIG meets the second Wednesday of alternate months, 7:30PM at SPRS in Scotch Plains, NJ.

The Mobile Devices SIG focuses largely on curent-generation cellphones and smartphones (such as Blackberry, Android, iPhone) which bridge the gap between basic cell phones and traditional computers, and how they can help you manage and organize your life.

Our membership ranges from those who have recently acquired their first, basic cellphone to those who develop applications for today's modern smartphones, iPods, and ultraportable computers.

While we expect to spend much of our time investigating the built-in features and specialized applications available to modern smartphones, if you bring your basic (or multimedia) cell phone, iPod, or other mobile device with questions on how to use it, where to find applications, or what features they have, we are always happy to help! Meet and greet and plan where this event goes. Bring all your ideas, PDAs, fancy phones, etc. ***Our next meeting October 12.*** 🖥

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 noviceusers or those who are planning to get started in computing. Watch our Web page for updates and

FireFox Activity

Firefox@acgnj.org

This SIG is an open forum for **all** FireFox and Mozilla techniques and technologies, to encourage study and development of web sites of all kinds. All browsers will be considered and examined. All are encouraged to "think out of the box" about new web site esign. All members and guests are invited to check out the design concepts and voice their opinion. *Next meeting, September 19.*

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmajestic@gmail.com)

http://www.NJGamers.com

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be September 9, 6 p.m. to Saturday 12 noon — 18 hours for 5 bucks!

BYOC - Bring your own computer

BYOF - Bring your own food.

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

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 October 3.

Window Pains

John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

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

Intended to provide members with Windows oriented discussions, Microsoft and Linux style. Directed to more technological level of attendee, but newbies are welcomed.

September 16: Brenda Bell will present on Medical Devices (blood pressure, insulin pumps, etc.)

Main Meeting

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

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

September 2: No meeting. Enjoy your holiday. Next meeting October 7.

Web Dev

Evan Willliams (ewilliams@collaboron.com)

Meeting on alternate months, 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. 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 other langages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola - MAC etc. *Our next meeting September 14.*

Java

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

July 12: This month's meeting was an annual review and planning meeting. We reviewed some of the more interesting topics from this past September through June and brainstormed topics for the 2011–2012 "season."

Our next meeting September 13, topic to be announced.

Hardware Activity

Mike Reagan (hardware@acgnj.org)

This group is dedicated to repairing, refurbishing and/or recycling older computers. Ten people attended the first meeting of the ACGNJ Hardware Activity; so there is still a market for this type of event. One guy came all the way from the Bronx! Although we looked at some of the older equipment stored in the back room, most of our time was spent in 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. If you have a hardware problem, bring it in and we can all help fix or demolish it. (no guarantees either way)

Next meeting September 22

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 meetings: September 8.

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	STUDENT	SENIOR CITIZEN (Over 65)
1 Year	$25	$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 MAS Rm 100, 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*

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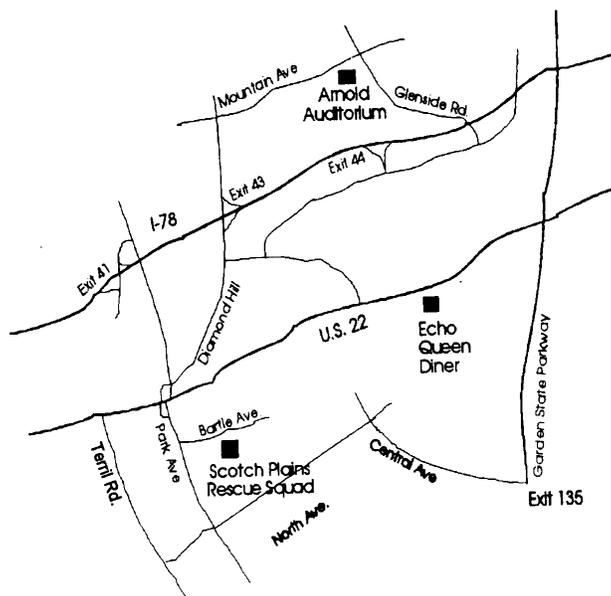
Directions to Meetings at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains NJ

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.

Cyber News!

Gary Stanley (gary.stanley.net) (cyber_news.htm)

If you are a frequent flyer and have a smart phone, then you will probably want this new app. "My TSA" (*apps.usa.gov/tsa-app/*) provides a tool to find out if an item is allowed in your carry-on or checked baggage, information on ID requirements and liquids rules, tips for packing and dressing to speed through security, and real-time operating status for U.S. airports from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

For a long time I have advocated using the free version of AVG as your anti-virus program. All things, in time, change and so it is with AVG. In my opinion it changed for the worse with its latest version AVG 2011. If you're using version 9 you have probably been getting an occasional message asking you to upgrade to 2011. I did that, but just like Norton and McAfee, AVG is getting too big for its britches and I noticed my computer acting strangely. I found other people saying the same thing so I did some research for an alternative and found Avast. AVG installation is 152 megabytes and Avast is 52 megabytes so that indicates a smaller footprint and less drag on your computer. I downloaded the free version, and it runs like a champ. Consequently I now endorse Avast in my "Secrets to Safe Computing" seminars, and you can find detailed instructions here: *gary.stanley.net/secrets.htm*.

Love movies? If you love movies then maybe Netflix (*netflix.com*) is a deal for you. For only $7.99 a month you can watch unlimited movies and TV episodes on your computer and if you have a router and a streaming video device you can watch them on your living room big screen TV! Of course you will need a high speed connection to the Internet

for all this enjoyment. As an alternative to Netflix, there's Hulu. I mentioned this a couple months ago and this is a place where you can watch movies and TV episodes for free. The selection isn't as large as Netflix but free is free! Check it out. *Hulu.com*

Want to have some fun listening to police, fire, sheriff, air traffic control and more? You can do just that by going to this web site, *webcrawler300/web/live+police+scanners?* Be careful though, you might spend more time than you want doing this. A great pastime if you're retired! ⌨

PC Problems You Can Fix

*Tips from the Cajun Clickers (*www.clickers.org*)*

Ever notice how your PC has multiple personalities? In the course of a week, your computer may act friendly, moody, and sometimes downright mean. However, don't take a hammer to your PC just yet. The following is a list of common symptoms and treatments to help even the most troublesome PCs. You don't even have to be a psychologist (at least not yet) to deal with your PC's neuroses. Windows 7 and Windows Vista usually manage this automatically, but overall you'll find that these tips work for all versions of Windows, from Windows 95 to Windows 7: *http://tinyurl.com/y8m8en6* ⌨

ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Friday, September 2
8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Cancelled because of Labor Day
(paul.syers@acgnj.org).

Monday, September 5
8 P.M. - Lunics, Cancelled becaus of Labor Day, Andreas Meyer
(*lunics@acgnj.org*)

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

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

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

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

Wednesday, September 14
7:30 P.M. -WebDev, (*webdev@acgnj.org*)

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

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

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

Thursday, September 22
8 P.M. - Hardware, Mike Reagan (*hardware@acgnj.org*)

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

Wednesday, October 12
7:30 P.M. - Mobile Devices, Brenda Bell (*mobdevsig@acgnj.org*)
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**All meetings, unless otherwise noted, are at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains, N.J.
Directions and map inside back cover.**