

# Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

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## Hobbyists of the Year Cass and Ruth Lewart



The 2005 Hobbyist of the Year Award was a dual award to Ruth and Cass Lewart. Both have been very active computer hobbyists for nearly 30 years. They were officers in the Bookdale User Group <<http://www.bcug.com/>> for many years and are also long-time members of ACGNJ. In addition to speaking at TCF for many years, Cass has been a speaker at meetings of ACGNJ, PPCUG, and other computer clubs. He is the author of several books about PC technologies and has contributed papers to the Trenton Computer Festival Annual Proceedings Book.

Both Ruth and Cass have always made themselves available to help personal computer users in need of help and have been frequent contributors to the ACGNJ News.

The Hobbyist of the Year Award is traditionally presented at the Trenton Computer Festival to an individual who has used his/her knowledge in the computing field to benefit others on a volunteer basis. This is the first time a dual award has been presented.

“Such awards are necessary as hobbyists are becoming an endangered species. With software companies cutting on manuals, tech support and programming languages and with hardware becoming miniaturized it becomes nearly impossible for hobbyists to develop new applications. An uninformed consumer seems to be the best source of profits for the industry. We need more independent hobbyists to have future creative engineers and scientists,” said Cass.

Ruth reminisced about their first computer, “a TRS-80 Model I computer. I think it may have had some kind of Print Screen function, but in any case its usefulness was limited. So I decided to write my own Screenprinter in Basic. I then wrote an article, and submitted it to 80 Microcomputing, one of two major hobby computer magazines at the time (Byte was the other), so I wasn’t expecting them to accept this, my first computer article. Within a few days my phone rang — they wanted it! They did a great job, with the result that I got several letters (no e-mail yet!). One correspondent happened to be a prisoner, who was interested in the topic. After several rounds of letters, Cass issued an ultimatum — no more correspondence! I always wondered what the writers crime had been, and what he did later in life.” ☐

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**Got questions about your computer?  
Your local user group can help.**

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<http://www.acgnj.org>

Founded 1975

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

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

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

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

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

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# From The DealsGuy

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

We worked the NSCA (National Systems Contractors Assn.) [<http://www.nasca.org>] show and I took a quick look around. It's a companion show to the Home Electronics Expo, but is about three times as large. Attendance was somewhat lower than expected at about 10,000. If you were interested in electronic installations in a digital home, this would be the show for you. All the famous speaker manufacturer names were there and plenty of other quality audio equipment. Also troubleshooting instruments, even to spectrum analyzers. There were plenty of booths with switching systems, cabling and whatever you need for such things, not to mention plenty of large screen monitors and TVs although I didn't see a prototype of the new 82" Samsung LCD screen.

Not as many end user products were shown as at the Home Electronics Expo. It had a large area featuring the Security/Life Safety Pavilion, which I didn't spend much time in (even though it had free beer and popcorn). There were digital signage booths and several booths showing master clock systems for large buildings. I have not even scratched the surface of it all, but it got exciting when a water sprinkler accidentally opened right over of an expensive projector booth (Christy) and it was very close to the booth I was working that contained plenty of large screen TVs. It sure drowned the Christy booth, but they miraculously saved everything by working quickly to remove it.

Comp USA had a one-day conference at the Orange County Convention Center and user group people were invited. It turned out the CompUSA show was held in an exhibit hall adjacent to the Travel Goods show we were working and I got the chance to look around. I was surprised to see many booths with all kinds of names in computer paraphernalia. I spent a couple hours explaining what I do to vendors and asking about putting together a deal for exposure to about 60,000 readers who are all computer users; the usual begging thing. Many were interested and it was the best bonanza I had ever found in the ten years I have been doing this column and searching shows for leads. I felt I had enough leads sounding positive to last the column for a year or more. My shirt pocket was bulging with vendor personnel's business cards. I was also very surprised when I found the APCUG booth with Peggy Ireland, Suzy Ball and Caryl Hall working in it. It was great to see them again, although I had just seen them at the FACUG spring conference in Kissimmee.

Next morning my wife was up before I was and when I finally did get up, she sheepishly explained that she had washed my shirt without emptying the pockets. I can't explain the feeling I had when I saw all the business cards with many important leads that were turned to pulp in minutes, and almost nothing was salvageable. In the 39 years we have been married, we have never had a fight. It might have been possible then, but I was so devastated that I couldn't find the strength to be mad, just thoroughly disheartened. When we have mentioned the incident to friends, the wives tend to indignantly state that it is the husband's job to worry about emptying the pockets, not the wives'. I have found nobody in my court on that one except other men. Anyway, I am back to square one, but may

have a couple of leads if vendors take the trouble to follow up without my calling them. There were very few brochures at that show to keep for info.

The Password Vault software for \$15 is still good from Gene Barlow. [<http://www.usergroupstore.com>]

## **\*The Bundle Is Back**

I received a message from Colleen Toumayan at Executive Software (an APCUG sponsor) telling me their bundle pricing is back. If you want to improve your disk defragging and undelete software, here is another chance to save some money on these great products. I have not tried the Home Versions, but their products I tried in the past were impressive. The bundle contains Diskeeper 9, Home Edition, and Undelete 5, Home Edition for \$39.95. (Download only.) The URL to get it is [<http://consumer.execsoft.com/purchase/purchase.asp?RID=50>].

## **\*Put Your DVD Burner To Work**

Here are two products that will help preserve your videotaped memories. They are "CameraMate VideoSafe" and "CameraMate Real Time Video" by Zio Corp. VideoSafe allows you to capture analog video/audio from any VCR or camcorder and burn it to a CD or DVD. The VideoSafe hardware has plugs for the video/S-video/audio cables on one end and a USB cable to connect to your computer on the other end. An included CD has the drivers and software. The MSRP for VideoSafe is \$49.99 with a \$10 rebate sticker on the package. VideoSafe is mostly for a direct conversion from your source to your burner, so if you want to do additional work with your video in the process, the product below is for you.

Real Time Video is also an adapter and software for capturing the video/audio from any VCR or camcorder for the purpose of burning to a CD or DVD. However, Real Time Video software also offers Autoedit Wizard, Autoedit Storyboard Wizard, Randomize Wizard and a DVD Burn Wizard. Software and drivers are included on a CD. Real Time Video's MSRP is \$69.99, but I suggest you shop wherever you can get the best price, even at local stores, then apply for the rebate. The URL for downloading the rebate form is on the rebate sticker on the box. This rebate expires on April 30, 2005, but they will honor it for us until May 31, 2005. The adapter cables with RCA audio/video/VHS C jacks are not included, but are easy to obtain and many folks have them lying around.

They sent me the products to try, but I was up against my deadline and a friend gave it a quick try. He had a few minor problems, but after tweaking some settings in his Windows operating system, he said it worked fine. He had no problems with the installation. It works with Windows 98SE/Me/2000/XP. However I didn't have time for some more extensive tests on his part. Video resolution is 720 x 480 for NTSC (the American TV standard). Their URL for more information is [<http://www.easiestvideoever.com>].

*Continued*

# Firefox Customizations

David McRitchie

The current Firefox version (1.0.3) available at <http://www.mozilla.org/>. Several features that kind of pushed me toward trying Firefox: built-in tabs instead of lots of browser windows, ability to block both popup ads and large banner advertising, and no artificial 500 byte limit on bookmarks.

After installing Firefox, I discovered I could not only install individual extensions of my choice but I could update, deactivate, reactivate, or remove them individually at any time. In many cases, you can even contact an individual author of an extension with suggestions.

I wanted to make sure everything I could do in Internet Explorer (IE) could be done in Firefox, and I think I've accomplished that except for system updates from Microsoft, which require IE and use Active-X. The initial frustration with Firefox was a useless source browser that did not let me use Notepad to make changes. That was solved by the Launchy extension that lets me invoke editors, browsers, and graphic programs of my choice. I can use Notepad, HTML-Kit, IrfanView, and Windows Explorer, and don't need another extension to invoke other browsers (IE, Netscape, or Opera) from the same web page. Since I have a lot of links on my web pages, I had made use of an add-on for IE that grabbed the page title and link URL and built the

HTML anchor for it. With CopyURL Plus extension, I could duplicate that and had a choice of formats, including designing my own, so I could pick up Title, Selection, and URL with different formatting for various HTML and plain text uses.

Tabbed browsing worked much better than I expected. I can start a new window or new tabs within a window. I can read an article in Outlook Express or a Web page and create tabs from linked articles, letting them be read in while continuing to read the original article, then read each of the tabs and close it when it has been read. You can add tabs to IE but with a small machine it didn't work all that well. The Ad Block group extension has been really nice. I can block most unwanted ads.

One feature of Firefox that is seldom mentioned is keyword shortcuts. Rather than going through folders of bookmark listings, I can use a keyword shortcut (abbreviation) of my choice and go to directly to a link.

I've just installed the extensions to Firefox that I consider important as my machine is rather small compared to anything one would purchase in the last couple of years. You can read more about my Firefox Customizations and use of bookmarklets and context menus on my Web site <<http://www.mvps.org/dmcritchie/firefox/firefox.htm>>, where everything mentioned above is covered in more detail. 

*Continued*

## DealsGuy, *continued*

### \*Announcement for Active Screen Lock (Edited)

"ActiveScreenLock 2.3 could be of interest to users group members and they can get a 20% discount on ActiveScreenLock 2.3. The coupon code is DMVS-QJPR.

"How to protect your PC from unauthorized access with one mouse click. ActiveScreenLock is one of the most simple, yet effective ways to protect PCs from unauthorized access. While most people worry about viruses, trojans and spyware, folks tend to ignore the fact that co-workers, visitors or even family members are much more likely to get access to confidential data by simply walking up to a PC and looking it up. ActiveScreenLock is a software application that makes your PC inaccessible without entering a password. While Windows OS comes with the password-protected screensaver option that seems to have the same function, any advanced user knows that there are a number of ways to bypass this.

"When ActiveScreenLock is activated (either by clicking a tray icon or pressing a combination of designated hotkeys), the PC becomes inaccessible. Whenever anybody tries to do anything with the locked computer, the program displays a password-protected window placed on top of all the others. In order to remove it, a correct password needs to be entered. Key combinations Alt+F4, Ctrl+Alt+Del, Alt+Tab, and WinKey are blocked.

"If necessary, a program user can opt to disable task manager or hide the cursor. Restarting the locked PC will not undo the protection. Should anyone try to pick the password, the pro-

gram will log all login attempts and what passwords were used.

"ActiveScreenLock has received dozens of awards, including Editor's Choice at TopShareware and FileHeaven, and 5-star rating at Softpicks, Shareup, FileTransit, SmartDownloads, and UKwares. A free demo version is available at [<http://www.dmvsoft.com/>] for evaluation (30-day free trial period). The price of a single copy is \$25 US. Registration removes all time limitations and nag screens, gives you free unlimited support and entitles you to free upgrades and new version updates.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael McCarthy at [pr@dmvsoft.com](mailto:pr@dmvsoft.com)

System Requirements: Operating system: Windows 95, 98, ME, 2000 or XP.

Company Website [<http://www.dmvsoft.com/>]

Product Page [[http://www.dmvsoft.com/a\\_screenlock.htm](http://www.dmvsoft.com/a_screenlock.htm)]

Download [<http://www.dmvsoft.com/ActiveScreenLock.zip>] or

[<http://www.dmvsoft.com/ActiveScreenLock.exe>]

Buy Link [<http://www.dmvsoft.com/order.htm>]

*That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [[bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com)]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com/>]. *

# Posh Tech

*Sheri Zorzi, APCUG Advisor*

Do you remember when a home computer or a cell phone was a luxury? Those days are gone and now such technology is considered a standard necessity rather than a luxury in most families. There is still room for luxury in technology, though, as I saw at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas last month.

Perhaps the biggest-selling luxury tech item these days is plasma TV. You can have your big picture without filling the living room with a huge piece of ugly equipment. These babies are only inches thick! Samsung showed an 80-inch plasma that is guaranteed to impress, with a price tag rumored to be \$45,000. A status symbol if I ever saw one.

Such large, thin screens make the idea of a true home theater experience ever more enticing. You can build a home theater with a wide screen, surround-sound, and tiered theater-style chairs with cup holders. I sat in one such chair equipped with (no kidding!) ButtKicker® technology, a “silent subwoofer” that allows you to feel powerful bass without excessive volume. Home automation technology can even be programmed to have the house light slowly dim out as the movie starts and then slowly come back up as the movie ends.

For much more affordable luxury entertainment, there are MP3 players. Apple’s iPod is the best-known but there are literally hundreds of brands of these tiny personal digital music players. You can add fancy cases, docking stations with speakers, or car adaptors that allow you to play through the car’s stereo speakers and switch playlists using your CD changer’s controls.

Satellite radio is not new, but it’s going portable now. XM Satellite Radio has several models of its XM2GO coming out this spring at about \$350. It’s only a matter of time, I think, before someone combines the portable satellite radio receiver with an MP3 player, putting all 200 channels of streaming radio plus every song you’ve ripped from every CD you own right in your hand or pocket.

Even the kitchen has gone high-tech. Tonight’s Menu Intelligent Oven by TMIO, Inc. is a refrigerator-oven combination that can be controlled over the Internet or any web-enabled device such as a handheld PDA or cell phone. You can put the casserole or roast in the oven on refrigerator setting when you leave for work and have the conventional or convection oven preheat itself at a preset time, cook the meal, then keep it warm until you are ready to serve. If you are delayed you can adjust the settings from any web connection. It comes in double-oven model only and costs \$7,500.

Do you strain to hear the Weather Channel’s forecast from the bathroom every morning while you brush your teeth? You might enjoy a Mirror TV from Phillips. It’s a two-way mirror with an LCD screen behind it. When the LCD is activated you see the TV picture; when it’s turned off you see your reflection. One model has the TV part in the lower half while the upper half remains mirror. Phillips estimates the price for a 17-inch Mirror TV will be around \$2,500.

Making all this technology stylish is another new luxury niche for technology manufacturers. Textra and Inclosia both showed molded accessories and cases for cell phones, PDAs,

MP3 players and notebook computers that include leather, wood and other luxury materials molded right into the device. Today a laptop computer can look like a dreamy designer handbag. Whoever imagined that geeks could be trendy, stylish, and posh?!

*Sherry Zorzi is a Director of Cajun Clickers Computer Club <[www.cajunclickers.org](http://www.cajunclickers.org)> and host of “The Cajun Clickers Computer Show” heard every Saturday morning at 9 a.m. on WJBO Radio. Her consulting company, Zorzi Consulting, provides technology training and technology consulting to businesses and individuals. You can reach her at 225-658-8100 or [szorzi@cox.net](mailto:szorzi@cox.net). There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. *

## Back Issues Needed

Have you been saving your copies of ACGNJ News for years? Wouldn’t you like to have them all preserved on a CD instead of taking up all that space?

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. Below is a list of what we still need.

1991: November, December

1990: Number 1 (Jan or Feb), and June

1989: All issues except April and June.

1985: June, July, August, September

1984: March, August

1980: September, October

1979 (volume 5): All issues are missing except September (#9). According to the numbers, this volume should also contain issues for July and August.

All issues are missing for the first four volumes (1975 through 1978).

If you can supply any of these missing issues, please contact the Editor by email ([bdegroot@ptd.net](mailto:bdegroot@ptd.net)) to make sure they have not been supplied by another reader. Please be sure to let us know if you are donating or lending your copies. Those who supply missing issues will receive a free copy of the resulting CD as our thanks for your help.

# Old Software is Best on a New PC

Harry Broderick

News Brief, December 6, 2004: "SpyWare creates explosive new market opportunities." From a minor annoyance for home-PC users to a major plight on enterprise environments around the world, SpyWare (also known as AdWare, MalWare, ScumWare, and a host of other sordid names) is infecting millions of computers with multiple purposes: stealing personal information, enabling identity theft, tracking users' online activity, and selling the information back to anyone willing to pay. According to new research from IDC, the need to identify and eradicate these parasitic programs will drive AntiSpyWare software revenues from \$12 million in 2003 to \$305 million in 2008.

Although not always malicious in nature, SpyWare still causes significant damage to legitimate software, network performance, and employee productivity. Moreover, it crosses the boundary between security and system management by deluging Help Desks with a siege of employee complaints about pop-up advertisements, applications failures, and poor PC performance. At worst, SpyWare's ability to track keystrokes, scan hard drives, and change system and registry settings is a tremendous personal and enterprise security threat. These activities can lead to identity theft, data corruption, and even theft of company trade secrets. Additional information can be found at [www.idc.com](http://www.idc.com).

I decided to use an old trusted operating system called Windows 98 on a 20GB Western Digital Hard drive. What? Install and keep just one OS? No dual boot, no security or firewall? Yes. I low level formatted the drive with a wipe utility, just to make sure it was very clean. I had a McAfee boot CD to insure that nothing was hidden inside the chips like a virus or ad ware.

The build consists of WinPC, was able to take two sticks of 256K on the motherboard, half gig of memory and was not overclocked from the 400mhz 66 speed Via motherboard

I put Spybot - Search and Destroy on it and sent in a small donation to [www.spybot.info](http://www.spybot.info) and I doubled the virus protection, using Norton 2004 ([www.symantec.com](http://www.symantec.com)) with a free upgrade to Norton 2005 plus the free version of AVG virus protection ([www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com)). I downloaded Ad-Aware from the [www.downloads.com](http://www.downloads.com) site to eliminate the pop up ads and used the 5x accelerator from my web provider [www.prolog.net](http://www.prolog.net). Additional scanning from my server was used on a daily basis from Spysweeper ([www.webroot.com](http://www.webroot.com)). Internet Explorer was used just **once** to download the patches from [www.updatewindows.com](http://www.updatewindows.com), then the IE icon, shortcut and executable file were renamed and a registry cleaner applied from Registry Mechanic (shareware downloaded from [www.downloads.com](http://www.downloads.com)), then Firefox ([www.mozilla.org](http://www.mozilla.org)) was installed as default browser.

Games? I have original registered and purchased software for Carmen San Diego 1998 and Barbie Sparkling Ice Show. Video was very crisp, no fractal images, no crashing, and 3D images were very smooth. Amazing, though, that lots of ad ware was on a CD from 2002 generated by Disney. Having documented the system, I added Microsoft office 2000. (I tried Office 98 but had difficulty reading my new word docu-

ments). If you open Word 2000, Help, System Info, there is a nice group of utilities there for hardware and software diagnostics including video drivers, and the Creative DVD player. Also Word 2000 diagnostics is telling me about the joystick. Thank you Microsoft for invading my privacy! Perhaps the Patriot act was written for Microsoft to view my non-Microsoft joystick and within a few days I will get junk mail about the latest joystick manufactured for Microsoft.

Screen savers for Windows 98 without Internet Explorer running as default — of course it had to be "Gates Does Windows" where the Microsoft Chief Architect is lowered by a window washer scaffold and all the bugs come out.

It is important with this PC that all software is traceable and unique. It all comes from a trusted source like a magazine site. CNET runs the [www.downloads.com](http://www.downloads.com) site. They want to sell more magazines, so must hold to a higher standard. As a result, no viruses, popups or ads were found in software from the site.

*Professor Harry Broderick teaches Cisco and Wireless classes for County College of Morris. He has been a member of ACGNJ for 20 years.*



## Advertising Rates

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# Linux Dual Boot Experiments

Robert D. Hawes, ACGNJ

Last month, John Raff ran into some difficulty while adding a Linux dual boot option (in this case, Fedora Core 3) to the club computer. Now, I've got years of computer experience, but I'm a Linux newbie, so I wasn't any help. I could only watch from the sidelines as he wrestled with GRUB (the FC3 bootloader). Of course, John finally got the computer to work the way he wanted, but not before he gave me an idea. He had to be very careful not to do any damage to the club's existing XP SP2 system, but I can recklessly and irresponsibly blow out all the hard drives I want, and that's exactly what I decided to do.

I went to [www.distrowatch.com](http://www.distrowatch.com) to get that day's top 10. (Since they track by "hits-per-day", averaged over the previous six months, these aren't necessarily the most downloaded releases, but they **are**, at least, the most looked-at):

- 1.Mandrake1,503 HPD3 CDs
- 2.Ubuntu1,419 HPD1 CD
- 3.Fedora1,355 HPD4 CDs
- 4.MEPIS1,235 HPD1 CD
- 5.SUSE1,190 HPD1 DVD
- 6.Debian 932 HPD7 CDs
- 7.Knoppix 796 HPD1 CD
- 8.Gentoo 705 HPD1 CD
- 9.Slackware 654 HPD2 CDs
- 10.Damn Small 558 HPD1 CD

Good! Most industry stalwarts were there, including Fedora Core, and some complete strangers as well. It turns out that both Ubuntu and MEPIS are Debian based releases. Because the current "stable" Debian download is **seven** CDs long, I decided to go with just Ubuntu and MEPIS, at one CD each.

I had already done some unsuccessful experimenting with Knoppix (more about this later), so that was out, too. Gentoo is said to be very good, but it's definitely **not** for beginners. Damn Small is an attempt to fit a "full" Linux desktop on a 50 MB credit-card-size CD. This warrants further investigation, but not now.

I downloaded the latest ISO files for the six survivors and burned their CDs. (That was easy to say, but it took **days** to do). Then I set up a test computer and got ready to install each of them three times. First, as a stand-alone system, to see if everything works. Then as a dual boot system with an installation of Windows XP SP2 using Microsoft's default partition layout. And finally, as a dual boot system using an unorthodox partition layout more closely matching the ACGNJ computer.

My test computer had a SOYO SY-K7VTA Pro motherboard with an AMD Athlon 1.7 GHz. processor, 512 MB memory, an NVIDIA TNT2 AGP video card, and a built-in VIA AC97 sound card. A Linksys LNE100TX ethernet card and a Netgear DSL router provided the internet connection. For these experiments, I installed a blank Maxtor 80 GB IDE hard disk as the primary master. A Sony CD/DVD reader was the primary slave.

## Round One: Stand-Alone Installation

In the first round, each installation had to pass only two tests. I had to access the Internet "out-of-the-box" (this is easy, thanks to DHCP from the DSL router), and I had to hear my built-in sound card working. These are the areas where Knoppix 3.7 let me down. It doesn't include VIA AC97 audio drivers. The motherboard is three years old. If the "97" indicates a year, then the chipset is **eight** years old, so it's not some new product they might not have heard about yet. As I see it, this lack of support can only be due to gross negligence or total indifference. Knoppix did install my network card, but it didn't turn on TCP/IP. After the system booted, I had to wade through the menus until I found; "KNOPPIX > Network/Internet > Network card configuration > Use DHCP broadcast?" and answered; "Yes". **Then** I could get to the internet. So much for Knoppix.

The SUSE download (a 3.13 GB DVD image) was the largest I had ever done (it took twelve and a half hours), so I wanted that one to go first. And, because John was using it, I wanted Fedora Core 3 to be last. I processed the others in numerical order.

**SUSE LINUX Professional 9.2 (eval version)**:As might be expected from a 3.13 GB DVD, SUSE 9.2 took by far the longest time to install. (SUSE has gone bloatware in a **big** way. Even their "live eval CD" is a 1.3 GB DVD). SUSE loads its firewall by default, and warns you that it **will** interfere with your web browser until you re-configure it. For this disposable installation, I just disabled the firewall (you can do that during setup). When the new system booted, the internet connection worked right away. But, although SUSE said that my sound card was installed, I could not get it to work. (Not that I spent all that much time trying. After all, "out-of-the-box" means "out-of-the-box").

Before erasing the drive, I checked it out with Partition Magic version 8. It showed two primary partitions. First, a 1 GB swap space, then a single yellow Ext2 partition filling the rest of the drive. This is important. Yellow is the color Partition Magic displays when it can't quite figure out what's going on. Good Linux Ext2 and Ext3 partitions are a **deep** purple. (Just for verbal confusion, good NTFS partitions are a light purple). While this is a cause for concern, it's not necessarily SUSE's fault. It could just as easily be PM. The swap space was brown, the right color.

But the Internet did work, so SUSE got a low but passing grade.

**Mandrake Linux version 10.1 Official** : Mandrake's installation was straightforward but a little less automatic. For instance, it found my video card during setup, but didn't configure it automatically. On bootup, the sound card worked, as did the Internet. (Mandrake **doesn't** load its firewall by default).

Partition Magic 8 reported a 6 GB Ext3 primary partition, then an extended partition containing a 1 GB logical swap drive

*Continued*

and a 71 GB logical Ext3 drive. This time all the colors were correct, so Mandrake passed.

**Ubuntu Linux version 4.10 (“The Warty Warthog”):** Setup went without incident. On boot, sound worked, and so did the Internet.

Partition Magic 8 reported a partition table #110 error, so it couldn’t view the drive. DOS FDISK reported a 76 GB Non-DOS partition (with 100% usage) and a 500 MB extended DOS partition (with 4% usage). It also reported a total disk space of only 13,655 MB, so the drive’s size information had obviously been compromised. This is probably what messed up Partition Magic. Something here is definitely **not** right, but the system booted and everything worked, so Ubuntu passed.

**MEPIS version 3.3:** The SimplyMEPIS 3.3 bootable CD is a live CD that’s also an install CD. First, it booted live from the CD and asked me to log in. It didn’t actually say anywhere on the screen that the password for root was “root”, but it was sort of obvious, and was probably mentioned somewhere in the documentation displayed at the download site. Once I logged in, sound and Internet both worked. After I installed it to the hard disk (using the desktop icon provided) and re-booted, sound and Internet both worked again.

Partition Magic 8 reported a 10 GB primary Ext3 partition, a 1 GB primary swap partition, and then a 67 GB primary Ext3 partition, all in the correct colors. Creating three primary partitions is unusual, but perfectly legal (the limit is four), so MEPIS passed.

**Slackware version 10.1:** Slackware provided no automatic partitioning at all. Rather than fumble around with FDISK and CFDISK (the two manual utilities provided), I just used Partition Magic 8 to create the same three partitions that Mandrake used. As it turned out, Slackware would have probably been happy with a swap partition and a single Ext3 partition. This was **not** an easy install. Nothing was automatic, and on reboot, it hung up. This was the first distribution that didn’t boot right away, no doubt because I hadn’t set it up properly. Like Gentoo, Slackware definitely isn’t for novices. I decided not to even try it in a dual boot situation. Exit Slackware

**Fedora Core 3:** For convenience, I chose “no firewall” during setup. When the installation was finished, I got both sound and Internet.

Partition Magic 8 reported a yellow 101 MB Ext3 primary partition and a yellow 76 GB “Type 8E (Hex)” primary partition, so something wasn’t right, but the system booted and everything worked, so FC3 passed.

**Round One Results:** Slackware failed. (Undoubtedly my fault, but being set up by a novice was part of the test, so it still failed). SUSE, Ubuntu and FC3 passed, but not perfectly. Only Mandrake and MEPIS had no problems.

### Round Two: type one installation

The five survivors were each installed on top of an XP SP2 system, on a hard disk laid out as follows: First, a 40 GB NTFS primary partition (the XP boot drive). Then, an 18 GB extended partition containing an 18 GB FAT32 logical drive

(to be used as a common data storage area). Finally, 20 GB of free space. (As usual, the advertised “80 GB” came up several **real** GB short). Before each distribution was loaded, the XP SP2 system was tested to make sure it could still boot (and was replaced by a Ghost backup if it couldn’t). While John was going to a lot of trouble to keep GRUB **out** of the MBR, I decided to waive that criteria for now and let the distributions put their boot loaders there if they wanted (and all of them did).

**SUSE LINUX Professional 9.2 (evaluation version):** SUSE didn’t have a specific “use only free space” option to select, but the built-in partition utility displayed default to-be-created sizes adding up to 20 GB, so I went ahead anyway and it did, in fact, use just the free space. Again, during setup, I disabled the firewall. When the computer re-booted, I got a screen with the following choices:

- SUSE Linux 9.2
- Windows
- Floppy
- SUSE Linux 9.2 (Failsafe)

I tested all four options. SUSE Linux 9.2 booted SUSE. As before, the Internet worked but my sound card didn’t. Windows booted XP just fine. Floppy went back and booted from the floppy drive. SUSE Linux 9.2 (Failsafe) **failed**. It hung up the computer and I had to reboot.

As before, Partition Magic 8 showed two new primary partitions. A 1 GB swap space and a 19 GB yellow Ext2 partition. So something still wasn’t quite right, but the dual boot options worked, so SUSE passed.

**Mandrake Linux version 10.1 Officialn:** Mandrake still uses the LILO bootloader. As before, setup went automatically, with no problems except that, like before, it made me manually configure my video card. On reboot, I got the following screen:

- linux
- linux-nonfb
- failsafe
- windows

The first two booted Mandrake and I got both sound and Internet. The third option took me to a command prompt. Not knowing what else to do, I typed “exit” and hit Enter. However, instead of shutting down as I expected, it loaded the GUI and I got both sound and internet. The fourth option booted XP.

Partition Magic 8 reported three new logical drives **inside** the extended partition, which now stretched all the way back to the end of the drive. A 6 GB Ext3, then a 1 GB swap, and then a 13 GB Ext3. Mandrake passed again.

**Ubuntu Linux version 4.10:**

Ubuntu only gave two choices: erase the entire disk or manually partition using the built-in utility. For this test, I just created one new Ext3 partition. On reboot, I got the following screen:

- Ubuntu, kernel 2.6.8.1-3-386
- Ubuntu, kernel 2.6.8.1-3-386 (recovery mode)

*Continued*

Memory test

Other operating systems:

Windows NT/2000/XP

The first option booted Ubuntu, and I got both sound and Internet. The second took me to a command prompt. I typed “exit” and hit Enter. As I now expected, the GUI loaded and I got both sound and Internet. As its name implied, the third option ran a computer memory test. The fourth option was only a label, but I tried selecting it anyway, just to be sure, because the last option **did not work!**

Partition Magic 8 reported a partition table #110 error, so it couldn't view the drive. DOS FDISK showed a new 20 GB non-DOS partition. It also showed a total disk space of only 13,655 MB, just like before. And, after I deleted the new partition, I couldn't get the XP system to boot. For the first time, FDISK /MBR wasn't good enough. Nor was anything else I tried. Ubuntu killed the whole drive. It had to be completely erased and re-Ghosted. Exit Ubuntu.

**MEPIS version 3.3:** MEPIS doesn't have an automatic “use only free space” option either, and I couldn't quickly figure out how to use its built-in QT Parted utility to create new Linux partitions that the setup program could actually use. The problem was, it would only let me make primary partitions, and it insisted on three. But the drive already had two, so it would only accept two more. (The limit is four. The extended partition, no matter how many logical drives it might contain, counts as one primary). However, it seemed to have a way to select and use three Linux partitions (/ , swap and home) if they ever **did** get created. So I re-booted from a floppy and used Partition Magic 8 to expand the extended partition and re-create the same three logical drives that Mandrake had produced automatically: a 6 GB Ext3, a 1 GB swap, and a 13 GB Ext3. Then I re-booted from the CD and, like I thought, it let me use them. Once everything was finished, I got the following boot menu:

```
MEPIS at hda6, kernel 2.6.10
MEPIS at hda6, kernel 2.4.29
Windows at hda1
MEMTEST
```

The first two options got sound and Internet. The third got XP. And the last got a computer memory test. So, despite the partitioning problems, MEPIS passed.

### **Fedora Core 3:**

I hit a whole bunch of bugs, which actually came up in windows labeled “Bug”. Two of them have been (sort of) reproduced below:

- Assertion (heads < 256) at disk\_dos.c:486 in function probe\_partition\_for\_geom() failed.
- Assertion ((C \* heads + H) \* sectors + S == A) at disk\_dos.c:486 in function probe\_partition\_for\_geom() failed.

FC3 finally crashed when an unhandled exception occurred. As they requested, I saved a copy of the crash dump on a floppy, to be sent to <http://bugzilla.redhat.com/bugzilla/>. From the

wording of the messages, it seems to be having trouble with my drive. Which, by the way, it totally killed. The hard disk had to be completely erased and re-Ghosted, so FC3 failed spectacularly.

**Round Two Results:** Ubuntu and FC3 failed. (But, because John's using it, FC3 will be given one more chance). SUSE and MEPIS passed, but not perfectly. Only Mandrake had no problems. After SUSE, Mandrake and MEPIS were erased, the DOS command FDISK /MBR was able to restore XP's ability to boot.

### **Round Three: type two installation**

The previous hard disk layout was flipped, to more closely match the club computer's XP SP2 system. First, 20 GB of free space. Then, an 18 GB extended partition containing an 18 GB FAT32 logical drive (to be used as a common data storage area). Finally, a 40 GB NTFS primary partition (the XP boot drive). As before, the XP SP2 system was tested each time to make sure it could still boot (and was replaced by a Ghost backup if it couldn't). And again, I decided to let the distributions put their boot loaders in the MBR if they wanted.

**SUSE LINUX Professional 9.2 (evaluation version):** No change from before — the sound still didn't work. As before, Partition Magic 8 showed two new primary partitions. A 1 GB swap space and a 19 GB yellow Ext2 partition. As before, something still wasn't quite right. **Unlike** before, the XP partition couldn't be made bootable again after the new partitions were deleted. So the entire drive had to be re-Ghosted, but the dual boot options worked, so SUSE passed again.

**Mandrake Linux version 10.1 Official:** No change from before. Everything worked fine, but it still wouldn't configure my video card automatically.

Partition Magic 8 reported that Mandrake expanded the extended partition to the start of the drive and created three new logical drives inside it: a 6 GB Ext3, a 1 GB swap, and a 13 GB Ext3. As with SUSE, the XP partition couldn't be made bootable again, so the entire hard disk had to be re-Ghosted. Mandrake passed again.

**MEPIS version 3.3:** No change from before — everything worked fine. This time, I created the new partitions with Partition Magic 8 before I even started. Unfortunately, but by now not unexpectedly, the XP partition couldn't be made bootable again, so the entire hard disk had to be re-Ghosted. MEPIS passed again.

**Fedora Core 3:** Given another chance, FC3 crashed once more, just as spectacularly. Again, I saved a copy of the crash dump on a floppy, to be sent to <http://bugzilla.redhat.com/bugzilla/>. And again, the hard disk was totally killed. It had to be completely erased and re-Ghosted, so FC3 failed again.

**Round Three Results:** Fedora Core 3 failed. SUSE, Mandrake and MEPIS passed as before. However, this time, nothing I tried in any of these cases could make the XP partition bootable again. Apparently, this XP-at-end partition

*Continued*

# Five More Annoying PC Annoyances

Steve Bass, Contributing Editor, PC World

When I wrote PC Annoyances, I thought I'd soon run out of annoyances to fix. Ha! No sooner had the book landed in bookstores than I was barraged with email from — who else? — PC World and O'Reilly readers, tossing me more annoyances to handle. That led to the second edition of PC Annoyances. I've added 160 more annoyances — and fixes — to the new book. (You can grab a copy on Amazon at <http://snurl.com/annoyed2> or see a sample at: [http://snurl.com/sample\\_annoy](http://snurl.com/sample_annoy).)

It didn't take long (nothing does with computers, right?) for readers to send another batch of irritating problems. So, for your reading pleasure, here are yet more annoyances. (These are actual annoyances contributed by annoyed PC World and O'Reilly readers.)

**Speed up Adobe Acrobat Reader:** I use Adobe's Reader 6 to read Acrobat PDF files, and it takes aeons to load on my already slow PC. Isn't there a way to speed it up?

The Fix: There's a quick-and-dirty fix that will make the Reader fly onto your screen. It's a free tool — Adobe Reader SpeedUp — that removes many of the add-ins the Reader or-

dinarily loads and few of us need. Get the tool at the [http://snipurl.com/adobe\\_speedup](http://snipurl.com/adobe_speedup).

**SP2 says "Reboot now":** I have Automatic Updates set to Automatic in Windows XP. But no matter what I'm doing, this last upgrade keeps smacking a message in the middle of my screen asking if I want to reboot now or wait until later. It's happening every ten minutes and driving me nuts, and no, I can't turn off this alert.

The Fix: Unpleasant as it is, when Microsoft has an update it considers critical for you to install, Automatic Updates slams an icon in your system tray. That's its not-so-subtle way of informing you that upgrades are available to download and install. But here's the rub: on these oh-so-very-critical updates, Windows wants you to reboot your system once the installation is complete. And like a pouty three-year-old, it doesn't care what you're in the middle of doing.

So when you click on the icon in the system tray and choose either Express Install or Custom Install in the dialog that appears, you're stuck. XP will keep reminding you to reboot until you're so aggravated that you throw in the towel, close all your open apps, and reboot. My recommendation? Wait

*Continued*

## Linux Tests, *continued*

layout (which, naturally, the club computer also uses) is much less resilient than the XP-at-start model. And I had wiped out the same hard drive fifteen times in a couple of days — a personal best.

### Conclusions

None of the distributions I tried were absolutely without problems. Listed from "worst" to "best":

Slackware shouldn't have been included here. Like Gentoo, it's an expert OS - simply **not** for beginners.

Fedora Core 3 crashed twice, so it didn't really get a fair test. But then again, maybe it did. After all, none of the others bombed on the same equipment. So maybe these problems **should** be counted as strikes against FC3.

Ubuntu has been rising in popularity very fast. Indeed, last time I checked out distrowatch, it had jumped over Mandrake to become number one, so it must have a lot of things going for it, but from these tests, **not** in the dual boot area.

It might not be SUSE's fault that Partition Magic didn't like the partitions it created, but it's not a great confidence builder either. Then there's the non-working sound card, and SUSE (now owned by Novell) is filled with Novell ads. (Their dual-boot screen sports a **big** SUSE/Novell logo). Worse, they want you to fill out a registration form to get **anything** — even for a copy of their "10 reasons to leave Windows" advertisement. That alone would make me reject SUSE.

Mandrake had only one minor problem: it detected my NVIDIA TNT2 AGP video card, but for some reason couldn't give it an automatic configuration. It made me configure it manually, yet at each step it gave me a default choice (which I always accepted), and then it worked fine. This small glitch

won't affect everybody, but it **does** indicate an area in which they've been less than thorough. Like SUSE, Mandrake is full of ads. They **really** want you to join their "user's club". (However, their dual-boot screen has the best looking, least intrusive menu of the bunch — a nice blue background with a small, discreet white logo at the bottom). But there's a cloud on the horizon. Mandrake has recently merged with South American Linux vendor Conectiva, so who knows what changes will be made before the next release?

MEPIS didn't have an automatic install unless you let it wipe out the whole drive. That's not good. I don't hold it against them that I couldn't quickly figure out how to correctly use their included QT Parted utility. (I hold it against the program's author, whoever that may be). All partition utilities do pretty much the same thing, so with the proper knowledge, I could probably have used QT Parted to do what I did with Partition Magic. On the plus side, the method provided for assigning and using the partitions I created (three drop-arrow boxes, one each for /, swap, and /home) was far, far superior to **anything** the others had. (That's how it is with great ideas. Some genius has to think of it first, but after that, it's obvious to everyone). On the minus side, their dual boot screen also has a big logo.

MEPIS still gets my vote as best, and MEPIS is a prime candidate for another of my computer projects, which (since I like silly initial slang) I call "The TCP/IP Initiative". In this case, TCP/IP means Totally and Completely Paranoid Internet Procedures. But, in the spirit of the old showbiz adage; "Always leave 'em wanting more", so I'll write about that project another time. ☐

# Paranoid Computing — An Introduction

Robert D. Hawes, ACGNJ

In June '04, I was surfing the net when something reminded me of an actress I'd seen on TV in the eighties but didn't see anywhere since, so I decided to search for her. I got quite a few hits. She's been active, but doing stuff that doesn't really interest me. Since I'd found her, I decided to take a closer look. **big** mistake. I wasn't looking for porn sites, or anything else stupid or dangerous — just following links to the name of an actress I'd seen on network TV (**not** NYPD Blue type shows, either), but I ran into some kind of booby trap. Two new shortcuts appeared on my desktop: "o" and "o.bat". Later, I found out that they were connected to a program called *infamous\_downloader.exe*. At the time, all I knew was they were signs of a hostile invader. Immediately, I cut off power to my computer, not even taking the time for a normal shutdown.

Given a choice, I'd **never** store **any** data files on the C: drive. Then, if I had trouble booting (due, say, to file corruption), or if I picked up some kind of virus, trojan, spyware, or whatever else this may have been, I could just wipe out that drive and start over. But in this case, I had to boot from a floppy and make a Ghost image of C: before I deleted it (to preserve those data files that the meddling minions of Microsoft won't let me **not** store there) Then, I used Ghost again to restore my previous image (luckily, made not so long before), booted from that and ran an intense virus scan on my data drives.

This experience got me thinking — about how I'd want to do things, and my favorite villain. If not for the enormous pile of intrusive bloatware that is Windows XP, we might have eliminated the hard drive by now (at least for the operating system). Imagine a "firmdrive". Externally, it looks like a hard disk. It's the same size and has the same connections, so it wouldn't require any change in computer hardware design. But internally, it has no moving parts. Just chips. And, once it's set up just the way you want, it can be changed to "read-only". Maybe with a hardware switch, so that no hacker, no matter how ingenious, can **ever** create a virus that can write to it unless **you** switch it back first. As for data, that could be stored on separate "firmdrives", or conventional hard drives (maybe even hot-swappable) — or stick memory.

Only a pipe-dream, right? Then, during my dual boot experiments, I ran into something that comes pretty darn close. SimplyMEPIS 3.3 CD. For that project, I installed MEPIS to a hard drive three times, but I also decided to see what I could do from the live CD, so I pulled my primary master, installed an empty FAT32 hard drive as the secondary master, and let the CD boot. Then, I started Firefox and tried some downloads:

minislack-0.4.iso	411,777,024	04-02-05	10:06a
yos-i686-2.1.0-4.iso	726,634,496	04-02-05	8:22p
dynebolic-1.4.1.iso	614,039,552	04-02-05	10:40p
puppy-1.0.0alpha2-firefox-multisession.iso	61,241,344	04-02-05	11:47p

Slackware didn't do well in my dual-boot tests. Minislack is a smaller, possibly more newbie-friendly version, so in fairness I thought I'd give it a try. That morning, I couldn't get a decent transfer speed, but I let the first download run anyway, to see if it would complete OK (which it did). Then I shut everything down for the rest of the day. In the evening, the other

downloads went better. Yos is Yoper (Your Operating System), an Australian distribution. I downloaded their previous version last year, but didn't do anything much with it. I'd never heard of dynebolic before, but something about the name caught my fancy. And puppy is a "complete" mini-system that can supposedly save its user settings to multiple sessions on its boot CD-R (**not** RW) disk.

There were more releases I wanted to investigate, but I stopped at that point. I had enough files to fill about half a DVD, so it was time for another test. The MEPIS CD was running in my Sony DVD reader (primary slave). The CD's built-in K3B 0.11.20 CD/DVD writer program recognized my Iomega DVD writer (secondary slave). I loaded those four files into a project layout, and wrote them to a DVD+RW disk. Then I wrote another copy to a DVD-RW disk. Good so far. I got out four CD-RW disks and burned a CD from each image with no problems. Then it was time to leave.

I shut down the computer and removed the MEPIS CD, then booted from each of the four CD-RW disks. Each disk booted just fine, and I'm sure they would have installed correctly if I'd let them. But at that point, I just wanted to see if they could boot. Then I re-installed my regular primary master hard disk and started Windows. Both DVDs were readable by Windows Explorer, and all four files on each one compared equally to the files on the source hard drive (still the secondary master), so I decided to push the envelope. At 3.13 GB, the SUSE DVD image from the dual boot tests was the largest file I had ever downloaded. I put a copy of it on the secondary master, plus all 50 files from my current Nero DVD project. (A 4,478 MB bootable disk. It wasn't quite the fullest DVD I'd ever made, but it came close). (Nero lists 4,483 MB as the maximum capacity for DVD+R, 4,489 MB for DVD-R). Then I removed the primary master and booted from the MEPIS CD again.

I burned a DVD+RW disk from the SUSE image with no problems. Then, before making the big DVD, I decided to throw K3B a curve. I loaded the SUSE download (as a file) into a new data DVD project and burned it to an ISO9660 CDFS DVD-RW disk. And it **worked!** That wasn't what I was expecting. Nero **can't** do that. It has to change to the UDF format for files over 2 GB. Had K3B switched without telling me first? I put that question aside and proceeded to the big DVD. I loaded its 50 files and its 13 MB hard drive boot image into a new project layout, and tried to burn it to a DVD-RW disk. It immediately bombed with a "Fatal error at startup: Input/output error" message. I then tried DVD+RW, DVD-R and DVD+R disks, all with the same result.

So I shut it down and rebooted from the SUSE DVD+RW, which worked fine until I aborted it. Next, I examined the DVD-RW disk under Windows, which could read the disk, identified it as CDFS, and compared the file on the disk to the source file exactly. Finally, I booted from one of my DOS floppies and was able to see the file. So it's definitely a CDFS disk, because vide-cdd.sys (my DOS boot disk driver) gets a "CDR103: CDROM not High Sierra or ISO-9660 format reading drive" message when it tries to view UDF disks. So I've got two mysteries to solve and seven or eight new operating systems to test before the next issue. ☐

# SIG News

## Investing

*Norm Wiss (cut.up@verizon.net)*

[http://www.acgnj.org/groups/sig\\_investment.htm](http://www.acgnj.org/groups/sig_investment.htm)

The Investment SIG continues with presentations on how to use analysis programs TC2000 and TCNet. Large charts are presented on our pull down screen and illustrate the application of computer scans and formulas to find stocks for profitable investments. Technical analysis determines buy points, sell points and projected moves. Technical analysis can also be used on fundamentals such as earnings, sales growth, etc. **Our next meeting: Thursday, May 12.** ☐

## NJ Gamers

*Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)*

<http://www.angelfire.com/linux/gamers/>

[www.lanparty.com](http://www.lanparty.com)

**The next Friday Night Frag is Friday May 13 at 6:00 pm.. \$5.00.** Friday 10:00 pm to Saturday 12:00 noon. \$5.00. BYOC - Bring your own computer, BYOF - Bring your own food, and if you don't like sitting on metal chairs... BYO chair! ☐

## Window Pains

*John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)*

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

Meetings are on the third Friday of the month.

**May 20:** Anti Spyware and Anti-Adware

**June 17:** HDTV ☐

## Visual Basic

*Rick Elbanna (rick@mastersofthecode.com)*

<http://mastersofthecode.com/html/sig.htm>

This is a public Special Interest Group affiliated with ACGNJ computer club and sponsored by Online Marketing Network LLC and Ricardo Capelli Associates LLC. This is a co-operative meeting with the Excel VBA and WebDev group. Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at East Brunswick Public Library in East Brunswick, New Jersey. Meeting times vary depending on the busy schedule of the Library. Times will be emailed to interested developers — send email to Rick to put your name on the notification list. Because of limited seating, those expecting to attend should email Rick prior to the meeting. Walk-ins are welcome, but are not guaranteed a seat. ☐

## LUNICS (Linux/Unix)

*Andreas Meyer (lunics@acgnj.org)*

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

LUNICS is a group for those who share an interest in Unix and similar operating systems. While we do quite a bit with Linux, we've also been known to discuss Solaris and BSD too. We generally meet on the first Monday of the month at 8:00 PM at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information. **Upcoming meeting is May 2, 2005.** ☐

## Web Dev

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for all Website Development techniques and technologies, to encourage the study and development of web sites of all kinds. All languages will be considered and examined. Anyone interested please contact the Chairperson in charge. The current project is a CMS for the club. Anyone interested in starting a new project, come to the meeting and announce / explain. Provide as much detail as possible. One can also send projects to the ACGNJ Newsletter editor for inclusion in the next volume.

WebDev should be an all-encompassing development and examination forum for all issues, applications, OS, languages and systems one can use to build Websites. We currently have two Web dev languages .NET and Java as SIGs but the other languages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola-MAC etc. ☐

## Human Networking

<http://www.acgnj.org/groups/hns.htm>

*Mark Douches (mad-networking@pobox.com)*

The purpose of this SIG is to expand the number of professionals that we know so that connections can be made into different markets or industries when a career change or business need is necessary. We are not just a group of people who like computers or technology. Our membership consists of Information Technology professionals from various industries. We will discuss over a time period the tools and skills that are necessary to cross a bridge advance your career. Meetings are held 2nd Wednesday of the Month at 7:00 P.M. ☐

## Genealogy

*Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)*

<http://www.webwarren.com/kb4cyc/gensig.html>

Genealogy SIG is for genealogists interested in computers and computer users interested in genealogy, and is a forum to assist members in furtherance of both endeavors. Meetings usually focus on genealogy more than on computers. We meet at 8 PM on the fourth Thursday of the month, and we have been exploring available on-line and CD-ROM databases at our recent meetings. In addition to our Web page, we also have an electronic mailing list. Messages to the list should be addressed to [gensig@webwarren.com](mailto:gensig@webwarren.com). To subscribe, include the line "subscribe gensig" in the body of the message. ☐

## C/C++ Programming

Bruce Arnold ([barnold@blast.net](mailto:barnold@blast.net))

<http://www.blast.net/barnold>

At our **March** meeting, Bitmap processing was demonstrated with a program called "ViewPICT". This is an update of a program presented here in July, 2001. Later that year, Paul DiLascia (MSDN Oct. 2001) wrote an article called "Displaying a JPG in your MFC Application" In that article, he created a class called CPicture that encapsulates some new functions. The advantage is that you are no longer limited to just .BMP files. JPG's and others are OK too. OleLoadPicture loads the picture from the stream and creates a new IPicture object you can use to display the picture. As usual, code discussed can be downloaded via a link at our Website. ☐

## Main Meeting

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

Evan Williams ([nhpressgo@blast.net](mailto:nhpressgo@blast.net))

May 6: John Raff on "How to Rescue a Computer"

June 3: To be announced ☐

## DotNet

Manuel J. Goyenechea ([mgoya@comcast.net](mailto:mgoya@comcast.net))

<http://www.servertec.com/dotnetsig>

Whether you are a seasoned .NET professional or new to .NET, you will find the .NET SIG an invaluable resource.

Because I had a very bad cold, my presentation, "An In-depth Look At The .Net Compact Framework" which was scheduled for the March meeting, was postponed to our April meeting. Instead Evan Williams demonstrated "Microsoft SQL Server 2000 Reporting Services".

Now available for download An In-depth Look At The Mono .NET Implementation PowerPoint presentation and examples from February 17, 2005 meeting:

[http://www.acgnjdotnetsig.org/An\\_Indepth\\_Look\\_At\\_Mono.zip](http://www.acgnjdotnetsig.org/An_Indepth_Look_At_Mono.zip) ☐

## Macintosh Users

Keith Sproul ([ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu](mailto:ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu))

This group is no longer meeting, but Keith is still available to help Mac users via telephone or email. ☐

## VBA & Excel

Jim Ditaranto ([fryr92a@prodigy.com](mailto:fryr92a@prodigy.com))

<http://www.excelvba.homestead.com>

VBA is implemented in Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Project and Microsoft Access, and will be implemented in Word and PowerPoint. Anyone interested in using any Microsoft Office and VBA is invited — 7 PM third Monday. Currently Jim is improving his skill set, so David McRitchie and John Raff will carry the banner. ☐

May 2005

## Java

Mike Redlich ([mike@redlich.net](mailto:mike@redlich.net))

<http://www.redlich.net/javasig/>

The Java Users Group covers beginner, intermediate, and advanced level Java programming. Primary focus is on developing useful/practical applets and applications, but can include related topics such as Java I/O, JavaBeans, Reflection, object-oriented programming and software design issues. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month starting promptly at 7:30 PM.

**April 12**, — Yakov Fain will discuss the Java Messaging Service (JMS). Any modern financial trading system is a complex distributed application that runs on multiple platforms and consists of components and services that have to communicate with each other. This presentation is about using JMS and Message-Oriented Middleware as a backbone that provides a fast and reliable delivery mechanism between various components and tiers of such systems. It is based on Yakov's real-world experience in design, development, and production support of an application that had to wire together midrange computers with J2EE and LDAP servers, non-Java stock exchange software, and mainframe legacy reporting ☐

## Layman's Forum

Matt Skoda ([som359@aol.com](mailto: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. ☐

## MCP

(Microsoft Certified Professional)

Gregg McCarthy ([greggmc@optonline.net](mailto:greggmc@optonline.net))

<http://www.angelfire.com/linux/gamers/mcse.html>

The MCSE SIG is a study group with the goal of preparing for the Microsoft Certification Exams. In February of 2000 "Windows 2000" debuted along with new MCSE tests. It's two years later and we have settled somewhere between W2k Pro/Server and Windows XP in our studies. Windows NT while still viable, is history as far as Microsoft is concerned. Windows .NET server should be out this year and should look like Windows XP-Server.

The books we will be using are "Mastering Windows 2000 Server" by Mark Minasi and the "MCSE Self-Paced Training Kit" from Microsoft Press. These books are important because as a study group we won't have a teacher to explain the concepts. We'll **need** to discuss them in the group. This is a study group, not a class taught by a teacher. Since hands-on training is crucial in acquiring the skills needed for these tests, we try to focus on lab work as well. The Microsoft training kits are good for labs.

**We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 7 pm to 10 pm.** Attendees are encouraged to bring a PC properly configured with NT, 10BaseT network card, and Netmeeting 2.1. For more info, reading assignments, course schedule, visit our website. ☐

# Guru Corner

Jo-Anne Head ([tinarock@aol.com](mailto:tinarock@aol.com))

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

	<b>Hardware</b>	
	Scott Vincent	973-539-8169
	<b>Software</b>	
HTML	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
	Mike Redlich	908-537-4915
CSS	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
ColdFusion	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
Java	Mike Redlich	908-537-4915
C++	Bruce Arnold	908-735-7898
	Mike Redlich	908-537-4915
ASP	Mike Redlich	908-537-4915
Perl	John Raff	973-560-9070
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
XML	Mike Redlich	908-537-4915
e-Commerce	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Genealogy	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Networking	Scott Vincent	973-539-8169
Home Automation	Charlie Huffsmith	732-549-1734
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
	<b>Operating Systems</b>	
WindowsNT	Scott Vincent	973-361-5793
Windows95	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Windows98	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Windows3.1	Ted Martin	732-636-1942
	Charlie Huffsmith	732-549-1734
	<b>Macintosh</b>	
Mac O/S	Keith Sproul	(732) 821-4828

## 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](mailto: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/membership\\_update.htm](http://www.acgnj.org/membership_update.htm) and pay dues with PayPal.

	US/CANADA	FAMILY OF MEMBER (No Newsletter)	Dues	FOREIGN	STUDENT	SENIOR CITIZEN (Over 65)
1 Year	\$25	\$10		\$55	\$20	\$20
2 Years	\$40					
3 Years	\$55					\$45

Mail this application and your check to:  
**AMATEUR COMPUTER GROUP OF NEW JERSEY, INC., P.O. BOX 135, SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ 07076**

New Member    Renewal    Address Change

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ URL \_\_\_\_\_

What topics would you like to see covered at club meetings? \_\_\_\_\_

Other Local Computer Groups		
<b>Princeton Macintosh User Group:</b> 7:15 pm 2nd Tuesday, Jadwin Hall, Princeton U. (609) 252-1163	<b>NY/NJ/CT Relational Database User Group:</b> Corporate and independent users. (212) 839-0125	<b>New York Personal Computer Club:</b> For information call hotline, (212) 533-NYPC
<b>Computer Education Society of Philadelphia:</b> 7:30 pm, 2nd Wednesday, St. Asaph's Episcopal Church. Lee Le'mon, (717)786-2260	<b>Brookdale Computer Users Group:</b> 7 pm, 3rd Friday, NAS 100 at Brookdale Community College, Lincroft NJ. (732-739-9633) <a href="http://www.bcug.com">www.bcug.com</a>	<b>Macintosh User Group:</b> Third Tuesday, Dickson Hall, Montclair State University, Montclair NJ. (201) 893-5274 <a href="http://www.njmug.org">http://www.njmug.org</a> .
<b>WordPerfect SIG of PCUG of So. Jersey:</b> 2nd Mon., 2101 Chapel Ave., Cherry Hill NJ after 7pm Main Meeting. <a href="http://www.pcugsj.org">http://www.pcugsj.org</a>	<b>Hunterdon Computer Club:</b> 8:30 am to noon 3rd Saturday, Hunterdon Medical Center, Rt 31, Flemington. (908) 995-4042	<b>PC Club of South Jersey:</b> 7 pm, 2nd Monday, 2101 Chapel Ave, Cherry Hill NJ. L. Horn, (856) 983-5360. <a href="http://www.pcugsj.org">http://www.pcugsj.org</a>
<b>Philadelphia Area Computer Society:</b> 3rd Sat., 9 am Main Meeting, groups follow. Drexel Univ., Philadelphia. Pat Murphy, (609) 428-8759	<b>Central Jersey Computer Club:</b> 8 pm, 4th Friday, Rm 74, Armstrong Hall, Trenton St. College. Rich Williams, (609) 466-0909.	<b>NJ PC Users Group:</b> Bergen County Community College, Paramus NJ. Maureen Shannon, (201) 853-7432
<b>Morris Micro Computer Club:</b> Bill Traywick, (201) 635-5393.	<b>Fairlawn Computer Club:</b> Last Monday, Fairlawn Senior Citizen Center. Joe Mathias ( <a href="mailto:fair.lawn.computer.club@juno.com">fair.lawn.computer.club@juno.com</a> )	<b>Princeton PC Users Group:</b> 2nd Monday, Lawrence Library, Rt 1 & Darrah Ln, Lawrenceville, Paul Kurivchack (908) 218-0778, <a href="http://www.ppcug-nj.org">http://www.ppcug-nj.org</a>
<b>Workshop, Hands-On:</b> 2 P.M. to Midnight on last Saturday of the month. First United Methodist Church, Church and Atlantic Streets (one mile from GSP exit 117A), Aberdeen NJ. Bring your project, computer and extension cord. For information call Burke Mawby, (908) 566-7445.		

## 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](mailto:bdegroot@ptd.net). Classified ads are free to members, one per issue. Non-members pay \$10. Send check payable to ACGNJ Inc. with copy. Reasonable length, please.



<http://www.apcug.net>

## Radio and TV Programs

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

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

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

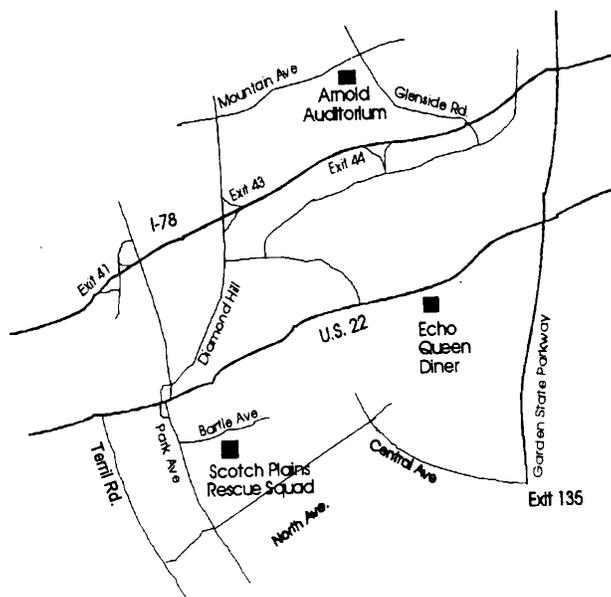
**PC Talk,** Sunday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., 1210 AM Philadelphia. 1800-876-WPEN, Webcast at <http://www.pctalkweb.net>.

### PC Shows Inc (KGP)

(Visit <http://www.pshow.com>)

**May 14-15:** New Jersey Convention Center, Raritan Center, Edison, NJ

**June 4-5:** New Jersey Convention Center, Raritan Center, Edison, NJ ☐



## 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. ☐

## Annoyances, continued from page 10

till the end of the day before clicking on the icon and agreeing to take the update.

**Kill Some Time:** How about reminiscing back to the time before web bugs, spam, and, well, the internet. Remember “NYC’s Bozo Show,” “Wonderama,” and “The Felix the Cat Show”? (Didn’t think I was that old, eh?): <http://www.tvparty.com/lostny2.html>.

**Unfreeze Windows XP:** Upgrade to Windows XP Service Pack 2 went like a breeze. But suddenly your system freezes.

The Fix: I know, you want me to tell you why XP crashed and how to prevent it from happening. You could try switching to a Mac or waiting for me to write a 1,600 page-tome (neither of which I suspect will happen). In the meantime, here’s a quick way to get yourself out of the jam. Even though Windows XP is locked up solid, chances are good you can still open Task Manager by pressing Ctrl-Alt-Del. In Task Manager, click on the Processes tab, choose Explorer.exe, and click on End Process. Then select File -> New Task (Run), type explorer, and click on OK. No harm if it doesn’t work; nifty rescue if it does.

**AOL idle Terminator:** The Annoyance: I’ve about had it with America Online. Even if I’m downloading a big file, I have to respond to that pesky “You have been idle” warning. Hey, AOL, I’m not idling!

The Fix: You need the Terminator. And no, it’s not the California governor. It’s a tool that keeps your AOL connection cooking past the 46-minute envelope allowed by AOL. And it doesn’t matter whether you’re downloading a humongous file

or just sitting and, yes, idling. The program’s free to try and costs a mere \$5 if you keep it. Grab a copy at [http://snipurl.com/AOL\\_terminator](http://snipurl.com/AOL_terminator).

**Kill Some Time:** I’m often accused of offering links that are too cerebral. That, of course, just ain’t true. Witness Blacksheep (at <http://snipurl.com/blacksheep>), a cool mouse-clicking Flash game. The trick is to pass the cursor over just the black squares, never the red ones. (Warning: lower your PC’s volume.)

**Importing DVD presentations in PowerPoint:** I’m well experienced with PowerPoint and can import most everything — except DVD videos. I’ve been hunting high and low for a way to do it; is there a trick I’m missing?

The Fix: You can call off the dogs. The trick is to spend \$99 for Visible Light OnStage DVD for PowerPoint. The handy utility adds itself to PowerPoint, and with it you can import DVDs to your heart’s content. For details and a trial version visit <http://www.snipurl.com/visiblelight>.

**Kill Some Time:** You know what happens when you get to a web page that no longer exists, right? You get a 404 error. Here’s one that’s a huge waste of time and will keep you busy past at least one deadline: <http://www.ukpaganlinks.co.uk/404.htm>.

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## ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

### Monday, May 2, 2005

8 P.M. - Lunics (Linux/Unix). Andreas Meyer ([lunics@acgnj.org](mailto:lunics@acgnj.org)).

### Tuesday, May 3

ACGNJ Board of Directors meeting.

### Wednesday, May 4

7 P.M. - MCSE Study Group, Gregg McCarthy ([greggmc@optonline.net](mailto:greggmc@optonline.net)).

### Friday, May 6

8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Evan Williams ([nhpresgo@blast.net](mailto:nhpresgo@blast.net)).

### Monday, May 9

8 P.M. - Layman’s Forum, Matt Skoda ([som359@aol.com](mailto:som359@aol.com)), 908-359-8842. Thursday, September 9

### Monday, May 9

Visual Basic, Rick Elbanna ([rick@mastersofthe.code.com](mailto:rick@mastersofthe.code.com)), meets at East Brunswick Public Library in East Brunswick on the second Monday of each month. Meeting time varies due to the Library’s busy schedule and seating is limited, so those interested in attending are asked to email Rick.

### Tuesday, May 10

7:30 P.M. - Java, Mike Redlich ([mike@redlich.net](mailto:mike@redlich.net)) 908-537-4915.

### Wednesday, May 11

7 P.M. - Human Networking, Mark Douces ([mad-networking@pobox.com](mailto:mad-networking@pobox.com))

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

### Thursday, May 12

8 P.M. - Investing, Norm Wiss ([cut.up@verizon.net](mailto:cut.up@verizon.net)).

### Friday, May 13

6 P.M. to 5 A.M.- Gamers Guild. Gregg McCarthy ([greggmc@optonline.net](mailto:greggmc@optonline.net)), 732-721-6507. Break from 8 to 10 P.M.

### Monday, May 16

8 P.M. - VBA, Jim Ditaranto ([fryr92a@prodigy.com](mailto:fryr92a@prodigy.com)), 201-986-1104

### Tuesday, May 17

8 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold ([barnold@blast.net](mailto:barnold@blast.net)), 908-735-7898

### Wednesday, May 18

8 P.M. - WebDev ([greggmc@optonline.net](mailto:greggmc@optonline.net)).

### Thursday, May 19

8 P.M. -Dot .Net, Manuel Goyenechea, ([mgoya@comcast.net](mailto:mgoya@comcast.net)).

### Friday, May 20

8 P.M. - Window Pains, John Raff.

8 P.M. - Lotus Notes, Mike Barlow ([barlowm@bright-ideas.com](mailto:barlowm@bright-ideas.com)), (732) 417-5778 ext 5. Meetings at Bright Ideas offices.

### Thursday, May 26

8 P.M. - Genealogy. Frank Warren ([kb4cyc@webwarren.com](mailto:kb4cyc@webwarren.com)), 908-756-1681.

### Tuesday, May 31

ACGNJ Board of Directors meeting. ☐