

Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

Volume 32, Number 10

December 2007

It's Election Time Again



Happy Holidays



<http://www.acgnj.org>

Founded 1975

In addition to the slate of officers and directors to be elected, there is also a proposal for a change in the Constitution and By-Laws to be voted on by the members.

This change, proposed by Bruce Arnold, will allow the SIG Leaders to vote at BOD meetings. The exact wording of the amendment will be presented at the Main Meeting, December 7.

As usual, elections will be held at the Main Meeting on December 7. Nominations will be accepted from the floor until the actual voting begins, and yes, you can nominate yourself..

The Election Slate

President Mike Redlich
Vice President Mark Douches
Treasurer Malthi Masurekar
Secretary Paul Syers

Directors

<Open> 1 year term
Gregg McCarthy 2 year term
Arnold Milstein 2 year term
John Raff 2 year term
<Open> 2 year term

Obviously we need volunteers to fill the open seats on the Board — we urge you to consider volunteering some of your time — it's only one evening a month! ☐

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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?

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

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Address Changes should be directed to Martin Rosenblum (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.

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Further Adventures in Time Travel

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

I've wanted to use this title for about two years. I thought of it, but didn't get to use it, while writing my 2005/2006 series of rants about "Time Bugs". (Those are the phenomena that have been driving me **crazy** for over a decade, but which nobody else seems to care about, or even notice). Don't panic. We **won't** be talking about them this time. I promise. Mostly, the kind of time travel I'll be covering this month is the kind that we all do every day: minute by minute into the future. In other (more intelligible) words, our topic this month mostly concerns backups of one form or another.

Here's our first time traveling example: As I somewhat explained in previous issues, much of this article was actually written in a three to four week period beginning in the last days of June (just about when the deadline would have been for our non-existent July issue). My intention was to get an early start on my September article. That way, when the inevitable summer distractions came along, I'd have something "in the bank". However, some sections developed a decidedly "Halloweeny" flavor, so they were postponed until October. The rest developed a "follow-uppy" flavor. Thus, parts (combined with new material) became my November article, and the rest (with some new stuff as well) got held over until now. As a result, after putting in about a month's worth of advanced work, I still had to start all over from scratch to cover September, and you're not seeing this until December. Cue the weepy violin music. (To those of you who don't like behind-the-scenes details, I apologize; but **I** enjoy reading that kind of story. So when I've got one of my own, I tend to tell it). After this, I've got two other articles in partial development, and two **more** in status "stalled pending inspiration". If I don't wimp out on my plans for *Linux From Scratch*, that'll generate even more material. I should be covered well beyond next summer's hiatus. As far as this newsletter goes, I'm heading into the future with a bang.

Anyway, let's get started. First, we have to go back fourteen years into the past. (See! Time traveling all over the place). I got my first tape backup drive in 1993. It was a Colorado Jumbo 250, which used 120 MB DC2120 tape cartridges. Eventually, I amassed about fifty tapes, and **six** tape drives. There's a sad story (which I'll tell you in a minute or two) that explains why I bought a second tape drive right away. The others just sort of multiplied, when I found that the tapes could be used for more than just backups. I had several friends who had similar drives, all of which could read and write the DC2120 tapes. As a cynic might expect, that "250" claim was a big, fat lie; but with compression, you could usually count on fitting about 180 MB of data on those 120 MB capacity tapes. Those tapes and drives became my first mass data "transmission" method; to and from my friends, and between my own computers as well. Think of it as "sneaker net" on steroids. (This was a few years before I got into cable-connected networking).

That first tape drive came bundled with *Colorado Backup for DOS* (CBD) software, which I immediately and enthusiastically adopted. Before that, I made backups to floppy disks,

first using the BACKUP programs that came with MS-DOS 3.3 and 5.0, then using Central Point Backup (a component of PC Tools). Shortly after I first successfully used the tapes as a file transfer medium, I thought about using them for compact, long term mass storage as well. In pursuit of that goal, I began a project which, I'm sorry to say, I **still** haven't finished. I assembled 364 floppy disks containing previous backups, intending to transfer their contents to tape. (It's actually the same philosophy as making frequent current backups. It's not as if I really expect to ever use any of them. However, in the extremely unlikely event that I do need some again, those old files will still be there waiting; ready, willing and able).

I only made one tape from those floppies, though, before running into some technical glitches that caused me to suspend the project. (I **didn't** abandon it, but I didn't do much work on it for a few years, either). I had CD **reading** drives even before the tape drives, but a personally affordable CD **writer** didn't become available until 1997. I got *Colorado Backup for Windows 95* (CBW95) at just about the same time. (Before that, I also had *Colorado Backup for Windows 3.1*, but I **never, ever** used it). CBW95 was missing some features of CBD (an annoying but unfortunately quite common occurrence in Windows programs advertised as "upgrades" from DOS versions), but it had a new feature that I liked a lot: You didn't actually need a tape. You could back up to a QIC file on the hard disk that was just **pretending** to be a tape. I cut back on using the tapes as my primary backup method, and started making QIC files, which I'd then burn to CDs. A few months later, I decided to re-activate my floppy-to-tape backup preservation project, except this time transferring both floppy **and** tape backups to CD. That's when I made a startling discovery.

In less than five years, **all** of my tapes had begun to fail. It didn't matter how long I'd been using them, either. From my very first tape to my most recent purchase, they all developed read errors within a **really** short interval. (Of course, its possible that every single tape of that particular type was manufactured at essentially the same time; but some of them spent more time "on the shelf" than others). Whatever the case, I consider such a short life span to be **completely** unacceptable. At that same time, my collection of old floppy backups had grown to five hundred disks, all about ten years old. (I **hadn't** made any new ones. I just dug up a bunch more old ones). Of those disks, only **eleven** had read errors, and only **two of them** were completely inaccessible. (It's true! They don't make 'em like they used to). So, with the **tapes** now inaccessible, the backup-saver project got stalled again.

Here's another example of possible computer related planned obsolescence: Years ago, I had three 32X CD drives (two IDE, one SCSI) in three different computers. All three of them stopped working **within the same week!** Was it a strange coincidence, or a fiendish plot? You decide.

Now, as promised, here's a comparatively short version of the sad story mentioned above: Once upon a time, there was an early national computer club (then **very** popular, now long

Continued

gone). Over the years, they had assembled a library of about a thousand floppy disks containing freeware and shareware programs, split fairly evenly between CP/M and DOS. They sold those disks by mail, but members who brought their own blank floppies to local chapter meetings could make copies for free. In the late eighties, when data CDs began growing in popularity, the national chapter decided to make (and sell) a CD of that library. Since many of those floppies were 360 KB, all of them would have fit on one single CD. They began the CD creation process by consolidating those floppies onto hard disks, and as a precaution, they got a tape drive to back up the hard disks. Unfortunately, their headquarters were in San Francisco, and San Francisco had an earthquake. They lost all their hard disks and they lost their tape drive; but their backup tapes survived. So they got a replacement tape drive, and tried to restore their data; but the new drive couldn't read *any* of their tapes. (Nowadays, many so-called backup programs don't even bother to include a "compare" function; but their particular backup software had it, and they'd used it. Therefore, they *knew* that those backup tapes had been good when made). So they took the problem to the tape drive manufacturer. They were told that the head on their *first* drive must have been out of alignment. The manufacturer would have gladly fixed that error by re-aligning the old tape drive's head, but absolutely flat out *refused* to try to adjust the new drive's head to read the existing tapes. So: no restored files, no CD, and (eventually) no club.

The moral; "When creating removable media, always be sure that your results can be read by an entirely separate device; *not* just by the unit that produced them". I've heeded this warning for my Jumbo tape backups, then for CD reader/writers, then for DVD reader/writers. I've actually had some instances where a CD or DVD created by one drive couldn't be read on another, so I consider this advice to be *very* well taken.

A corollary second moral (based on my own experience with backup tapes) would be; "Before you make backups, find out just how long your backup media is likely to last". I'd heard that optical media were supposed to be more-or-less eternal. Since CD/DVD disks are optical media, I thought I was all set this time. I should have known better. It seems that many of the blank CDs and DVDs being sold today can begin to fail due to corrosion in as little as *two years*. Wow! Talk about planned obsolescence; and to think I considered a five year tape life span bad. Quoting myself (from my November, 2005 article *Much Ado About A Bad Ethernet Cable*): "There is no quality. There is only price". Even though it was my own idea, I really *hate* this little bit of homespun philosophy; but more and more these days (quoting Walter Cronkite's famous tag line from over a quarter century ago): "That's the way it is".

I've quoted computer columnist Jerry Pournelle, too (in my April 2006 article *Paranoid Computing Revisited*). Currently, he has a Web site, featuring a blog and a lot of other things (www.jerrypournelle.com). Jerry generates more material now, but I find that I'm reading him less often. No matter how interesting the topic may be, reading stuff from a computer screen is just *not* as relaxing as reading a column in a magazine.

Maybe someday it will be, but *not yet*. Whatever. One thing he does now that he couldn't do before is publish questions from his readers. Sometimes, Jerry knows the answer himself, but often he hands it off to his group of "Advisors"; the people he turns to when *he* has a technical problem. The third letter in Jerry's "Mailbag" for March 19, 2007, from a person identified only as "Sean", concerned CD R life spans. Advisor Robert Bruce Thompson replied; "All Taiyo-Yuden disks are first rate. Verbatim in the past has relabeled some garbage disks, but in the last few years they've been selling only first rate disks (8X ones labeled MCC003 and 16X ones labeled MCC004 are completely reliable)". Advisor David Em noted that Delkin makes gold CDs and DVDs they claim will last 100 - 200 years. David then said that he uses portable hard disks for his own backups. Jerry concluded by saying; "On Bob Thompson's advice given me a good dozen years ago I have looked for and bought Taiyo-Yuden and Verbatim media rather than the el cheapo specials one sees in bins near the checkout line".

If you want to see the complete letter and all replies, follow this link (remember, it's the **third** letter):

www.chaosmanorreviews.com/open_archives/jep_20070319_mail.php

As part of his reply, Thompson included some links to his own Web site. There (his "Daynotes Journal" for the week of 12 June 2006), he displayed the results of tests he performed, and named the brands that *nobody* should *ever* buy. Here are direct links:

<http://www.ttgn.net.com/daynotes/2006/2006-24.html#Mon>

<http://www.ttgn.net.com/daynotes/2006/2006-24.html#Fri>

Now, I should point out that if you do a web search, you'll get many results that just cite the 100-200 year figure mentioned above, and don't bring up the sub-standard disk problem at all. In my opinion, the authors of those sites have their heads stuck firmly in the sand. When quality isn't a consideration (as it's definitely *not* these days), the cheap junk *always* drives out the good stuff. Just ask all those people who recently bought toys that were covered with lead paint, made in (country of origin deleted due to fear of lawsuits and/or nuclear weapons).

In the end, all I really have is my own personal experience. In the ten years since I got my first CD writer, I've produced about 200 data CDs. Right after I made each and every one, I did a complete binary comparison test on a different (usually read-only) CD drive. That took *a lot* of extra time, but I consider it to have been worth it, because I've turned up several "bad burns" over the years. So far, of those 200 disks that I made myself, only *one* that passed its initial quality tests has now turned up bad. Just a few months ago, when I tried to get some old data off of it, I got read errors. That CD was created on September 5, 1999. It was definitely accessed several times after that, but probably not often after 2001. Thus, I can't say how much longer than two years it lasted, but it definitely didn't last more than seven. Considering the current spate of computer-related lawsuits, I can't in good conscience put the club or myself in jeopardy by publishing the manufacturer's name. (I don't think this particular corporation has

Continued

Further Adventures in Time Travel, *continued*

nuclear weapons; but hey, you never know). So I've had one now-bad CD that possibly lasted longer than the DC2120 tapes, but not *nearly* as long as the vast majority of my old floppy disk backups.

Like David Em above, a lot of people seem to be using portable hard disks these days. Unfortunately, my own experience casts a pall over that idea, too. One of my hard disks (manufactured, according to its label, on February 18, 2002) just recently succumbed to the "click of death" (and it took my new "semi-permanent" Ubuntu Linux installation with it). An only slightly more than five and a half year life span like that doesn't bode well for the use of hard disks as a long-term backup medium, either.

In his "wrap-up" to the link above, Jerry Pournelle speculated that, in this case, the Library of Congress is the closest thing that the US government has to an official arbiter of quality. Unless they settle on a verifiably rugged standard for long-term digital storage, then use their considerable purchasing power to enforce it by buying *only* devices and media that meet such a standard; Jerry thought (and I reluctantly agree) that there's probably not much anybody else can do except try the best they can to buy only the good stuff.

As a pessimist might expect, of the thirty-two unused CD-R, twenty-four unused DVD+R and forty-six unused DVD-R disks I currently have on hand, *not one* of them is from a Thompson-approved brand. At least, none of them is from a "complete garbage" brand, either. I searched the Internet for Delkin disks, and found that their "Archival Gold" CD-R disks cost from \$1.63 to \$2.40 *each*, while their "Archival Gold" DVD-R disks cost from \$2.97 to \$3.40 each. (Both prices vary due to where you buy them, as well as how many you buy at a time). They also sell "Archival Gold Scratch Armor" DVD-R disks at \$3.42 to \$3.80 each. They don't seem to sell DVD+R disks of *any* kind. When I finally get my "home movie to DVD" system set up, I'll probably buy those Scratch Armor DVDs; but for CDs and data DVDs, I'll have to go with Taiyo-Yuden or Verbatim. They cost about the same as all the other brands (which I'll *never* be buying again).

Generally speaking, I don't like to impart "bad news" without at least suggesting the possibility of some "good news" as well. So just before I submitted this article to the newsletter, I did a search for CD and DVD sales on www.pricewatch.com. Ever since I "discovered" that site in 2000, it's been my main source for comparison prices. This time, rather than prices, I was looking for reliable sources; and Pricewatch provides some dealer information as well. Here are the best four Verbatim sources I found, listed in descending feedback order. Unfortunately, only the last two also stock Taiyo-Yuden disks. The only other Taiyo-Yuden sources I turned up had even less positive feedback, so I left them out. I haven't listed prices or quantities in stock either, since that information can change from day to day.

Unity Electronics, Inc. <http://www.unitelectronics.com/>, (Union City, CA) 510-475-0400

Verbatim CD-R, CD-RW, DVD+R (No Taiyo-Yuden)
On Pricewatch since 10/3/2001

93% positive responses from their last 107 feedbacks
Computer Giants <http://www.computergiants.com/> (New York, NY) 800-905-9885

Verbatim: CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-R, DVD-RW, DVD+R, DVD+RW (No Taiyo-Yuden)

On Pricewatch since 6/15/1999

80% positive responses from their last 210 feedbacks
CDrDVDrMedia <http://www.cdrdvdrmedia.com/> (City of Industry, CA) 888-813-5667

Verbatim: CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-R, DVD-RW, DVD+R, DVD+RW. Taiyo-Yuden: CD-R, DVD-R, DVD+R

On Pricewatch since 5/1/2002

73 % positive responses from their last 123 feedbacks
Yesbuy.net <http://www.yesbuy.net/> (Baldwin Park, CA) 626-480-1868

Verbatim: CD-R, DVD-R, DVD+R. Taiyo-Yuden: CD-R, DVD-R, DVD+R

On Pricewatch since 2/25/2000

69% positive responses from their last 297 feedbacks
Unfortunately, while I found some Delkin electronic equipment sales, Pricewatch had no current or recent Delkin CD or DVD transactions listed. Fortunately, the company will still sell directly to the public. (Their Website does have a *Find a Retail Store* link, but it's still "under construction"). Note that the following information came from them, *not* from Pricewatch.

Delkin Devices, Inc delkin.com/products/archivalgold/index.html
(Poway, CA) 800-637-8087

Archival Gold CD-R and DVD-R (no DVD+R) disks
Additional Scratch Armor (SA) protective layer available

In business since 1986

Price list (as of this writing, *not* including shipping):

- CD-R 100/\$173.99 (SA: \$224.99)
- CD-R 25/\$49.99 (SA: \$63.99)
- CD-R 16/\$47.99 (SA: \$59.99)
- CD-R 10/\$25.99 (SA: \$29.99)
- DVD-R 100/\$309.99 (SA: \$354.99)
- DVD-R 25/\$79.99 (SA: \$95.99)
- DVD-R 16/\$69.99 (SA: \$79.99)
- DVD-R 10/\$35.99 (SA: \$39.99)

Note that I personally have *never* bought *anything* from *any* of the above sources. All of them have been in existence for at least five years, but that doesn't necessarily mean much. They're listed here only for your information, and absolutely *not* as any form of recommendation. If you're contemplating buying stuff on the Internet, you should definitely do your own research. You really need the "Force" to be with you, because whatever emasculated watchdog agencies may still exist probably won't be.

Continued

Further Adventures in Time Travel, *continued*

That's about all I've got at the moment on backup media. Next month, we'll look at some contemporary backup *programs*. See you then.

APPENDIX I: ANSWERS TO TRIVIA QUESTIONS:

First of all, don't think that I'm a Three Stooges fanatic. Like Bugs Bunny cartoons, they're a fond memory from my childhood; but until recently, I hadn't watched any of their films for a *long* time. Last month, I took what would probably be my only chance to publish my trick trivia question about their names. To make sure I had my facts straight, I made a relatively quick Internet search. In just a couple of hours, I'd cut-and-pasted almost five thousand words into a temporary text file, *all* of which I thought worth repeating. In a painfully heroic process, I trimmed it down to 2,824 words; which is *still a whole lot*, especially for the newsletter of a technical association. My excuse: I dug up all this stuff while surfing the net, so it *is*, in fact, computer related. Much of my information came from The Three Stooges Official Website (www.threestooges.com), but by no means all of it. There are other Stoooge sites, plus there are sites dedicated to just about every other name I'll be mentioning below. Even if you're not a Stoooge fan, I think you'll find this interesting.

We'll take question two first (because the answer is easier and shorter): **Were there ever Four Stooges?** Yes, sort of. In the Columbia short Hold That Lion (1947), Curly makes a cameo appearance as a sleeping passenger on a train, doing his famous Stoooge Snore. He says no lines, and hardly moves at all. This is the only Stoooge short in which brothers Moe, Curly and Shemp appear together (and Larry too, making four Stooges on screen). It's rumored that Curly also filmed a scene for Malice in the Palace (1949), playing a chef; but if so, it was left on the cutting room floor. (I already knew about the first scene, though I'm not sure from where. I found the second scene on the Internet).

Now for question one: **What were the eight names of the six "Three Stooges"?** The trick of this question is that it refers to Stoooge names as listed in end credits (and end credits *only*). Around thirteen years ago, while watching PBS (of all places), I discovered the seventh name. That led to my original version: What were the seven names of the six "Three Stooges"? Then, just a few months ago, while watching a borrowed Stooges DVD during a fit of nostalgia, I discovered the eighth name. Those of you familiar with my previous articles shouldn't be surprised that I'll now blather on and on endlessly before I actually tell you those names. The standards I've used for my selections are arbitrary and totally my own, but I'm not just picking nits. I won't accept anything that I don't consider to be distinctly different. For instance, Curly Joe DeRita, Curly-Joe DeRita, Curly Joe and Joe DeRita are obviously just minor variations, so they all count as only *one* name. For a brief, exhilarating moment, I thought I'd found a ninth name when I discovered that Curly had been spelled "Curley" on early marquees and in the opening titles of the first 14 Columbia shorts (from Woman Haters through Half-Shot Shooters). However, I rejected it for three reasons: It's **not** in the end credits, it sounds **exactly** the same, and it's basically just a typo. So my list of names remains at eight.

Let's start out with brief biographies of the six universally acknowledged "Three Stooges":

Moe Howard was born Moses Horwitz, although he also used the name Harry Moses Horwitz. He died on May 4, 1975 at the age of 77. Moe and Helen (his wife of almost 50 years) had a daughter, Joan and a son, Paul.

Larry Fine was born Louis Fienberg. He suffered a stroke in 1970, during the filming of "Kook's Tour" (which was never officially released), and didn't perform again. He died on January 24, 1975, at the age of 72. Larry and his wife Mabel had a son, Johnny and a daughter, Phyllis.

Curly Howard was born Jerome Lester Horwitz. He suffered a stroke in 1946 during the filming of his 97th Three Stooges comedy, "Half-Wits' Holiday" (released in 1947). In his last years, he suffered a long series of further strokes. He died on January 18, 1952, at the age of 48. Curly and his second wife, Elaine had a daughter, Marilyn. He and his fourth wife (and widow) Valerie had a daughter, Janie.

Shemp Howard was born Samuel Horwitz. On November 23, 1955, he had a sudden heart attack while riding in a taxi and was dead at the age of 60. He and his wife Gertrude had a son, Mort. The Three Stooges Official Website lists 42 films in which Shemp appeared on his own. There are probably more.

Joe Besser (his real name) was a close personal friend of Shemp. He died March 1, 1988 at the age of 80. He and his wife Erna apparently had no children.

Curly Joe DeRita was born Joseph Wardell. (DeRita was his mother's maiden name). He died on July 3, 1993 at the age of 83. He and his wife Jean apparently had no children

Just to be perverse, I'm going to continue by detailing all the names that I'm *not* counting, beginning with the original Stoooge-master himself. Ted Healy was born Charles Earnest Lee Nash, and died December 21, 1937, at the age of 41. He and his second wife Betty had a son, John Jacob, born on the night Ted died. (Just to confuse future historians, his first wife was named Betty, too). I'd always thought that his split with boyhood friend Moe was acrimonious, but apparently the story wasn't that simple. Two days before his death, Ted had been in touch with Moe's wife, Helen, updating her on Betty's condition. It's said that Moe, who was known for never showing his emotions, collapsed in tears when told of Ted's death. He was on a public phone in New York City's Grand Central Station at the time, and wasn't able to explain why he was crying until after Larry and Curly had helped him onto their train. Remember that, although they made a few film appearances, Ted Healy and His Stooges were primarily a *stage* act, often doing several shows each day. This was during the great depression. Everybody had to get work wherever they could, and their friends (if they really *were* friends) helped out as much as they were able. Over the years, Healy used a lot of replacement stooges, whenever one of his regulars (especially Shemp) was off working elsewhere. Ted died just as preview audiences were acclaiming his performance in the Warner Brothers film Hollywood Hotel (1937). If he'd lived, it's quite possible that he might have worked with the Three

Continued

Stooges again, though no doubt with different billing. In their filmed appearances together, Ted was always the boss and/or straight man, *never* one of the Stooges.

The second name I'm *not* counting is Joe Palma (born Joseph Provenzano), who probably died on August 15, 1994, at the age of 89 (some sources list a different date). He was married to Marjorie Ann Ries for more than 50 years, but apparently they had no children. Palma played bit parts and/or did stunt work in virtually all the Stoooge comedies of the 1940s and early '50s. He has a somewhat valid claim to "Stooogehood" because he doubled for Shemp in four 1956 shorts, filmed from the back or with his face obscured by props. That's right! Shemp starred in four of the eight comedies that the Three Stooges released in 1956 *after* he had died. (Too bad I couldn't work that ghostly tidbit into my "Halloween Issue" in October). Those four films were all re-makes of previous shorts, using stock footage of Shemp wherever possible; but Palma *did*, in fact, appear on film in each one, playing the third Stoooge. Shemp's official successor (Joe Besser) didn't come in until the 1957 releases (many of which were actually made in 1956). For the purposes of my trivia question, I reject Palma's claim because he *wasn't* listed as a Stoooge in the credits. Others have rejected him because he was just imitating Shemp, not projecting a Stoooge personality of his own.

The third name I'm *not* counting is Emil Sitka (born Emil Josef Sitka), who died on January 16, 1998, at the age of 83. He and his first wife Donna had seven children. Emil worked as a character actor with *all six* Three Stooges in dozens of their films over more than twenty years, and he also appeared as straight-man for Moe, Larry and Curly Joe in thirty-nine live-action opening/closing sequences produced for "The New Three Stooges", a 1965/66 made-for-TV cartoon series. (Each sequence was used as a wraparound on four different cartoons, for a total of 156 cartoons). Emil actually *was* proclaimed by Moe as the Official "Middle" Stoooge, succeeding Larry. (His character, "Harry" was conceived as being extremely conscientious, to the point of ridiculousness). Publicity photos of Emil with Moe and Curly Joe were released. Some still survive. Unfortunately, Emil never got to be a Stoooge on film, because Moe died just as shooting was scheduled to begin. I'll have more to say about this last Three Stooges movie later on. For the purposes of my trivia question, I'm rejecting Emil's claim *only* because he was never listed as a Stoooge in a finished film's credits.

The fourth and fifth names I'm *not* counting are two show-business veterans who (after Moe and Larry died) made a few on-stage public appearances with Curly Joe, billing themselves as "The New Three Stooges" (recycling the cartoon series title). Paul "Mousie" Garner, who died August 8, 2004 at the age of 95, had a long and varied career. He'd worked as a pinch-hitter for Ted Healy in the "good old days", where he frequently performed with Moe and Larry when Shemp was unavailable. Frank Mitchell, who died January 21, 1991 at the age of 85, was also a popular slapstick comic in the halcyon days of vaudeville. He'd worked all over the place, as a single or half of a duo. My far-from-exhaustive

Internet search couldn't document a connection with Ted Healy, but who knows? For the purposes of my trivia question, these two are also rejected because they were never credited on film as Stooges.

The sixth through fifteenth names I'm *not* counting are ten of the *eighteen* men identified as Stooges in the book "The Three Stooges: The Triumphs and Tragedies of the Most Popular Comedy Team of All Time", by Jeff Forrester, Tom Forrester and Joe Wallison. The authors obviously did a lot of painstaking research; but for the purposes of my trivia question, I've rejected *all* ten names (Jimmy Brewster, Dave Chasen, Dick Hakens, Kenny Lackey, Red Pearson, Bobby Pinkus, Freddie Sanborn, Jack Wolf, Lou Warren, and Sammy Wolfe). They may have been Ted Healy's Stooges, but none were ever credited on film as one of the Three Stooges. Interestingly, the other eight names the book lists are the six Official Stooges, plus Mousie Garner and Frank Mitchell. The authors either missed or rejected Joe Palma and Emil Sitka, the *only* men I'd consider to be (by any criteria) possibly legitimate heirs to "Three Stooogedom".

Finally, here are the names I *do* count: Jerry Howard and Jerome Howard. Now you see the trick. Both are variations of Curly's real name. So, why do I accept these as two *different* names, when I rejected "Curley" above? Because they *were* used in end credits, they *don't* sound exactly the same, and they're *not* typos. Besides, his nickname was Babe, *not* Jerry. Furthermore, each billing was a conscious choice made (about a dozen years apart) by Curly; at the beginning of his movie career, and at the end.

At the start of his career, Curly was sometimes credited as Jerry Howard, and sometimes just as Howard (of Howard, Fine and Howard). I don't count Howard (considering it to be just a shortened version of Jerry Howard), but Jerry is my seventh name. I discovered it by accident thirteen years ago, while watching (on my local PBS station's "classic movie night") a film featuring a cameo appearance by Ted Healy and His Stooges. During my recent Internet search, I found quite a few Jerry listings, but no plot synopsis to match my (now faint) memory of what I saw all those years ago. None of the various film databases I found are guaranteed to be complete, so maybe whatever I saw just hasn't been listed yet. In any case, I found more than enough instances to prove my seventh name. Here, in release (but not necessarily production) order, are *just four* of the movies in which Curly is credited as Jerry Howard:

- Dancing Lady (1933): With Ted Healy, Moe and Larry.
- Fugitive Lovers (1934): With Ted Healy, Moe and Larry.
- Roast-Beef and Movies (1934): Appearing by himself.
- Jailbirds of Paradise (1934): Also featuring Moe (but not Larry).

(Note: Fugitive Lovers is the last film of the Stooges with Ted Healy).

The DVD I recently watched; Swing Parade (1946), starred Gale Storm as a singer trying to break into show business, and featured many musical performances (hence the title). Moe,

Continued

From The DealsGuy

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

*I'm Excited About My New Toys

We wanted a GPS device with a 4.3" screen (diagonally), and with better features. We finally chose the Garmin nuvi 660 because it announces your next turn (street name) well before you will turn, and again just before you actually turn. It has a bright screen and includes traffic reporting capabilities without purchasing an FM traffic adaptor, which is in the DC cord you get with it. 90 days of traffic reporting is activated when you register it, but after that, you must subscribe (\$60 year).

The nuvi 660 includes Bluetooth technology for hands free use with your Bluetooth cell phone. MP3 file use is also included and it has an SD slot. It will also talk through your car radio. The 4.3" screen is easier to see and it was on sale for \$599 at BJ's Wholesale. I could have done much better on the Web, but I preferred to buy it locally for the ease of returning it if I so desired. A friend returned four before he settled on the Mio he kept. So far, we are satisfied in spite of two curious anomalies in the mapping that we encountered. MapQuest

had given us worse in the same areas. I ordered a free CD to update the maps, but I'll have to pay for updates in the future.

Another new toy; a Kwikset Biometric Smart Lock, is for our house door. The last few years we used a Kwikset pushbutton lock that we could press the buttons for a preset code and it automatically unlocks. Great if you can't find your key. You can also use your key. We were happy with the ease of use, but along came the Kwikset biometric lock. Simply slide your finger across the sensor for it to automatically unlock.

It looks like a conventional lock on the outside, but with a small fingerprint sensor sticking down from the key cylinder housing. It is powered by four AA batteries and fingerprint data is stored in flash memory. It also works with a key. The interior lock housing is larger, containing batteries, electronics and the Lock's programming screen. It can store over 50 different fingerprints and the lock administrator can limit privileges of any fingerprint to a certain time of day, and even a day of the week; and can make another user also an administrator. Any stored fingerprint data can be deleted or neutralized. A great feature of any Kwikset Smart Key lock is

Continued

Further Adventures in Time Travel, *continued*

Larry and Curly appeared as supporting players, both advancing the plot and providing comic relief. At the end, Curly was credited as "JEROME HOWARD...Curly". Nobody really knows why Curly was billed this way; but at that point in the Stooges' career, it couldn't have been a studio mistake. It had to have been *his* choice. One theory advanced by fans is that he suspected this might be his final full-length feature film appearance (it was), and he wanted to see his real name "up in lights" just once. Of course, he couldn't have known that he'd soon suffer a debilitating stroke. However, in his last few Columbia shorts, he was obviously not up to his usual standards. So it's quite possible he knew that **something** wasn't right.

Here's some pure speculation on my part: Changing an actor's name for show-business involved more than just ethnic prejudice (although that certainly played a *big* role). Prior use was also a major consideration; and there were other factors to deal with. Maybe, for some good or bad reason, the studio that released his initial film appearance decided that Jerome Howard wasn't acceptable, and changed it to Jerry Howard (possibly without even asking his permission first). It's also possible the blame goes back even further. The culprit could have been whatever authority oversaw performer identification for his stage appearances with Ted Healy. However it happened, he would have been stuck with that billing until he became well enough known as Curly Howard. As far as I can tell, he never thought of himself as Jerry. He was Babe, Curly, or Jerome.

That finally answers the trivia question, but I'm not going to shut up and go away just yet. Instead, I'll keep right on talking, about the Three Stooges movie that wasn't. The Three Stooges Official Website (www.threestooges.com) is strangely reticent about the film Moe, "Harry" and Curly Joe planned to

make in 1975. The Emil Sitka Memorial Website (www.emilsitka.com) just mentions that shooting was scheduled, but gives no further details. When I read that last sentence, the first thought that occurred to me was; "What happened to the working script?" (If shooting was scheduled, there *had* to have been one). I found the embarrassing answer at Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (www.wikipedia.org), which completely explains the silence on those Stooze sites. It seems that filming went on without the Stooges, and the result turned out to be R-Rated soft-core porn.

The previous year, the producer and director had collaborated on a fairly successful T&A flick called The Naughty Stewardesses. In 1975, they wanted to do something different; a good old-fashioned slapstick comedy. It was planned to be a fond throwback to the kiddy matinee westerns of the 1930s, and to the B-pictures of the 1940s. In addition to the reconstituted Three Stooges, they assembled a cast of screen veterans, including Yvonne DeCarlo, Don "Red" Barry, and the two surviving members of the Ritz Brothers.

Perhaps, if Moe hadn't died, the film might have come out as originally conceived; but when the Stooges suddenly disbanded, the Ritz Brothers were promoted as replacement leads. Unfortunately, to put it as kindly as possible, they just weren't up to the task; and with production already started, the budget wouldn't have allowed the time needed to stop and search for alternate actors. So, to take up the slack, T&A content was added to the vintage Western theme. After going through several working titles, including The Jet Set, Texas Layover and The Great Truck Robbery; the film was ultimately released as Blazing Stewardesses (to capitalize on the Mel Brooks box-office hit Blazing Saddles).

Now we're done. ☐

that you can “re-key” the lock yourself in about 15 seconds, and without any disassembly. That worked great. It also resists criminal “bump key” methods known to defeat many locks. Many people aren’t aware that a clever thief can quickly and easily defeat most door locks using the “bump key” technique. Check: <http://www.toool.nl/bumping.pdf> for info.

If the lock would work as advertised, we would love it for its simplicity, but that hasn’t been the case. Often my finger works the first time, but not always and I must rescan several times. My wife has less success and often has to scan her finger several times, sometimes resorting to her key (and a few unkind words). Telephone tech support was little help, although we couldn’t get my wife’s finger to unlock it at all until after they walked me through a setting change. Her finger now works, but not consistently. Their on-line tech support feels we aren’t scanning correctly, but we have tried the video’s approach and some other techniques with no improvement. We purchased it at Home Depot, but it appears they will get this very unreliable item back. Their Web site tech support was a joke and the English part didn’t work for me. I asked them to send a new sensor, but they said that would take at least a month. This product really tries your patience. There is an installation and programming video on the Kwikset Web site <http://www.kwikset.com> that makes it seem easy, but we’re giving up. The price at Home Depot is \$199.95.

***And A Good Time Was Had By All!**

I attended the fall conference for FACUG (Florida Association of Computer User Groups) and it was nice to see everyone. Attendance was about average for their one-day fall event with 80 attendees from 29 user groups. Central Florida Computer Society (CFCS) was host and the FACUG conference coincided with the CFCS 2nd annual Tech Fair, a two-day event featuring many great seminars and products with a host of local vendors selling their wares. The conference included breakfast and lunch and they kept you busy for the entire event, ending with a drawing for the FACUG event, and another drawing the next day at the Tech Fair. Unfortunately, the CFCS event was not well attended by their membership.

I also met APCUG president Jay Ferron and got some updated information from him. Nobody could be more positive about APCUG’s future than Jay.

***Help For Cut & Paste**

Flashpaste Professional by Softvoile is a utility that lets you type a boilerplate text, save it to a mini-database, and paste it automatically into any document, e-mail, Word document, Web page, chat, etc. Just click “CTRL-U” to pop up a dialog box where you pick the auto text you need and paste it into a document. Click the “New Item” button and type in the name of the item, and then set its type to RTF or simple text. Just type the boilerplate text into Flashpaste and fill in all the fields without having to step out of the submission page several times. The record is then added to the tree of items in the Flashpaste main window."

The standard Windows clipboard keeps only the last copied text, but Flashpaste records all recently copied words, numbers and phrases allowing easy reuse and eliminating repeated copying and pasting. Flashpaste Professional helps perform a variety of tasks such as automatically inserting frequently used addresses, e-mail text blocks, HTML code snippets, words, phrases and paragraphs. Flashpaste can also create macros and strings that are either replaced or processed by an application. Using macros, you can paste current time and date, insert commands that emulate pressing the Tab or Enter keys, and more.

Download Flashpaste Professional using this link <http://softvoile.com/download/flashpastepro.exe?s=ng9> (1.1Mb). Use the discount coupon (bcddc) for a 25% discount from the \$29.95 list price. Offer valid till Feb. 01, 2008. A 30-day evaluation copy can also be downloaded. I’m not sure if it will be a fully-working version or if they will send you a key for the trial version <http://softvoile.com/>. Visit their Web site for more information <http://softvoile.com/flashpaste/?s=ng9>.

***An Interesting Freeware!**

DVDVideoSoft Limited <http://www.dvdvideosoft.com> has updated its free software, Free YouTube to iPod Conversion and Free YouTube to iPhone Conversion. The software enables users to download a video from YouTube and convert it to MP4 video and MP3 audio format to play on an Apple iPod, iPhone, Sony PSP or cell phone. With a few simple steps, users can enjoy their favorite online videos without having to sit in front of the computer. Users enable Free YouTube to iPod Conversion and Free YouTube to iPhone Conversion by inserting a link into the program interface and clicking the “download and convert” button. The software downloads a video in MP4 format or audio in MP3, which can then be uploaded to a portable player or mobile phone. The program also converts a Flash video file to MP4 video format.

DVDVideoSoft has created a line of free tools: Free YouTube to iPod Converter, Free YouTube to MP3 Converter, Free YouTube to iPhone Converter, Free Video to iPod Converter, Free Video to iPhone Converter, Free Video to MP3 Converter, Free YouTube Uploader, Free Fast MPEG Cut, Free 3GP Video Converter and Free Video to Flash Converter. All programs are absolutely free and run under Windows, including Vista. They say they respect the users’ privacy and there is no spyware or adware. Programs are available in different languages, ie: English, German, French and Japanese.

Besides free downloads, the site provides many tutorials and guides. For more information visit DVDVideoSoft at <http://www.dvdvideosoft.com/free-dvd-video-software.htm>. In addition to its software site, DVDVideoSoft runs a free On-Line Video Conversion resource VIDOKY, <http://www.vidoky.com>, a popular video download site.

That’s it for this month. I’ll have more new product announcements on my Web site (most not offering a discount). Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the pur-

Dufferdom: Tales from the Kingdom of the Ordinary User

Of Avery, CDs, Squaring the Circle, Selected Greek Classics, Plus a Resolution

David D. Uffer ([daviduffer\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:daviduffer(at)sbcglobal.net)), Chicago Computer Society www.ccs.org

We have all heard of the name Avery, the global leader in assorted office supplies, self-adhesive labels (but probably not yet the US Postal stamps), dividers, markers, and such. You may not have heard of Paxar, whose Monarch Division seems to be the culprit behind those wonderful price and info tags attached to clothing and other goods and hanging by tough, tiny plastic strings you cannot break or pull loose but must cut and then seek the remaining portion which is often inserted out of sight, waiting to annoy you further by scratching your skin if not removed. Well, Avery just acquired Paxar in a deal worth 1.3 billion bucks. Such is the price of the right annoyance. So Avery deserves respect, maybe even reverence if judged by revenue. It is after all the standard index referred to by more reasonably priced packs of blank labels for use in PC printers. But this user may have lost some respect for this global leader (as if they care) because of a wild, redundant search they placed in my path.

In an effort to avoid losing sight of most other users progress, I tried to catch up to a common practice in this age of proliferating digital photos. I collected some pictures taken in Greece onto some CDs, learning how to do it by trial, error, and reading instructions when desperate. Results were impressive. Buoyed up by approaching the League of the Big Guys, I wondered why their handwritten CD content titles were so curt and scruffy when labels were available to display more readable and detailed information. A single label might conceivably cause imbalance problems as a CD revved up its speed as the drive's internal laser moved to the outer tracks. But a pair of properly placed labels could offset each other for

a smoother spin. OK, two labels could also display more information than one, fine. But Avery makes these disk-shaped labels with the core hole to cover the entire disk and display anything the user wants to fit in the still larger space, even graphics. Finer, better. Big league catchup.

Beset by pride and hope of grandeur, I bought a set of holey Avery disk labels. Swallowing my pride, I looked at the instructions. Those that came with the labels explained the technique for correctly applying the label to the disk, center holes exactly aligned. Neat. The package and online directions, showing an imprinted disk, said to use an indexed template, Avery's # 8931 or 5931, in *Word* or *WordPerfect*. Each had 2 variants, CD face and CD case. All I wanted at the time was the round disk face, maybe later for the almost square disk case label if I wanted to venture further. But, in actual use, all the templates allowed was an image without a central hole. Worse still, all the patterns for the circular disk were square.

OK, so maybe Avery wants users to use Avery's printing software. It is available online, for free. So they claimed. A slightly larger version with more graphics is also offered for sale. Both would do at least some graphics as well as a blank face for imprinting just text. So they claimed. I'll spare you the details of repeated and finally successful attempts to secure the software. Guess what. It was the same as what I found earlier online. I could print text all over a solid square to go onto a holey disk. A square on top of a circle. Not right. No help.

Continued

Back Issues Needed

The editor is attempting to build a CD containing all issues of ACGNJ News in pdf format, but our collection is incomplete. We're hoping some faithful reader has been hoarding them and will be willing to lend them to us just long enough to scan them. We promise to return them quickly. Thanks Joseph Gaffney, who loaned his collection for scanning. Below is a list of what we still need.

1985: June, July, August, September

1984: August

1976: January, February, March, April (pamphlet-size booklets)

1975: All issues except #1 (June). These are also pamphlet-size booklets.

If you can supply any of these missing issues (or scanned images or good clear copies), please contact the Editor by email (bdegroot@ptd.net). Those who supply missing issues will receive a free copy of the resulting CD as our thanks for your help. ☺

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10% discount for 3 or more consecutive insertions			

Now, squaring a circle is one of three classical problems in the early development of Greek geometry. (The other two were doubling the cube and trisecting an angle.) It was known to be difficult and proved impossible in precision in 1882 because it involved the imprecise term, pi, though a near approximation could get the job done for those who were interested. One of the sites referenced in Google for “squaring the circle” delivers a 7-page article replete with a barrage of real and legended ancient Greek names. (If you enjoy their rich pronunciation, you may be amused by the names pun near the end of this tale.)

So it would seem that Avery has squared the circle, at least to their own satisfaction. Now if they could only work it in the other direction, circling the square to the user’s satisfaction and punching a hole in the center, it might increase my respect for this global leader. Indeed, in consideration of my pain and suffering, if Avery were to send some workable software (or a minute share of 1.3 billion) in this direction, that wavering respect just might become a bit reverential. That upgrade in regard seems unlikely since it appears they think a square is the working equivalent to a circle with a center hole. There may be some hidden transformation formula there. If so I consider it well concealed. It does offer Options, which merely

present other Avery patterns, none applicable to the problem at hand. For that matter, Avery’s CD/DVD patterns weren’t either so one could say the others were no worse.

But yet all their promotional illustrations show attractive disks with text and graphics plus a range of alternates, all just out of reach. This user is reminded of the mythical Greek god Tantalus, a son of Zeus, who must have messed up pretty badly since he was later doomed to the Underworld, up to his chin in water with delicious fruits just out of reach. That’s the origin of “tantalize”, which also applies to Avery’s promo pictures of decorated, circular disks — in your dreams. However one thing becomes clearer, why I had seen the hand-written CD title inscriptions. We are not alone, as they say, just ignored.

(There is this two-word pun on classic Greek names which has a man showing his torn pants to a tailor who asks, “Euripides?”. The customer nods and replies, “Eumenides?”)

As it usually happens in children’s books, and sometimes in real life, there is a happy ending to this tale of corporate woe. It comes from Brøderbund (“a band of brothers” in a loose translation of mixed Swedish, Danish, and German). Now spelled more simply as Broderbund and part of Riverdeep, they have over 20 years developed and offered *The Print*



Tantalus -- Joseph Heintz the Elder, 1535 www.mythman.com

Shop software, now in version 22. It is now substantially more than the basic graphic printing application it was originally but remains readily available and reasonably priced. In the last few years they began enabling printing your choice of graphics and text on CD and DVD labels. No hype, no fanfare, just competent performance, good to know, and a pleasure to use. So, you can buy your blank CD and DVD labels from Avery but print them with software from the brethren.

Dave Uffer is a member of some standing in the Chicago Computer Society. Originating in Colorado deep in the last century, he arrived in the Midwest and settled in the Chicago area where he has held a variety of honorable but not especially honored positions in computer-related fields. He and his wife are now retired, children grown and away; he sometimes writes about the often neglected concerns of real PC users.

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Fake Check Scams on the Internet Explode

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

You may remember the recent case of a woman who responded to a “work at home” opportunity where she would accept payments from the customers of a business, deposit the checks, deduct her generous commissions, and then wire the balance elsewhere.

Recently, in my High Tech Crime Consortium (HTCC) listserv, an investigator posted the following inquiry (redacted): “Is anyone working a case involving a fraudulent check from XXX Bank on the account of YYY Financial Trust Company, a supposed winner of a drawing scam. My victim received this letter and check, deposited it and XXX BANK told her it was good so they put the money in her account. Turns out it was not. She of course was told to wire “taxes” in the amount of \$4425.00 to a subject XXXXX in Houston, Texas, but the money gram was picked up in XXXXX.”

Recently, (10/3), the Reuters news service ran a story “Spam-scam crackdown nets \$2 billion in fake checks”. The story goes on to explain, “An international crackdown on Internet financial scams this year has yielded more than \$2.1 billion in seized fake checks and 77 arrests in the Netherlands, Nigeria, Canada, and U.S., authorities said. The scammers, often West African organized crime groups, use ploys such as “spam” e-mail offering to pay recipients “processing fees” for depositing checks, which later turn out to be phony, and sending the ostensible proceeds to the scammer, authorities said.” Demonstrating how prevalent this scam is, the Reuters article goes on to say, “Two-thirds of Americans said they received at least one potential scam contact per week, and 18 percent said they or a family member had fallen for one, in a survey conducted for an alliance of banks, consumer groups and the U.S. Postal Service. Grant said complaints to her group about fake checks have risen 60 percent this year, and the average victim loses about \$3,000 to \$4,000.”

In a parallel news story at FoxNews.com (10/3), “Postal Service Declares War on Nigerian Scam”, in discussing the same seizure writes, “So far this year, an average of more than 800 people a month have filed complaints about such scams. Hoping to stem the losses, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service announced an international crackdown Wednesday in which more than 540,000 fake checks with a face value of \$2.1 billion have been seized.” The financial and emotional impact of being a victim can be disabling, “Retired people have lost their nest eggs and young families have been defrauded of their savings for a home.” If 800 people a month report losses to the Postal Inspector, one may wonder how many other victims are too ashamed or embarrassed to report the crime which victimized them.

You may have noticed TV commercials warning about these scams, another indication of the degree of the threat. The commercials are promoting a consumer education website fakechecks.org, a creation of the National Consumers League, and sponsored by groups such as the American Bankers Association, American Express, Capital One, JP Morgan Chase, Visa, Western Union, and the United States Postal Inspection

Service. The meat of the website is a curt warning that says, “There is no legitimate reason why anyone would give you a check or money order and ask you to wire money in return.”

The major types of scams that use these methods are foreign business offers, rental schemes, love losses, sudden riches, overpayment, and work at home scams. The common thread in all these is that in response to an email, phone call, or letter, the victim received certified or cashiers’ checks, or money orders, and was directed to deposit them in their personal bank accounts. Immediately after depositing the instruments, the victim was directed to deduct his commission or fee, and then wire the proffered balance (often via Western Union) to the crook. The checks and money orders would bounce as they were typically counterfeit, forged, or otherwise phony, leaving the victim with the loss of the amounts wired to the crook. The proceeds of the wired funds are often picked up overseas, and not at the address stated in the original offer.

Many of us have received the ubiquitous Nigerian 419 scam from the relative of some oil minister who was killed in a plane crash, and the widow needs help in investing the money. In the original scam, still circulating by millions, the victim is to wire money to Nigeria or a “barrister” in London to pay taxes and fees to release the funds, for which the victim is to receive a generous commission. In a new iteration of the scheme, the victim receives an email or letter in which the crook claims to have a check which can be used to pay taxes and fees, and in exchange for depositing the check and wiring the net proceeds to a third party, the victim can withhold a generous commission. Of course, the check is worthless.

In another version, also distributed in the millions, the victim receives an email, letter, or fax claiming that they have won an international lottery. In the past, the victim had to come up with the taxes and fees on his own, and wire the money to the crook in order to collect the winnings. Now the scheme sends the victim an authentic looking check which is to be used to pay the foreign taxes and fees on the prize winnings. The victim deposits the check, which may also include a small percentage of his winnings, and wires the taxes and fees to a third party. The check bounces, and the victim is out the proceeds, often in the \$3000 to \$4000 range.

I have actually had students who advertised their cars online, and received a call or email from a barrister in London representing a client who wanted to buy the car for the full asking price. They would overnight a certified check to the seller for more than the selling price of the car, and ask the seller to wire the balance back to London, sometimes after deducting a generous fee or bonus. A bonded courier will pick up the car. Of course there is no courier, and the check is no good, leaving the seller with his car plus a several thousand dollar loss.

Another student recently brought me an email where she could make hundreds of dollars a week by accepting checks and money orders from a seller that needed an American presence, asking her to deduct her 20% commission, and then wire the proceeds to some distant place. The scam is obvious.

Continued

How to use Google Street Views to see... streets, places, routes and faces!

Linda Gonse (editor(at)orcopug.org), Orange County IBM PC Users Group (www.orcopug.org)

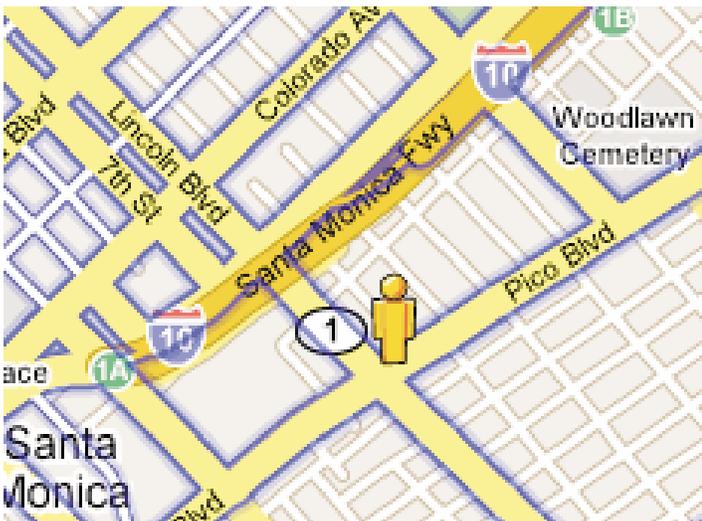
Beyond the curiosity of the new panoramic on-the-road reality shots, Google's detailed Street Views give you a feel for really being where you want to go. Although only a handful of large cities are represented in these views, it's still likely you will want to look for destinations in them occasionally.

If you aren't familiar with Street Views, go to Google.com and click on Maps, a link at the top of the screen. Type in a location of a street or a city. If one of the boxes at the top of the map shown says "Street View," click on it.

A map looking like a plate of blue spaghetti shows where panoramic shots were taken. (Figure 1.)



Zoom in to see streets outlined in blue. (Figure 2.) A "person" icon (that's you) is facing in the direction you are heading. You can move the icon to wherever you wish to go, or simply double-click on one of the blue-lined streets.



You can enlarge a panoramic shot to full screen, so you don't have to squint to see into a little peek-a-boo window.

Other handy features allow you to zoom in and out, and to "drive" along a street or freeway by clicking on an arrow with your mouse. You can look in all four directions, of course, and the names of the streets and the routes are superimposed on the photos. (Figure 3.) You can even email the view to family or friends.



In the meantime, a different type of map searcher is ignoring the privacy controversy caused by Google Street View's high-quality, crystal-clear, panoramic photos, and are magnifying certain side-of-the-road scenes they find and sharing them online!

What they've found falls into categories, which include actual lawbreaking or crimes in progress, people doing ordinary things that seem extraordinary when you know that people worldwide will be seeing them; surreal sights caused by the panoramic camera being halted or later photo-stitching in an editing program; visual commentaries about places and people; and street views divulging the homes of the famous, or landmark homes and places. Map searchers uploaded these mini-slices of life to www.streetviewr.com.

Check out the maps and see what you can find. Maybe you'll even see yourself in one of the shots!

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Continued

Fake Check Scams, *continued*

Greed and gullibility can affect all races and religions. The website fakechecks.org may provide a valuable warning to those who might fall victim. If the Postal Service can seize 540,000 fake checks worth \$2.1 billion, one may wonder how many were not seized, and made it to the victims. One can

only wonder how much more was lost by the victims, often those who can least afford it.

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DustKleen

Neil Longmuir ([longmur\(at\)ms.umanitoba.ca](mailto:longmur(at)ms.umanitoba.ca)), Winnipeg PC User Group (<http://www.wpcusrgrp.org/>)

DustKleen is an innovative stand alone application from Image Trends Inc. DustKleen will automatically remove most dirt and dust from any scanned images regardless of the source. The scanned images can be color, black and white negatives, color slides including Kodachrome or prints. The technology which is patent pending, identifies the dust or debris on the image. These “defects” are removed without destroying the image quality. DustKleen is exactly the type of innovative software that digital image users need who use a scanner to convert images to a digital format. DustKleen occupies 2.97 mb of hard disk space once it’s been installed. When was the last time you installed a *stand alone* program that used so little hard disk space?

Working with DustKleen

My test hardware is running XP Pro with an AMD 3200 processor, 1 Gig Dual Channel RAM, 320 gig of hard disk space on two hard drives, CD and DVD burners, ATI Radeon video card with 64 mb of RAM. Windows NT, 2000 and Vista operating systems are supported. A Mac version is currently under development.

The software interface is clean and very easy to use. Press the ? on the bottom left of the program to get a quick overview of how to use DustKleen. Clicking on the ? will bring up more detailed help information. The help files are very well written and have all the information required to answer questions. Because DustKleen is a stand alone program it works very fast. DustKleen targets one real problem, dust and debris on scanned images, and does the job it was designed to do very well. DustKleen reads BMP, JPG, PNG, PSD and TIFF files.

The automatic detection and removal default setting works great for most images without any end user intervention. There will be times when the default settings do not clean up all of the dust or debris defects. However, the good news is that the user is given three tools for removing dust and debris: dust size, dust amount and dust aggression. Any additional defects can be handled using the advanced “Manual Touch Up” mode. The Manual Touch Up mode lets the user adjust both brush and dust size to target a specific area of the image. The “Add Touch Up” feature works very similar to the healing brush in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Photoshop Elements. If you do not like your change, pressing Ctrl+Z will remove it immediately or you can use the “Remove Touch Up” feature to remove either an automatic or manual correction in a specific area with a single brush stroke.

People do not want to spend a lot of time in front of a computer screen correcting scanned images. I actually tried cleaning some of these images by hand using the healing brush in Adobe Photoshop CS. I didn’t come close to getting all the spots. Then I ran my supposedly cleaned image through DustKleen, which found a lot more dust which was visible in the final print. Why not just use the “remove dust and scratches filter” available in Adobe Photoshop and Elements? I tried this but found that the image quality was degraded.

Removing visible dust and defects on Kodachrome slides is no easy job. I scanned Kodachrome slides with a Minolta

Dimage Scan Elite 5400, which supports Kodak’s hardware Digital Ice, which is a terrific hardware solution, but it does not work with Kodachrome slides or black and white negatives. Even if it did work, it still takes approximately seven minutes to scan and clean up a slide at 2700 dpi. By comparison, scanning four slides at 2700 dpi without Digital Ice takes about five and a half minutes. Cleaning up and saving the four scanned slides using DustKleen takes another minute.

Hint: Scan and save your files as PSD or TIFF. Then run DustKleen to clean up and save the file. When you want to make prints convert the files to JPEG and upload them to your favorite photo lab or print them on your own inkjet printers. Remember you do not lose any information when you save a file as a PSD or TIFF.

Conclusion

Every photographer, needs a “digital toolbox” to solve specific problems quickly. In my opinion, DustKleen is a tool that should be in every digital photographer’s toolbox. Yes, most of us are now using digital cameras but there is still a sea of prints, negatives and slides that many end users want to convert to a digital format.

DustKleen worked great for me on scanned prints, color negatives, really old black and white Tri-X negatives, E6 processed slides and Kodachrome slides. In every case, there was dust that was not readily visible to the eye or with a loupe. The best part, was I now have some very nice prints made from Kodachrome slides. This is a product that needs to be used to really appreciate just how good it is. Be sure to visit www.imagetrendsinc.com and download the trial version for yourself.

Recommended Improvements

Not every piece of software is perfect on the first release, but DustKleen is very good. I would make some changes to further improve the workflow. I would leave the *Image Type* to the last image type used. More than likely the user will be scanning images from the same format for some time and it’s tiresome to keep changing from the default to the image type that is being scanned. It would be great to just click on *Save As* and automatically have a user defined prefix added to the front of the open file name. For example, if the open image is named Tray1_025.jpg, the *Save As* image could be named automatically using the user defined prefix DK to DKTray1_025.jpg. Also, by default I would use the highest quality setting for JPEG images. Finally, Adobe’s DNG universal RAW file format should be added to list of supported file formats.

I rate this program * * * * plus! I would like to thank the kind folks at Image Trends Inc. for providing me a copy of the DustKleen for review. Contact: Image Trends Inc., (512)-637-7300

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A Router Can Help Protect Your Computer

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

A few years ago, you had probably not have heard the term “router”, unless you used one in your wood-working class in high school. Today, you hear much more about the word “router” when it is used in conjunction with computers and the Internet. In the computer world, a router is an important piece of equipment and one that is making its way into everyday terminology. So I would like to tell you a little about what a router is and what it can do for you.

A router is a hardware device that connects networks of two or more computers and forwards data across a network of computers. Devices like network printers can also be hooked up to a router. Routers that you might see in home and small business use are generally small rectangular or square devices about 6 to 8 inches in size. This type of router will have ports on the back where you can hook in computers, broadband modems, and other devices. A router has lights that indicate its status and the status of the connected devices. Routers can usually sit on a desktop or the floor, but they can also be hung on a wall.

You can think of a router as a kind of traffic cop that stands on the corner and routes the traffic to their final destination. Just as a traffic cop knows which direction a car is coming from and which way it wants to go, a router knows what data comes from each of the computers, what data each computer has requested, and what data to return to each computer. Routers are the workhorses of the Internet. They make sure that your email gets to your intended recipient rather than one of the millions of other computers. Within a smaller network routers make sure that the data or the webpage that you request is returned to your computer and not the computer of your co-worker or other family member.

While routers have been used for years in the Internet and by businesses, the proliferation of home networks has brought the router into the home and into the realm of the average computer user. In a home, a router typically is used to share an Internet connection. It connects a home network of two or more computers with the network of your Internet Service Provider (ISP), giving each of your computers Internet connectivity. Your ISP issues you one address on the Internet, called an IP or Internet Protocol address. If you have multiple machines at home, a router lets you share that single IP address.

The router watches the traffic going out and waits for the response to the outgoing traffic. It then routes the incoming

traffic to the proper computer within your home network. Since the router is watching all the traffic, it knows what information you have requested and only allows incoming traffic that is expected. So if your computer has requested a Web page, it will allow that Web page to come into your computer. Other traffic that has not been requested is tossed aside and not allowed to come in.

This ignoring of unexpected incoming traffic has an interesting side effect. It actually protects your computer from many malicious attacks from the outside. So the router, since it protects all the computers on your network, is considered a hardware firewall.

In fact, a router plus the firewall that is built-into Windows will, in my opinion, give the average user all the protection that they need. That is, provided that they follow safe computing procedures, like not opening unexpected email attachments and running a good antivirus program.

For heavy duty computer users who want to make sure that their computers are completely protected, third party software firewalls, like those offered by Symantec, McAfee, and Zone Alarm, do offer the added safeguard of watching the traffic flowing in and out of each software program on your computer. However, these firewalls can slow down your computer. They often ask the computer user to permit or deny permission for programs that request Internet access. If you are just an average Joe, it can often be very difficult to determine if you should grant or deny that permission since the names of the files are often nebulous. I can't tell you how many times I have been called to repair someone's Internet connectivity only to find out that they had inadvertently told the firewall to deny Internet access to a program that can't function without it.

So having a router not only lets you share an Internet connection, it also protects your computer without slowing it down. As a matter of fact, even if you only have one computer, you can still use a router between your broadband Internet connection and your computer to help protect your perimeter. With the price of small routers falling to under \$50, a router can be a wise investment for today's computer user, even if they have to pay someone to come in and set it up for them.

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How To Answer the Question

Mike Kerwin (*kernary(at)comcast.net*), Central Maryland User Group (<http://mycmug.org/>)

OK, I'm not being mysterious but addressing an issue that most Geeks encounter often. I suspect that most of you have been asked The Question many times by friends, relatives, and acquaintances. I refer to the expectant "What do you recommend as the best _____?" (Fill in the blank for PC, notebook, PDA, digital camera, camcorder, DVR.) Folks who know me and my penchant for gadgets and gizmos frequently ask me this. Lately the most popular subject is notebook computers. Now I do get a bit of a stroke when I am asked for my opinion about things digital, and I do understand the seemingly overwhelming number of choices being marketed, but I also get frustrated when my response elicits blank stares.

My thinking is that people ask this due to despair at the multitude of choices currently available and the wide range of pricing options. And, of course, the options lead to even more confusion. A few years ago the world seemed to be simpler when the number of manufacturers of notebook PCs diminished to just a handful. Today, despite the consolidation, the remaining firms now offer several complete "lines" of notebooks along this continuum: superlight, ultralight, mobile performance, entertainment, general purpose, budget, desktop replacement... You could probably suggest even more categories. Now, too, we have designer notebooks in a range of case colors and branded logos (Ferrari, LiveStrong, Hello Kitty). Then there is screen size and the directly linked weight factor; since LCD screens use glass front panels and glass is rather heavy, the larger the screen the heavier the device.

Answer a Question with a Question

So what do I have to offer in the way of advice? I've learned to follow the experts on my reply: from the online Buying Guides back to Socrates, the recommendation is to answer with a question. (I don't think Socrates knew about decision trees, but that's what we have here.) Specifically I first ask, "Do you have a price point in mind?" followed by "Do you have a brand preference?" These two questions narrow the choices considerably. Some individuals and organizations are strictly wedded to one brand, such as Dell, and that becomes a major factor in deciding on what is the "best". Price is also a great divider of the pack with budget machines being advertised under \$500 and high-end performance units listed for prices around \$3K — a very wide range.

The next question along this tree is, "What do you intend to do with the computer?" The answer will be very different for a Road Warrior backed by a corporation which can deduct business expenses versus a student heading off to college, or someone who just wants to use it for email at home without being tied to a cable. For example, the weight of a notebook can be a major consideration if you travel frequently, as everything gets heavier at the end of a long flight or stressful day of sales calls. For travelers the features needed can also be important considerations as some of the lightest notebooks don't have built-in optical drives (see Dell) but use optional peripherals which can add to weight, bulk, and extra parts to keep track of. The recommendation is to have as few pieces as possible for simplicity's sake.)

The Fine Print

Speaking of weight, you must read the fine print of the specifications, as I learned this week looking at the new Toshiba Protégé line of notebooks. This company is making great claims for this "superlight" line. Digging a little further one soon discovers that the quoted weight is for the main clamshell case and internal parts. This is really light at under 2 lbs and is possible through the use of solid state memory in place of a traditional spinning disk HD. But it won't do much without a battery, which adds at least 0.6 lbs additional for the limited capacity, standard battery, and more for the optional, long-life battery. And then there is the transformer (aka brick) which weighs in at 0.5 lbs. Then one might look at whether the 68 GB of HD equivalent would be sufficient running Vista which reportedly takes nearly 10 GB just for the OS and then allocates an additional 15% of the HD for Restore points. These can take up lots of the internal HD and then one would have to consider carrying an external drive for storing data, presentations, pictures, etc which could add additional weight. And for all of this one would pay nearly \$3K.

At the other end of the price scale are the budget models which barely have enough onboard memory (or capacity) to run the old WinXP. As more Vista applications become available, these machines may be left in the dust, unable to accommodate current versions of software. This could lead to early replacement before the expected lifespan of 3-5 years.

Then there are optional/necessary features you might want in a notebook. One feature is an optical drive which most, but not all, units have as a standard feature. Then there are different flavors of CD/DVD readability and writability. Virtually all of these units will read and write CDs and DVDs, but perhaps not all three formats of DVD, plus the capability for dual layer data storage and, in some cases, LightScribe technology to burn labels on the back side of special disks. Unfortunately the industry has not settled on a standard technology for a new generation of disks to store HD movies (and eventually data), so if this feature is important to you, you might plan to add the capability externally sometime in the future.

Another common feature is WiFi. This technology has advanced from A to B to G and now to N, but not all notebooks support all of the types so again you have to read the fine print.

For a notebook to be sent off to college, you might look for a built-in webcam to keep in touch and help ward off homesickness by the young adults. You'll also want to look at anti-theft features such as locking adaptors and "phone-home" software. Some of the new anti-theft features are biometric password-type locks such as fingerprint scanners and wireless proximity alarms (if the PC and the owner get too far apart, the alarm sounds).

Another consideration is the warranty provided. Notebook PCs are very compact so popping the top to add or replace defective parts is not something to be undertaken lightly. I recommend checking to see how long any unit is under warranty and what is covered, such as what is the turnaround for repairs and where are they done (and who is responsible for getting it there).

This and That — Do You Really Need to Upgrade?

Elizabeth B. Wright ([james\(at\)qns.com](mailto:james(at)qns.com)), Computer Club of Oklahoma City (www.ccokc.org)

How much time are you spending upgrading, both hardware and software? New operating systems, programs that won't run on older systems, changes in the internet, memory hog programs and graphic cards? If you are keeping up with the trend toward power, then all of these things probably apply to your computer life. But are they worth it?

For myself, I have found that so much time and money have been invested in trying to keep up with the times. Keeping up with the Joneses doesn't even apply here. Just trying to stay current on the internet is enough to make most of us upgrade, upgrade, upgrade. But all of this has come with a severe penalty. I find it is taking much too much of my valuable time and that not enough of that time is being spent productively. If there wasn't a deadline for this column, would I even find the time to write it? Some big changes in direction are in order I think.

Until Microsoft makes everything we already own completely useless, I find that most of what I need to do with the computer can be done with much older programs. For instance, if I want to be sure someone can open and read a document; I still save it as ASCII text. Oh yes, we have .pdf and other so-called portable text formats, but so what? The most portable is still the above mentioned ASCII. The output is usually in exceedingly small files. There is no formatting possible, but if you are merely transmitting information, what need is there for more than an old-fashioned typewritten letter? Most word processing programs still offer the option of saving the file as a .txt file. Personally, when I want to be sure the file can be accessed by someone else, I type it in Notepad. I've even been known to use really archaic programs, just for kicks.

If you are earning your living with mathematical programs such as accounting, then where do you draw the line on updating? Does your older software do the job, and does your older computer do that job fast enough to ensure that you meet your deadlines so you can get paid for your work? But if your clients upgrade their software and you find that you must

submit spreadsheets, etc. to them in a new format, then you are caught in the trap. So far most new programs will read some of the data from older versions of their software, but when will that change? About the same time as the printer manufacturers found out they could make more money selling ink rather than printers, one can only assume that the software companies were probably thinking "why can't we do something like that?"

When it comes to graphics however, don't even think about using older software and computers, unless of course you have all the time in the world to wait for changes to take place when you are enhancing your photos. Once again, if this is your job, you simply can't afford to be slow. But even for hobbyists, speed is really essential to graphic manipulation.

Where is the bottom line on speed versus money? Each of us has to decide on the point at which we achieve the balance of using our computers for productive output without further upgrades. It is just as easy to write this column on my oldest computer, but since working with photos is my hobby; my fastest computer will have to be used. However, from now on, the two machines will be used to do a specific job, rather than keeping everything on just one of them. As for the internet, as long as it can be accessed with something other than the computer dedicated to the photos, then that is the one that will be used.

Hopefully I can keep my useful work separate from the internet, the object being to avoid contamination as much as possible. But I'm not sure how long the older, slower computer will serve my internet connection. If you are limited to one computer, you might look into removable hard drives in order to keep your data safe from the bad guys out there. But that takes us back to the money issue.

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How To Answer the Question, *continued*

In the end, I think the process is straightforward, though it may require several decision branches to arrive at the "Best" recommendation for a specific individual. These details always seem nagging pests when searching for instant gratification, but the old adage of "Buy in Haste, Repent at Leisure" can be avoided by taking just a little time up front to

make a good choice. I hope this approach might of use to some of you.

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SIG News

C/C++ Programming

Bruce Arnold (barnold@ieee.org)

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

This group is devoted to programming languages in general and C, C++, and C++ for Windows programming in particular. Each month a small but hopefully useful program (complete with source code) is presented for discussion.

November: The program presented displays oscilloscope type wave forms known as Lissajous Patterns. The code uses the latest C++ compiler in Microsoft's Visual Studio 2005. The program may also be compiled using the free C++ Express compiler. Some of the items discussed: Windows Programming with Microsoft Managed code, Windows Graphics, Microsoft Visual Studio 2005, Events and Controls. Back before the Civil War, about the year 1850, a French physicist Jules Lissajous developed a method for comparing frequencies. His purpose was to manufacture tuning forks with the proper resonant frequency. He found that if he mounted a small mirror on the reference tuning fork he could reflect a light beam onto a screen. If he then added the test tuning fork with a mirror vibrating at 90 degrees to the first, he would create a pattern on the screen. The pattern showed the exact frequency and phase relationship between the two tuning forks. Just imagine: his standard 'A' tuning fork vibrated at 435 cycles per second. If the second tuning fork vibrated at only 434 cycles per second, he would know by looking at his "LISSAJOUS" pattern.

Most people who use oscilloscopes have been taught this phenomenon but he used it first. The program for this month demonstrates this situation by taking two Sine Waves and plotting them on X and Y axes of a window that looks like an oscilloscope. It uses the latest Microsoft .Net C++ compiler and its window, graphics, and math libraries.

Our next meeting December 18. ☐

Java

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

<http://www.javasig.org>

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.

December 11: Technical Overview of OSGi ☐

LUNICS (Linux/Unix)

Andreas Meyer (lunics@acgnj.org)

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

LUNICS is a group for those who share an interest in Unix and similar operating systems. While we do quite a bit with Linux, we've also been known to discuss Solaris and BSD too. We generally meet on the first Monday of the month at 8 PM at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information. **Next meeting January 7.** ☐

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. **Our next meeting December 12.** ☐

Main Meeting

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

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

December: How to Build a Web Site Using Easy Tools, Paul Natanson

January 4: Digital Photography & Photoshop Elements
Bruce Arnold ☐

Window Pains

John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

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

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

December: No meeting

January 18: How to Remotely Access Other Computer Workstations (Software, Hardware, Config) David Eisen ☐

Investment Software

Jim Cooper (jim@thecoopers.org)

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

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

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

Our next meeting: December 13. ☐

Zune — A Player for the Rest of Us

Ash Nallawalla ([anallawalla\(at\)apcug.net](mailto:anallawalla(at)apcug.net)), APCUG Director, Melbourne PC User Group, Australia

Are you older than 50? Have you tried to use an MP3 or video player but found your thumbs and fingers were all mixed up? Perhaps the text was too hard to read? A solution is at hand, in the form of the Microsoft Zune player. Its large fonts and simple controls make it quite suitable for the 50+ age group. The buttons give positive feedback, unlike the capacitive touch pads on others where you might click more than you intended to. Available in stores and online for around \$230, this gadget is a portable picture viewer, video and music player, as well as a radio. It is about the size and weight of a pack of cards.

The Zune has a 3x2-inch (320x240 pixels) color screen and a 30 GB hard drive. Its circular control is a 4-way switch and the centre is a push-button. There are two smaller Back and Play/Pause buttons. At the base there is a docking socket and at the top is an earphone socket and a lock. The only accessories that you get are a soft pouch, earphones and a USB connector. The two earbuds are magnetized, so they snap together when not in use and do not get tangled up.

There is built-in WiFi, but it only communicates with another Zune, with which you can transfer music (not video). These shared tunes only last for three days and you can only play

each one three times. Once you name your Zune (its “tag”), you can participate in the community of nearby Zunes within WiFi range and share your music or let them see what you are listening to.

How much can you fit on the 30 GB Zune? The official estimate is about 30 hours of video, 25,000 pictures, or 7500 tunes. Some people have hacked it to take an 80-100 GB drive, but this will void the warranty.

In use

Installation was dead easy on my Windows XP desktop, once I swapped the USB connector from the front of my PC to a slot at the back. The Zune was recognized and the process updated the firmware and the Zune software. It fetched the latest data from the Zune Marketplace, which is the online music store.

I tried the 14-day free trial (included in the box) of the Zune Pass, which normally costs \$14.99 per month or \$44.95 for three months. You can download all the songs you want and they can be played while your subscription is current.

Continued on page 22

SIG News, *continued*

New SIG -- Mobile Devices

David Eisen (ultradave@gmail.com)

Starting on November 21, and meeting on the third Wednesday of every month. ☞

DotNet

Manuel J Goyenechea

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

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

Meetings on the third Thursday of the month — Next meeting **December 20**. ☞

Genealogy

Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)

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

Genealogy SIG is for genealogists interested in computers and computer users interested in genealogy, and is a forum to assist members in furtherance of both endeavors. Meetings usually focus on genealogy more than on computers. We meet at 8 PM on the fourth Thursday of the month, but we do not meet in November or December. In addition to our Web page, we also have an electronic mailing list. Messages to the list should be addressed to gensig@webwarren.com. To subscribe, include the line “subscribe gensig” in the body of the message. **Next meeting ?**

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

Layman's Forum

Matt Skoda (som359@aol.com)

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

We meet on the second Monday of the month (no meetings in July and August) to discuss issues of interest to novice users or those who are planning to get started in computing. Watch our Web page for updates and announcements. ☞

Firefox Activity

Firefox@acgnj.org

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for all Firefox and Mozilla techniques and technologies, to encourage the study and development of web sites of all kinds. All the browsers will be considered and examined. **Meeting third Monday of the month at 7 PM. Next meeting November 19.**

The first meeting of the Firefox Activity was led by David McRitchie to discuss, argue and kick around many concepts and ideas. Web2 is definitely in the mix. All are encouraged to “think out of the box” about new web site design. All members and guests are invited to check out the design concepts and voice their opinion. ☞

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

<http://www.NJGamers.com>

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be December 14, 6 p.m. to Saturday 12 noon — 18 hours for 5 bucks!

BYOC - Bring your own computer

BYOF - Bring your own food.

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

Guru Corner

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

Software

HTML	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
ColdFusion	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
CSS	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
Java	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
C++	Bruce Arnold	908-735-7898
	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
ASP	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
Perl	John Raff	973-560-9070
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
XML	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
Genealogy	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Home Automation	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Operating Systems		
Windows 3.1	Ted Martin	732-636-1942

Discount Computer Magazine Price List

As described by the DealsGuy

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

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

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

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

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

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

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

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

New Member Renewal Address Change

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ E-Mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ URL _____

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

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

Classified

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



<http://www.apcug.net>

Radio and TV Programs

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

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

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

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

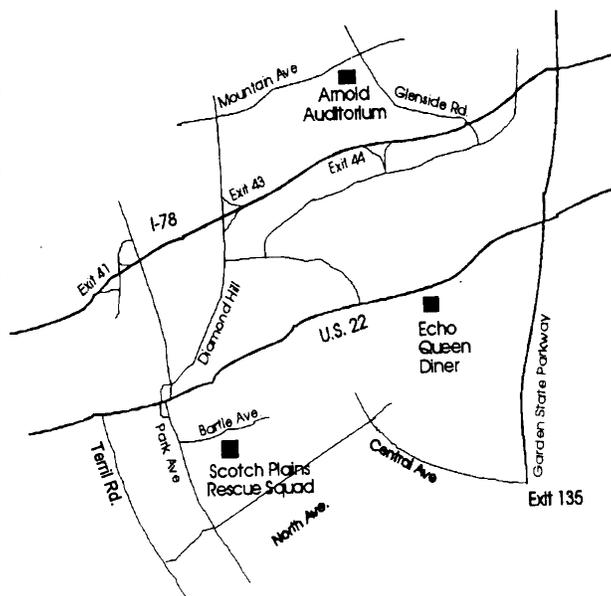
MarketPro Shows

<http://www.marketpro.com/>

November 10 & 11: NJ Convention Center (Raritan Center), Edison

November 24 & 25: Meadowlands Expo Center, Secaucus

December 15 & 16: Meadowlands Expo Center, Secaucus



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

From New York City or Northern New Jersey

Take Route 1&9 or the Garden State Parkway to US 22 Westbound.

From Southern New Jersey

Take Parkway north to Exit 135 (Clark). Stay on left of ramp, follow circle under Parkway. Bear right to Central Avenue; follow to Westfield and under RR overpass. Left at light to North Avenue; follow to light in Fanwood. Right on Martine (which becomes Park Ave). Right on Bartle Ave in middle of shopping district. Scotch Plains Rescue Squad (2-story brick) is located on the right. Do not park in the row next to the building — you'll be towed.

From I-78 (either direction)

Take exit 41 (Scotch Plains); follow signs to US 22. Turn right at light at bottom of hill and use overpass to cross Rt. 22. Follow US 22 Westbound directions.

From US 22 Westbound

Exit at Park Avenue, Scotch Plains after McDonalds on the right, diagonally opposite Scotchwood Diner on the left, immediately before the overpass. After exiting, turn left at the light and use overpass to cross US 22. Bear right at bottom of ramp to continue south on Park Avenue. Turn left at the second light (a staggered intersection). Scotch Plains Rescue Squad (2-story brick) is on the right. Do not park in the row next to the building — you'll be towed. We meet on the second floor, entering by the door at the right front of the building.

From Western New Jersey

Take US 22 Eastbound to the Park Avenue exit. The exit is about a mile past Terrill Road and immediately past the overpass. Exit onto Park Avenue South and follow the directions above to the Rescue Squad building. ☐

The Zune software found all music, video clips and pictures on my PC — there wasn't a lot to begin with, so this was quick. I found a couple of CDs and some music clips online and synchronized them with the Zune. There is still 27 GB free so I might get a converter program that will let me load some full-length movies that I could watch on a round-the-world flight later this month.

The Zune's ability to store digital images and home-made videos makes it easy to bore your relatives and workmates with your family's latest activities and archival footage featuring at least four generations! Think about it - if you lost your home in a fire or flood, wouldn't it be great if you had transferred all your pictures and home videos to the Zune?

I am more of a radio listener than a pure music listener. The Zune displays the radio frequency in a large font so you'd need to be almost blind not to read it. My favorite FM station supports the Radio Data System (RDS) which is also known as the Radio Data Broadcast System (RDBS) — this means the name of the song being played and the performer are displayed on the Zune.

You can store song lyrics if you have them, but you cannot see them on the Zune screen. In the future we might see synchronized lyrics but I am not sure if there will be a bouncing dot to go with the words.

I noticed a clever feature when listening to music and I pulled out the headphones in the middle of a tune. The music pauses - so you don't lose your place and it can be resumed when you plug back the headphones.

Audio quality is fine, at least for what you can expect from basic earphones. I didn't test the battery capacity but most people report about 11 hours with the WiFi switched off.

Quirks

The main irritation for me is that while the Zune is being charged, it is unusable for anything else. You can click the buttons and nothing will happen.

My next nag is the inability to connect to the Internet with the built-in WiFi. This could be a future possibility. Closely related is the inability to get podcasts into the Zune easily. The latter is easily solved with the free, third-party program FeedYourZune, which is also an RSS reader.

You cannot use the Zune as a data storage device and so it is not visible through Windows Explorer. It would be handy if we could use it for occasional data storage. I had to use a third party hack (to my Windows registry) to achieve this.

Community

There are many sites that feature the Zune. Here are a few:

Zune Insider - Cesar Menendez (MSFT):
<http://zuneinsider.com>

Zune Guy - Bill Wittress (MSFT): <http://zuneguy.com>

Zune User Group: <http://www.zuneusergroup.com>

Recommendation

You will enjoy using a Zune! I have a white Zune but you can get it in pink, red, brown and black. You can buy numerous accessories such as docks, cables, protective cases, chargers, cables, and so on. For more information, visit the official site <http://www.zune.net/>

This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above). ☐

ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Monday, December 3, 2007

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

Tuesday, December 4

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, December 7

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

Monday, December 10

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

Tuesday, December 11

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

Wednesday, December 12

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

Thursday, December 13

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

Friday, December 14

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

Thursday, November 15

8 P.M. - Dot Net, Manuel J Goyenechea

Monday, December 17

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

Tuesday, December 18

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

Friday, December 21

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

Wednesday, November 22

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

Monday, January 7

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

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