

Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

Volume 33, Number 04

Special 2008 TCF Edition

33rd Annual Trenton Computer Festival

April 25, 26 and 27



Don't Miss These



David Perry

Mike Redlich



Keynote Speaker David Perry, talking on "Identity Theft", one of the fastest-rising crimes in America according to the FBI and CIA. He speak on Saturday from 2:35 to 3:30 P.M.. and later at the TCF Banquet, which begins at 6:00 P.M at the TCNJ Brower Student Center.

Get your Amateur Radio License. Members of the Delaware Valley Radio Association will provide basic information on Amateur (Ham) Radio and license testing on Saturday between 11:20 A.M. and 12:40 P.M. in room SSB 105 of the Social Science Building. License testing will take place at 1 P.M.. sharp.

ACGNJ President Michael Redlich's Hands-On Java Workshop. Bring your laptop. You will receive a CD that contains everything you need to build your first Java application and continue to improve on it as you learn additional features of the language. Social Science Building Room 102, 11:40 to 1:50 P.M. (photo at left)

Robotics Contest - Sunday, Rec Center

9:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. DesignATHON Check In

12 noon to 1:00 P.M. Robotics Contest

12 noon to 1:00 P.M. Precipice Avoidence

3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. DesignATHON Judging

Kip Rosser's Theremin Concert - SSB Atrium 11:40 A.M. TO 12:40 P.M. and his Theremin Demo in the Rec Center 2 P.M. to 3 P.M. ☺



<http://www.acgnj.org>

Founded 1975

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

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Building the Future

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

I like to build stuff. My first computer was the only one I ever actually bought from a retailer. As I've mentioned in previous articles, the first time I cracked open its case and fiddled with its guts was a truly traumatic experience. (After all, it had cost me **more** than my first three cars **combined!**) However, I'm a take-it-apart-and-put-it-back-together kind of guy at heart, so I got over that feeling pretty fast; and I quickly grew to love tinkering with computers. I built all my subsequent PCs myself. (At first, I saved significant money by doing so. Not any more). As I've also said before, I've even gone so far as to cut and bend my own sheet metal parts; and I've drilled and otherwise modified older cases to hold newer drives, motherboards, and even power supplies. Why? Because I like to. You either understand the joy of constructing your own machinery, or you don't.

Personally, I intend to continue doing this for as long as I can; but the handwriting is clearly on the wall. The future just doesn't include do-it-yourself computer construction. In this article, I'm going to take a quick look at some new products, then see what I can do to simulate their operation using the equipment I've already got on hand. (That's because we're not famous enough to be sent free goodies for review, and our budget doesn't allow for any such purchases on our own).

First of all, no contemporary article speculating about the future of computing could be considered complete if it didn't at least mention the OLPC (One Laptop Per Child) "XO" computer. However, OLPC is **not** actually a computer manufacturer. It's a charitable foundation; different motives, different objectives. However, there **is** a commercial product that's been getting a lot of advertisement lately, which could be looked at as a high-end version of the XO: the MacBook Air. (They've got similar feature sets: extensive built-in wireless networking and **no** built-in CD/DVD drives). Maybe you've seen the MacBook commercial: It opens showing an all-white, flat area (a table or the top of an office desk, perhaps), onto which a disembodied hand places a standard nine inch by twelve inch interdepartmental document routing envelope. The hand then unfastens the end flap, reaches in, and pulls out a supposedly complete notebook computer. That took up about ten seconds of commercial screen time; and it was, indeed a compelling graphic. But is that ultra thin-ness a realistic design goal? Are workers really going to be sending computers to each other by inter-office delivery? Or are they instead destined to frequently bemoan that lack of a built-in CD/DVD drive?

Now, the OLPC XO is a Linux machine. Eliminating removable storage and concentrating on "bulletproof" networking made sense there, because most Linux programs are downloaded from the Internet, **not** installed from CDs. In the Mac world (like in the PC world), it's just the opposite. Why promote a "cool" design that **isn't** the most useful for the actual user? There are some further deliberate design "flaws" that I could also mention; but space is at a premium this month, and I've made my point already. The MacBook Air gets a **big** thumbs-down. So: on to the next design.

Linutop is a French company offering what they describe as a "Low Maintenance Small Computer". It's 5.9 inches long, 3.66 inches wide, and 1.06 inches high; and it has **no** moving parts (not even a fan). The case front contains four USB 2.0 ports, a microphone jack, and a headphone/speaker jack. The case back contains a RJ-45 Ethernet network jack, a SUB-D15 VGA video output jack, and a DC power input jack. Having no internal hard drive, it boots from an external 1 GB USB key. As a concept, I really like this design. However, since it would require a USB keyboard and a USB mouse to operate, it's obviously severely under-specified as far as total USB ports go. (I'd want at least **eight**, four on the front and four more on the back). Since I'm all for diversity, throw in a FireWire port and an eSATA jack; and I'd say we'd be good to go.

So, given our limited to non-existent resources, what about this could we test? The only thing I could come up with was USB external drive storage times. So, first I needed to take some baseline measurements. My primary master hard disk for this particular subject computer was a Maxtor 160 GB EIDE drive. I added a Western Digital 80 GB EIDE hard disk as the secondary master, then rebooted into XP and timed some file operations. I used 2 GB Ghost images for my subject files. Since that's the point at which Ghost starts spanning images over into multiple file sets, I've got a whole lot of those files to choose from, all of the **exact** same size. I won't bother listing their names, but I used a different source file each and every time.

First, from an XP Command Prompt, I tried XCOPY. It took six minutes and twenty seconds to copy one 2 GB file from the 160 GB hard disk to the 80 GB hard disk; but only five minutes and fifteen seconds to copy another 2 GB file from the 80 GB disk to the 160 GB disk. An unexpected asymmetry! Switching to Windows Explorer, I dragged-and-dropped **six** different files, three each way. Those tests averaged out to 6:21 and 5:17, respectively; giving me a consistent inconsistency, at least. Looking for a possible cause, I checked out the hard disk dates of manufacture. The 80 GB disk was made on February 28, 2004; and the 160 GB disk was made on October 28, 2004. I decided that it was possible that the 160 GB drive, being eight months newer, might be able to write input data just a little bit faster than the 80 GB drive. I took that as my working theory, anyway.

Now, to simulate a Linutop: Ideally, I would have wanted to disconnect **all** the internal drives in my computer and boot from an external USB drive as well. Unfortunately, my subject computer couldn't do that, so I had to settle for booting from an internal CD. I disconnected my primary master and slave drives, and my secondary master; leaving just my secondary slave (a 52X CD reader) connected. For my first external USB 2.0 drive, I installed the 80 GB Western Digital hard disk in my external USB case. (It was designed to adapt internal IDE CD/DVD drives for external use; but as I've demonstrated in previous articles, it works just fine with IDE hard disks, too). My second external USB 2.0 drive was a

Continued

From The DealsGuy For April 2008

Bob (*The Cheapskate*) Click (bobclick@mindspring.com), Greater Orlando Computer Users Group.

*Great Shows!

The International Builders Show came to town again this year and I worked in it several days. It's the largest show in the amount of freight (thirteen million pounds) of any show that has been held here, and close to the largest in area. The dock basin was piled high with crates of all kinds. There were five beautiful modular homes set up on blocks in the parking lot for people to tour. The modules arrived a week before the show opened, but all the homes were assembled with the finishing touches in time for show days. One was a three-story 2700 square foot model worth over a million dollars, which was actually sold during the show. One home featured technology of the future such as calling you or sending you an e-mail at work if something goes wrong. I'll write a separate article about that which will be available on my Web site soon. Kohler had their million-dollar computer controlled

waterfall again this year, and it was fascinating to watch it making letters, words, ad phrases and other decorative things to fall, all completely out of water. Mr. Kohler himself flew in to look over the display.

Another show we worked was the Orgill Show <http://www.orgill.com>. That is like a giant hardware store, but is a trade show (about 500,000 square feet of display area) with exhibitors showing their latest wares. Orgill is a large independent hardware distributor. Many exhibitors prefer not to take their booth's displayed products back home so some dealers come with large trailers and purchase as many products from vendor booths as they can carry, after the show closes. Some booths just leave their products, and volunteers from Habitat for Humanity collect as much as they can for that organization's projects. "Pallet pricing" and "coupon

Continued

Building the Future, *continued*

Western Digital stand-alone 250 GB sealed unit that I've had for well over a year now, but which I've never used in a club project before.

For the boot disk, I chose my sentimental favorite: the SimplyMEPIS 3.3 live CD. It's three years old now. That's *well* over the hill for a Linux distribution; but as I've said before, I'll never forget what I experienced the first time I ran it: A feeling of euphoria came over me, and I thought; "This is **it**! We can do it! We can send Microsoft to the Scrap Heap of History!" I certainly needed that wonderful memory now, to offset the feeling of total confusion I got after I performed four drag-and-drop tests (two each way). I got times of 2:37, 2:35, 2:31 and 2:27. That's more than twice as fast as my supposed baseline measurements, and almost *three* times as fast as the 80 GB hard disk's previously measured performance. At first, I suspected some hidden form of write caching; but I was eventually able to eliminate that possibility. Both drives *were* really writing that fast. USB 2.0 certainly works a lot better than I thought! It gets a **big** thumbs-up!

I'll miss my homemade computers; but the Linutop design is certainly something I could get used to.

Appendix I: Even More Copyright Paranoia

I added an Appendix to the end of my article for our February, 2006 issue, in which I groveled abjectly; begging Garry Trudeau not to sue me for paraphrasing a punch line that I remembered reading in one of his comic strips during the seventies. I've got more of the same this month. In the first paragraph of this article, I wrote; "Why? Because I like to". As I typed that, a certain song was running through my mind. It probably also flashed through your memory as you read those words. They were recited at the end of every episode of a TV show that I watched almost every weekday when it originally ran (and occasionally in reruns for years thereafter). I'm not going to name the song (or the show), but I must have heard it at least a thousand times as I grew up. Three of those

words are exactly the same, and one of the other two rhymes with the original version. Therefore: 60% of that saying was copyrighted sometime in the mid fifties by Walt Disney Productions. (All rights reserved). There, I said it. Please, please, **please, please, please** don't sue us.

So, why am I concerned about only three words? Because I know from personal experience that they made quite a big fuss over two. In 1959, Disney released the animated feature film *Sleeping Beauty*. This classic fairy tale was first published in a book under that name in 1697, and the story itself can be traced back to at least 1634. It had been set to music, and performed in Paris as an opera in 1825; and Tchaikovsky composed it as a ballet in 1890. Sometime around 1960, my grammar school class was scheduled to sing the title song (most likely from the Tchaikovsky version) at some kind of event in the school auditorium. (It might even have been for a graduation ceremony). One day during rehearsal, the teacher suddenly told us that Disney wouldn't let us say "Sleeping Beauty". They didn't object to the music, just the words. Though clearly printed on our sheet music, we would *not* be permitted to speak them aloud in public. We had to sing "Pretty Princess" instead.

Now, for some no doubt deeply Freudian reason, I remember that last minute word change; although I've forgotten a lot of the details about the performance itself (including exactly *when* it was). Plus, being only a student, I was never actually told anything at all about the background details. For instance, just how did Disney find out about our plans? Did they have "moles" in small schools all over New Jersey (or maybe the whole country)? By then, those words had been sung for over a century, and had been read in print for about two centuries longer. Yet Disney was somehow able to claim them exclusively, and to successfully forbid us from using them. To what lengths might they be prepared to go for *three* words? Hopefully, they've now been appeased, and we *won't* find out. ☺

specials" are featured for dealers attending and the Orgill reps wear different colored blazers signifying their sales volume. A coworker said an attendee was looking for me, saying he reads my column all the time, but my coworker unknowingly gave him incorrect location information and he never found me. I was very disappointed. It's not the first time someone has looked for me at a show, but they are often large areas and unless you know who to ask, getting together is difficult because most of us don't know much about where others were assigned to work, and my wife and I don't work all of the shows here.

March will bring the Electronic House Expo <http://www.ehxweb.com>, one of my favorites. I won't be working it, but hope to look around. Central Florida Computer Society <http://www.cfc.org> has already made arrangements for their membership to attend at no cost. I recommend that one if you are in the area.

*Are You Ready To Tax Your Brain?

AlbyMedia has released version 1.1 of PIQE: Chain of Puzzles. It contains different types of challenging puzzles, has three difficulty levels and allows comparing your results with other players. It's a set of engaging puzzles giving you a real challenge. The game has progress check and result comparison features to provide you with detailed information on your development. The game has three difficulties, offering more sophisticated puzzles after you beat the easier ones. Please visit <http://piqe.albymedia.com> for a free trial of the product.

PIQE: Chain of Puzzles runs under Microsoft Windows and costs \$14.95 (USD) for a single-user license. AlbyMedia offers user group members 15% discount on the PIQE: Chain of Puzzles. Use the coupon code ALBY-JMGJ at <https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=15534-3>. Licensed customers get free technical support and free upgrades.

Download : www.albymedia.com/downloads/piqe.setup.exe

Company web-site: <http://www.albymedia.com>

*Here's Another Freebie!

DVDVideoSoft, an Internet resource dedicated to free software, multimedia software guides and tutorials has just updated Free Video to Flash Converter. The new version features 30+ player skins and new easy-to-use web integration, just copy and paste html code to the site or blog. Convert video files to flash (SWF and FLV). Convert the whole movie or just a portion. Free Video to Flash Converter is available at dvdvideosoft.com/products/dvd/Free-Video-to-Flash-Converter.htm for free download. The program contains no spyware or adware. No activation or registration is required. Just download and use it.

Video to Flash Converter is already the 15th free program developed by DVDVideoSoft and has developed a line of free tools: Free Video Dun, 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 Audio Dub, Free YouTube to MP3 Converter,

Free 3GP Video Converter, Free Video Flip and Rotate, Free Video to JPG Converter and finally Free YouTube Download www.dvdvideosoft.com/products/dvd/Free-YouTube-Download.htm.

All titles are available at <http://www.dvdvideosoft.com> for immediate download. Also here are lots of guides and tutorials related to different video tasks like burning and ripping DVDs, making DVD copies, converting between all video formats and more. All our programs run under Windows Vista/XP/2000. We respect our users' privacy and there's no spyware or adware.

*Comfort Should Be The Golden Rule!

Comfort Software Group announces Comfort Keys 3.0, a successor to the popular hotkey management tool. The new version supports non-standard keyboard types (Ergonomic and Dell Inspiron 6000); speaks two new languages (Hungarian and simplified Chinese); has adjustable sensitivity for fast input of capital letters, spaces and other characters; has the option of hiding in the system tray and features an enhanced hotkey management window with a full list of hotkeys and new groups.

Comfort Keys is a multifunctional hotkey manager for Windows Vista, XP and 2000. The integrated clipboard manager extends the capabilities of the standard Windows clipboard allowing you to save an unlimited number of copied objects and reuse them as much as you want; and makes sure your clipboard data is saved in case of a power failure or hardware crash. It also features an advanced task switcher, sound control tools and a virtual keyboard that facilitates the choice and configuration of your hotkey combinations. You can quickly switch languages, convert the selected fragment of text into another language (or case), run keystroke macros, easily manage a window and even restart the computer using the keyboard.

Comfort Keys supports Windows Vista/2000/XP operating systems. A personal license costs only \$29.95. A multi-user license ranges from \$21.95 to \$6.95. The company offers a 30-day money back guarantee on all orders. More information on Comfort Keys, as well as its free trial version, is available at <http://www.comfort-software.com/hotkey-manager.html>

Products can be purchased from Plimus, the official reseller of Comfort Software Group products. Major credit cards (VISA, MasterCard, Amex and Discover) are accepted. User Group members get 30% discount at: <https://secure.plimus.com>.

*Wow! What a Clock!

ALSEDI Group announces version 2.6 of PerfectClock. It delivers any number of realistic clocks onto the desktop or replaces your wallpaper with clock wallpaper. PerfectClock lets you know the time in the most convenient way by looking at stylish analog or digital clocks. Enjoy having as many clocks on the desktop as you need, each displaying the time for the defined time zone. You can use the wallpaper clock as a screensaver. PerfectClock supports scaling. You can set a label to a clock and customize fonts, color, position and other parameters. The Reminder feature is also customizable. On the official website are dozens of clock and wallpaper clock

Continued

Recording Audio

Bart Koslow (*review(at)topcc.org*), Thousand Oaks Personal Computer Club (<http://topcc.org>)

Nowadays it is no problem to record video from a TV broadcast, VCR or other source using a Digital Video Recorder. When I began to look into recording music broadcasts off the air, I found that there were external Audio recorders, but they were expensive, beginning in the \$250 range and up. This is twice as much as a similar Video Recorder. Since I wanted to create CDs from the broadcast music and I had DVD/CD burners on my computer I decided that using my computer was a better and cheaper alternative.

One possibility was a TV/FM card for my computer which may be purchased for \$30 to \$40 and up. However, I found a cheaper method. My stereo system was only a few feet from my computer, so I connected an audio output from my audio receiver to the line in on my computer sound card. I happened to have a cable with two RCA connectors on one end going to a single stereo connector on the other end. Just what I needed, I connected the RCA connectors to audio out on my receiver and the stereo connector to the line in on my sound card on the computer. Now all I needed was a program that could access the sound card and record the input.

I hit the jackpot. Roxio Easy Media Creator has just the program. Not only that, but, once you complete your recording, Roxio has a basic sound editor that enables editing the sound files, and programs to burn the files to a CD or DVD. The Roxio program will access a number of inputs besides the line in. You may access your phone line, CD player, microphone input, and other inputs including Internet Radio broadcasts received on your computer. You may also decide which type of file format to record, WAV, MP3, or WMA, what fidelity to record, and where to save the recorded file. In addition, there is a recording level meter and control.

Once I turned on my stereo receiver and accessed the Roxio recording program, everything went well. I recorded a long broadcast for a few hours and then my computer told me I had

a problem and had to close the Roxio program. I lost my whole recording, but now I knew it worked and tried again. This time I closed all the programs I did not need and disconnected from the Internet to get less interference when I recorded. After editing the recorded audio file, I successfully burned it to two CDs.

If you have music cassettes or even VCRs with music, you may use this technique to transfer music to CDs. If you have cable or satellite TV service with accompanying radio, you may use the above procedure to record from your set top box to your computer. I have satellite service with SIRIUS radio, and am now recording live and historical music broadcasts that interest me.

I next discovered that in many cases I could bypass an external stereo receiver, set top box, or recorder by using Internet Radio which may be played using Windows Media Player, iTunes Player, Real Player or other free media players. All you have to do is find the radio station that is broadcasting the music you wish and then enter the URL for its streaming audio broadcasts in the Player software. I did a search using Google and found there are numerous Internet radio station locators, found the station I wanted and entered the URL. Now I had the music coming in directly to my computer from the Internet with no intermediary device. In order to save the music I again resorted to Roxio's "Capture Audio from Sound Card" program and changed the input from "Line In" to "Stereo Mix," and recorded the broadcast to a file. Edit the audio file and burn it to a CD and I was finished. It all worked like a charm. Now, I do not need a Stereo Receiver, external recorder or even have to add a TV/ FM card to my computer. The simple solutions are always the best ones.

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DealsGuy, continued

skins. It allows you to adjust hue, saturation, brightness and contrast to reach optimal appearance of the clock.

You can manually create a unique skin without being a programmer. New customers purchasing PerfectClock can order a Personal Family Photo Clock Skin at no cost. It only requires selecting a frame pattern, sending a photo or two, and the skin will be delivered to you in three days. This skin makes a great present for family events. Visit <http://www.perfect-clock.com> to get the trial version.

PerfectClock runs under Windows Vista/XP/2000. The Standard Edition costs \$16.95 (USD) for a single-user license and the Professional Edition, supporting the Wallpaper Clock feature, costs \$23.95 (USD). Licensed customers are entitled to the fully functional version of the product, free technical sup-

port and free upgrades. Further information on PerfectClock, as well as a free trial copy is available from <http://www.perfect-clock.com>. Get a 20% discount on *Professional version* or 20% discount on the *Standard Edition*.

Company web-site: <http://www.alsedi.com>

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 purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>. □

All Computers Wait at the Same Speed

Vinny La Bash ([vlabash\(at\)comcast.net](mailto:vlabash(at)comcast.net)), Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group (www.spcug.org)

I first heard that phrase about ten years ago at a geek conference in Seattle. A decade ago is earlier than the Stone Age in computer years. It was probably meant to make fun of the propeller heads that couldn't live without the fastest CPU on their motherboard. The geeks' concern with processing speed seemed ridiculous to those who understood that computers spend very little of their time processing information. They spend it waiting for us to tell them to do something. You would certainly find your life very boring if you had to spend 99% of your time waiting for other people to act before you could do anything.

What are we talking about? We're talking about keeping your system properly tuned so you don't have to wait while it tries to do its job. It's no secret that Vista has had performance problems. Microsoft has promised that their upcoming service pack should resolve most if not all performance issues. We've heard similar promises from Redmond before, but this time they say they really mean it. In fairness, not every performance issue can be laid at Microsoft's doorstep, but it's always fun to blame them —they're such an easy target.

Vista puts great demands on your CPU due to Aero and other assorted graphical gizmos built into the product. They should have named it the Eye Candy OS. Responding to the user community, Microsoft also added security features and additional functions that were not present in XP. When you ask your CPU to do more, you're adding overhead. This means you need more CPU power or you live with a slower system. If Vista performance has been less than stellar, the good news is that you can do something about it other than buying a new computer. Here are some of the things you can do to make Vista more appealing from a performance standpoint.

You're probably tired of hearing this one. It's like mother telling you to eat your vegetables. You know she's right, but you don't want to hear it. **Add more memory.** Vista is hungrier for RAM than any of its predecessors, and with memory as cheap as it is, it doesn't make sense to keep it on a starvation diet. XP runs great on one gigabyte of RAM. Vista should have two gigabytes as a minimum, and you won't go wrong by installing even four gigabytes.

Even with enough physical memory, Vista can still act like a tired old dog if you have a lightweight video card. Go into the Performance Information and Tools utility in Control Panel, and check out your video card with Windows Experience Index. You need a video card that's certified for Vista Premium and supports Direct X 10. Use the money you save on RAM to buy a good video card. Don't try to do this one on the cheap.

A real help to good performance is bringing your power settings to the High Performance option. Do this from the Power Options utility in Control Panel. The default setting is Balanced which is OK for XP but not Vista. The High

Performance setting gives you full access to all the Power in the CPU.

Turn off the sidebar. While this feature is visually appealing, it has few socially redeeming traits. Turning off this feature can sometimes result in significantly faster startups and shutdowns. Disable the sidebar by right-clicking it. Select Properties, and remove the checkmark in the box that starts the sidebar when Vista wakes up.

Fine tune your indexing options. Vista has a great search feature, but it's totally dependent on indexing the files and programs on your hard drive. It's a mixed blessing. You have a fantastic search capability when you index all locations, but you take a performance hit. By indexing fewer areas, performance will improve, but your search feature will be less robust. Vista won't let you turn off indexing completely, but you can disable indexing for locations that may not be important to you. Do this from the Performance Information and Tools utility in Control Panel.

Here's another "eat your veggies" type tip. Empty the Recycle Bin and adjust it so it doesn't take up more than 2% of your hard drive. Right click on the Recycle Bin, select Properties, and make the necessary adjustments in the dialog box. Don't forget to defrag your disk once in a while, and empty the Recycle Bin before you defrag, not after.

Open My Computer from the Desktop. Right click on the C: drive, select Properties and check how much space you have left on your hard drive. If you're approaching 90% or more, you need to take non-essential files and move them to another location. Vista needs free disk space to perform certain housekeeping functions, and if it has to hunt around for room or use virtual memory, your performance hit could be enormous.

Keep your device drivers up-to-date. Device drivers were designed to ensure that programs or hardware peripherals could "talk" to the system without problems and do their jobs properly. Newer drivers can improve 3D performance, fix bugs and other graphical glitches in games and video programs. Device drivers can avoid memory conflicts and prevent programs from squabbling over resources. Newer device drivers can support innovative features within applications, and ensure compatibility among different programs.

These are only some of the things you can do to improve Vista performance. Removing unnecessary startup programs, preventing spyware and virus infections, and updating old software are additional steps you can take. If your system is frequently hanging up or crashing after doing everything you can do to improve performance, then it's time to consider reformatting your hard drive and reinstalling everything, but that's another article.

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Benefits of Using a Computer Sandbox

Gene Barlow, User Group Relations

A computer Sandbox is newer technology that is not very well known, but, it can be quite useful in many situations. By using a Sandbox utility, you can place your computer in a protected state where you can try some rather risky things on your computer and not have your computer damaged in the trials. Once you place your computer into Sandbox mode, you can safely run anything on your computer, knowing that all changes to your hard drive will not be permanently made to your computer. While in Sandbox mode, your computer runs as if all changes to the hard drive were actually made to your system. But, at the end of using the Sandbox, you can throw away these changes, putting your computer back exactly the way it was before entering the Sandbox. Let's take a look at some real life situations to better understand the benefits of using a Sandbox utility.

Installing New Software

Everyone knows that when you install a new software product on your computer, parts of the product are placed all over your computer's hard drive. Entries are made to the Windows Registry, special supporting files are placed in certain directories of the operating system, and other shortcut and setting files are scattered in various places on your hard drive. These are in addition to the main folder that is installed on your hard drive with the software programs. Most software will uninstall easily, but often pieces of the product are left behind on your hard drive. These leftover pieces of orphaned software can build up and slow down your computer. Some software products include hidden viruses or other bad programs as you install them. The end result is that installing new software on your computer can be a risky thing to do.

Using a Sandbox to install and test new software is a much better approach. With a Sandbox, you put your computer in Sandbox mode before you download and installed the new software. Since the Sandbox lets you use the newly installed software just as if it had been permanently installed on your computer, you can run the new software to try it out and see if you like it. You can also run virus utilities to see if the installation gave you a virus you were not expecting. If you find viruses on your computer or just decide you do not like the newly installed software, you can get out of the Sandbox and throw away all traces of that software product and any hidden virus that came with it.

Letting Others Use Your Computer

Another reason to use a Sandbox is to let others use your computer. Other users may change your computer to match the way they like to use computers. For example, many of us have grandkids that come to visit and want to play on our computer. They may download games they like, change your wallpaper and default font sizes. They may pick up viruses in the process of getting your computer changed to their needs. When they leave, your computer no longer is the same as it was before they arrived. It may take you days to get it working again like you want it to. With a Sandbox, you can place the computer in Sandbox mode before they arrive and then let them play on

your computer to their hearts content. When they leave, you simply exit the Sandbox and throw away all changes that they made to your computer. It is instantly back the way it was before they started to use it.

Computer Labs and Classrooms

User groups that have computer labs or classrooms have a similar situation. The classroom computers are setup carefully by the instructors before the class begins. Once the students have used the computer throughout the day, the computers are different and modified from what they were in the beginning of the day. This may cause problems for the students that follow them, so the instructors will often restore the computer's hard drives to put them back to normal. With a Sandbox, this long restore process is not needed. Instead, put the computers in Sandbox mode at the beginning of the day before the students arrive. Then at the end of the day, exit the Sandbox and throw away all hard drive changes made by the students. The computers are quickly returned to their normal state as you exit the Sandbox.

Browsing the Internet

Much of the Spyware that you pick up on your computer comes from simply browsing the internet. Some web sites are designed so that simply passing your cursor over a part of the screen is enough to activate a download of Spyware to your computer. Not only that, but your privacy is at risk when you browse the Internet. Windows automatically saves all of the places you browse to and all of the screens you see on the Internet. Browsing the Internet in a Sandbox is a much better approach. Place your computer in Sandbox mode before you start to browse the internet. Then browse all of the sites you want to. When you are done browsing the internet, exit out of the Sandbox and throw away all Spyware and traces of web sites you may have visited.

We offer three excellent Sandbox products that you may want to use on your computer. Let's look at each of these briefly to help you decide which one would best meet your needs.

StorageCraft ShadowSurfer

The smallest and least expensive Sandbox we offer is ShadowSurfer by StorageCraft Software. This product is the quickest product to install and the easiest product to use of all of our Sandbox products. With ShadowSurfer, all changes to your hard drive are always thrown away when you exit the Sandbox, which is what you want in most cases anyway. This excellent product runs on Win2000 and WinXP systems and is available from us at the discount price of just \$20. This is an excellent beginning Sandbox product for most home users.

Acronis True Image 11 Home Try&Decide

The next step up in ability and price is a feature that Acronis has added to their new True Image 11 Home backup utility. This feature is called Try&Decide and it is a Sandbox feature built into this award winning backup utility. Try&Decide requires that you create and use the Acronis SecureZone on your hard drive to contain the temporary changes to your hard

Continued

Shortcuts

Mike Moore (ml.moore@insightbb.com), Bowling Green Area Microcomputer User Group (www.bgamug.org)

Why do some icons on your desktop have a little white arrow embedded in the picture?

These are shortcuts (sometimes called links). They are small files that represent and “point to” the real thing. When you double-left-click on a shortcut icon, Windows reads the location of the file to open from within the shortcut file, then opens the target file. Shortcuts are, in the lingo of computer programmers, symbolic links to actual files. They don’t contain any of the file’s information—they just point to it. In real terms: if Peoria, Illinois was a file, then its shortcut would be the map telling you how to get there.

Why do we use shortcuts? Why not just put the real, actual file on your desktop? There are several reasons. First, since a shortcut does not contain any of the target file’s information, it can be deleted without damaging the file it points to. Therefore, placing shortcuts on the desktop (or in any directory) is safer. Accidental deletion of these links will not affect anything other than you may lose track of where your file was!

The other reason is that you can have many shortcuts and place them anywhere you might need quick access to your file. For example, when we give away computers, we organize the software links in various folders on the desktop. There’s a folder for Educational software and Game software links, and for the software that is both Educational and Fun,

we put links to the same program in both the Educational and Game folders. You can rename shortcuts to anything you want, and it won’t affect the real name of the file they point to. Shortcuts are also portable! If I know for sure that a program will be in a certain place on nearly every PC, I can e-mail a link to someone and tell them to place it on their desktop. Double-clicking on it should open that file on my recipient’s PC! E-mailing a link is much more of a sure bet than e-mailing an executable file — because most e-mail servers just won’t allow executables (files ending in .EXE) to be sent!

How does one create a link? The best way is to find the file you want the link to refer to, then do a single right-click on it. This brings up a context menu where you can create the shortcut. Once the shortcut is created you can move it to any directory or to the desktop.

For creating desktop links, Windows provides a shortcut wizard that allows you to create a shortcut for any file type including a web page or another folder. From anywhere on the desktop, right click and select ‘New’ and then ‘Shortcut’ to activate this wizard.

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Benefits of Using a Computer Sandbox, *continued*

drive. When you exit the Sandbox with this product, you can choose to keep all changes to your hard drive or throw them all away. This excellent product runs on Win2000, WinXP, and WinVista operating systems and is available from us at the discount price of just \$29 for a download or \$33 on a CD. This is a very good Sandbox feature that comes with an outstanding backup utility.

StorageCraft ShadowUser Pro

The most advanced Sandbox utility we offer is ShadowUser Pro by StorageCraft Software. This is a professional-level Sandbox product that has many options and features to it. With this product, you can password protect the controls of the Sandbox, so that nobody can disable the Sandbox unless they know the password. Perhaps the biggest differences between this product and the other two Sandbox products is that you can pick and choose what files to throw away and what files to keep as you exit the Sandbox. This top of the line Sandbox product runs on Win2000 and WinXP operating systems and is available from us at the discount price of \$47. This is the product you should use if you are running a public computer workstation that needs tight controls.

A Sandbox offers you a new way to protect your computer from damage from the software you install or access on the in-

ternet. It also keeps your hard drive safe from damage caused by others using your computer. The selection of Sandbox products we offer lets you pick and choose which one is right for your needs. To order your Sandbox product, go to www.ugr.com and find the Sandbox product you are interested in. Then click on the Buy Now button on that product page to place your order using our secure web shopping cart. As you complete your order indicate the order code of UGNL0108 to qualify for these excellent discount prices. If you have questions about this new technology or about any of these products send an email to gene@ugr.com and I will try to help you.

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How to Forward Email

Vinny La Bash (*vlabash(at)comcast.net*), Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group (www.spcug.org)

Let's examine a typical email scenario. After opening your email, you find a message that you simply must share with all your friends. You press the "Forward" button and one way or another get all their email addresses in the "To:" box. Feeling quite satisfied after pressing the "Send" button, you sit back and take satisfaction in the joy you are sending to others.

You should be ashamed of yourself. You have just exposed everyone on your mailing list plus any people who received the email ahead of you to unending streams of spam, spyware, viruses, and other assorted electronic junk and mischief that hackers are prone to these days. What you have done is prove conclusively that you don't have a clue about the proper way to forward email. Your license to compute should be revoked immediately.

As messages get forwarded in this way they move along the internet, and the list of email addresses embedded in the note gets longer and longer. All it takes is for just one of these folks to get a virus or some other kind of malware, and everyone in that address list can be infected.

Anyone can take those email addresses, sell them or send out their own junk mail. Assuming you are a mature responsible adult, you most likely would not want to harm anyone, even inadvertently. What does a conscientious person do to stop or better yet, prevent damage?

When you click the "Forward" button you enter the edit mode of your email client. Before you do anything else DELETE all the other email addresses appearing at the top of the message. Let me repeat. DELETE them by highlighting them and THEN pressing the Delete button on your keyboard. It doesn't take long. When you've finished, delete any other junk that isn't actually part of the message, such as information about the original sender. Delete anything that is not part of what you want to send.

If you're sending the message to more than one person, do not use the To: or Cc: fields for adding email addresses. Always, always use the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field for listing the email addresses. The people receiving the message will see only their own address.

Some email clients don't automatically show the blind carbon copy option. If that's the case, click on where it says To: and your address list will appear. Highlight the email address and choose the BCC: option. It's not much effort, and it eliminates the possibility of someone using the email addresses inappropriately. When you send using the blind carbon copy, everyone receiving the message will see "Undisclosed Recipients" in the heading information. If your email client requires that something be in the To: field, send the message to yourself and use the BCC: field for everyone else.

Remove any FW in the subject line. Better yet, clean up the subject line completely by fixing any spelling or grammatical mistakes. Why let someone else's errors appear as your own?

Sometimes you will receive an email that is a petition. It states a position and directs you to add your name, address, and sometimes other information. Then you're supposed to send it to as many people as possible. If enough people do this, an email can contain hundreds if not thousands of names and addresses.

The longer the list gets the more valuable it becomes to a spammer or hacker because the names and email addresses are valid. If you really want to support the idea behind the petition, a personal letter to the eventual recipient carries a lot more weight than a piece of paper with a long list of names. When you think about it, lists like these can be generated from telephone books. Do you really think that a member of congress is going to pay attention to something that could be so easily faked?

Sometimes these petitions come with statements or warnings that the emails are being traced. Don't believe it. While technology is constantly improving, there is still no way to trace emails through the internet.

One kind of really annoying email is the one that promises that something wonderful is going to happen, but only if I forward the message to at least ten people in the next ten minutes. However, if I fail to do so, some unspeakable evil will surely befall me. I always fail to do so, and nothing bad has happened yet, but I wonder if this could be the reason I haven't won the lottery.

Before forwarding some version of an Amber Alert, take a little time to check out the story behind the message. Most of these messages have been circulating around the internet for years. Some of them have been around for a decade. Almost all of them are much less than they seem. Some sites that will help:

www.hoaxbusters.com

http://urbanlegends.about.com/od/internet/a/current_netlore.htm

<http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/bulletins/h-05.shtml>

<http://www.snopes.com/snopes.asp>

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

You may not be able to stop this stuff on your own, but you can stop contributing to it.

A SIG-nificant Anniversary

On January 15, 2008, the C/C++ Users Group (an ACGNJ Special Interest Group) celebrated its 18th Anniversary; each and every one of those years under the leadership of Bruce Arnold. Congratulations, Bruce; and Happy Anniversary! ☺



Converting CD-Based Music to Compressed Audio Files

Mike Moore ([ml.moore\(at\)insightbb.com](mailto:ml.moore(at)insightbb.com)), Bowling Green Area Microcomputer User Group (www.bgamug.org)

I spent the equivalent of two or three days in January, working a few minutes at a time, converting all of our CDs to MP3 format. I had been dreading this project, thinking that it would take too much time, but it really was not that bad and the results are going to be worth it.

A few years ago I purchased a 400-CD jukebox type CD player. This device has the capability of displaying a short line containing the album's title, using a standard PC keyboard, but the process is complicated with problems. It's easy to get CDs in the wrong slot and of course, you can only play them in the room where you've physically situated the jukebox unit.

In the past few years, we've been getting away from the album and becoming more focused on individual songs. This lamentable trend has been fueled by the 99 cent price point associated with downloading music by the song. Artists and producers alike have vilified this process, claiming that the artistic sum worth of songs on an album is greater than the tunes taken as individual songs.

I can buy into this sadness, to a point. I remember the smell of vinyl LPs, unwrapping the cellophane outer wrap, and the incredible detail the producers went into in packing artistic value into the finished product, right down to the order the songs appear on the album. These days, you just Google the album or artist title and download the jpeg, that's about it. For a fee, a program called iTunes will do this automatically.

So why would a guy spend the time to rip (compress) the tracks of a CD or other ancient audio product to MP3 files? There are a few good reasons to do this. For one thing, the devices that play music have become decentralized. What I mean by that is if you can imagine your computer as the "record player," then it's not much of a stretch to think of playing music anywhere in the house, car or workplace.

Doing this in the past meant locating the song you want (which may or may not be an easy task), finding the CD (or tape, or LP) it's recorded on, and hoping that it's not damaged.

Then once you've got it, you carry it to where ever you want to hear it. For me, this was often the car, and a car is a great place to scratch or otherwise ruin a CD, and I've also known friends whose entire CD collections have been stolen from vehicles. Physically moving music and other files from player to player is sometimes humorously referred to as "Sneaker Net"

But once you begin to think of your songs and other media in terms of compressed MP3 files, they become at once more searchable, more replaceable, and more portable.

Compressed audio files, though the wonder of a shared internet database called Gracenote (formerly CDDB), contain informational tidbits that can be searched. On the other hand, ordinary music tracks on a Compact Disc have no information associated with them at all, not even the name of the song. By converting CD-ROM music to MP3 files, your database can pull up a playlist using information encoded in the MP3 file. Most ripping software (such as C-Dex, available at <http://cdexos.sourceforge.net/>) will query the CDDB so you won't have to type in the names of the songs or the name of the CD.

Compressed audio files can be stored on any hard drive in the house and can be made available on inexpensive MP3 players, iPods, and Multimedia computers that attach directly to your sound system. There is usually no special hardware to buy — you can just feed the stereo output from your computer's sound card to the audio input on your TV or stereo amplifier.

Most of the MP3 player devices out there do not require a lot in the way of software — you generally plug them into a computer, they assign themselves a drive letter, and you can just copy your songs to the devices as if they were another hard drive. There are even self-contained wireless hard drives (see: <http://www.apple.com/airportexpress>) that will broadcast your music wirelessly to any networked computer in the house!

Compressed audio files cannot get scratched like CDs do, and if your iPod or MP3 player is stolen or accidentally formatted (happens all the time!), or even if your entire CD collection is stolen, it's no longer the end of the world. You just re-copy the files back to another device and you're good to go.

Though not exactly small, compressed audio files do lend themselves much better to e-mail. A typical MP3 music file is around 3 to 6 megabytes, which is just under the threshold of being too large to send to someone using dial-up internet. If both ends of the connection have high-speed, it's no problem at all, as this amount of data can be transmitted by most DSL and cable internet services in about 10 or 20 seconds. The MP3 compressed format is "lossy" in the sense that some of the music data is lost during compression, compared to the original recording, however I've never been able to tell the difference between a compressed song and a non-compressed track on a CD. The data you lose is not data that manifests as part of the music.

By the way, the songs as recorded on CDs you buy are very large - 50 to 80 megabytes would not be uncommon. For those of you audiophiles who need compression but don't want any data loss, consider using the FLAC mode of compression (See <http://flac.sourceforge.net> for information). FLAC stands for "Free Lossless Audio Codec"

So, there are a host of reasons why we would want to compress our audio collection, but what is the downside? The only problem I can think of is that most automotive and older CD players cannot recognize the MP3 or any computer generated music format. Some of the newer CD players can, but it's not something that people generally know. So, for example, when I transferred an audio book selection to CD for my wife, she found that the CD player in her car refused to play the media, even though her car is not that old. My car, a Chevy Monte Carlo, played the disk without a problem even though it's an older car than hers. So in this situation you may want to take advantage of software that does the reverse of ripping — it would take MP3 files and lay them down on the CD as if they were ordinary Audio CD tracks. iTunes and many CD-writing utilities such as Nero will do this for you.

Now does anyone wanna buy a used 400-CD jukebox player?

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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.

March: A discussion about the "State Method" of designing or coding programs in C++. A utility was created using this concept for converting a general text file into a "tab separated data file" suitable for importing into a MySQL database.

Even the smallest of programs can benefit from the STATE METHOD. It is a way of looking at a problem, dividing it into smaller and smaller parts until each part is in its simplest form. Code can then be written for each part with little concern for the other parts. Finally all parts are combined.

I am webmaster for a Bible website showing many Bibles. I needed to add the Douday Rheims, a 1500 page PDF. Adobe wrote the PDF to a TXT file of 100,000 lines. The source file consisted of multi-line paragraphs for each verse with a page footer containing Book and Chapter. A record in the target database consists of 4 fields: Book, Chapter, Verse Number, and Verse Text. The MySQL database accepts input of a single tab delimited line for each record. The problem was to convert the data from one form to the other, 100, 000+ conversions.

The problem was defined in terms of a STATE DIAGRAM. Using VS2005 in text mode I mapped the State Diagram into C++ code to accomplish the conversion. The running time of the program is about 5 seconds. Although the program is only a few pages long, it still benefits from this concept. A program can usually be written faster and with fewer errors using this concept, and debugging becomes easier.

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

Our next meeting April 15. ☐

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.

April 21: No Meeting — Come to TCF!

May 16: Linux, Andy Meyer

June 20: How to Configure Your Router (DHCP, VPN), John Raff & Don McBride ☐

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 April 7.* ☐

Web Dev

Evan Williams (tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com)

This SIG is an open forum for all Website Development techniques and technologies, to encourage study and development of web sites of all kinds. All languages will be considered and examined. Anyone interested please contact the Chairperson. The current project is a CMS for the club. Anyone interested in starting a new project, come to the meeting and announce / explain. Provide as much detail as possible. WebDev should be an all-encompassing development and examination forum for all issues, applications, OS, languages and systems one can use to build Websites. We currently have two Web dev languages .NET and Java as SIGs but the other langages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola-MAC etc.

Our next meeting April 9. ☐

Java

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

<http://www.javasig.org>

The Java Group covers beginner, intermediate, and advanced level Java programming. Primary focus is on developing useful/practical applets and applications, but can include topics such as Java I/O, JavaBeans, Reflection, object-oriented programming and software design issues.

March: Crushing the Config Chaos of Application Servers, a webinar provided by Phurnace Software. Phurnace creates software that troubleshoots configuration problems and accelerates deployments of Java EE applications. It eliminates the error-prone, repetitive processes and headaches associated with troubleshooting, configuring, and migrating of software running on web application servers (regardless of vendor or version).

Our next meeting April 22. ☐

Investment Software

Jim Cooper (jim@thecoopers.org)

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

The Investment SIG continues with presentations on how to use analysis programs TC2000 and TCNet. Large charts are presented on our pull down screen and illustrate the application of computer scans and formulas to find stocks for profitable investments. Technical analysis determines buy points, sell points and projected moves. Technical analysis can also be used on fundamentals such as earnings, sales growth, etc. We're no longer focusing on just Telechart -- if you are using (or interested in) Tradestation, eSignal, VectorVest -- or just in learning how to select and use charting and technical analysis, come join us !!

Our next meeting: April 10. ☐

DotNet

Manuel J Goyenechea

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

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

Next meeting April 17. ☐

It's Not Just Entertainment Any More

Gene Komaromi ([genek6\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:genek6(at)gmail.com)), Computer Club of Green Valley (<http://gvcc.apcug.org/>)

In the past, we've commonly thought of computer games, especially those played on game machine platforms, as pure entertainment. Times have changed and many games have become educational as well as physical training devices.

Learning has become fun for both kids and adults. Here's some information that will keep you ahead of the digital gaming curve.

DS - Handheld Games for Senior Citizens

Nintendo has a hot selling hand held video game machine called the "DS" for "Double Screen." The device opens with two visible screens, one is a display screen and the other is a "Touch Screen" which serves as the controller interface. The DS has a series of games designed with "older" users in mind. They are Brain Age, Big Brain Academy and Flash Focus.

All three have been recommended by AARP, and Brain Age has been shown to improve mental performance in independent tests. Brain Age and Big Brain Academy have a series of games, practice exercises and tests that are designed to improve and evaluate cognitive skills, and best of all "they're fun." They chart and graph improvement and will keep records for several individuals.

Have you ever had a problem with that vision test on your driver's license exam? Then Flash Focus was made for you. It too has games and exercises, but instead of improving your brain they improve your eyes.

Wii Want to Play

The hottest new gaming console is the Wii, another product from Nintendo that has games designed for the older kids, real older kids. The game controller is a little motion sensitive device that straps on the user's wrist. Participants interact with the game by moving their arms.

In the Detroit area, aerobic classes and movies have been replaced by Wii in many senior citizen centers. "Bowling" seems to be one of the most popular games. I've played it, and yes, it's exactly like the real thing. The motion of your arm, as you approach a virtual bowling alley, allows you to curve the ball and add some spin. Wii bowling leagues are springing up all over the country. Nintendo is about to release an exercise program for the Wii that uses a floor pad as a controller.

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SIG News, continued

Layman's Forum

Matt Skoda (som359@aol.com)

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

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

Mobile Devices

David Eisen (ultradave@gmail.com)

Our next meeting April 16 ☐

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. We meet at 8 PM on the fourth Thursday each month. 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.

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. ☐

Main Meeting

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

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

April 7: Cool/Useful/Fun Web Sites Paul Natanson

May 2: Dreamweaver, presenter to be announced

June 6: Guest speaker Bill Machrone ☐

FireFox Activity

Firefox@acgnj.org

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for **all** FireFox and Mozilla techniques and technologies, to encourage the study and development of web sites of all kinds. All the browsers will be considered and examined. All are encouraged to "think out of the box" about new web site design. All members and guests are invited to check out the design concepts and voice their opinion. *Next meeting April 21.* ☐

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmcc@optonline.net)

<http://www.NJGamers.com>

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be April 11, 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/membership.application.html> and pay dues with PayPal.

Dues					
US/CANADA	FAMILY OF MEMBER (No Newsletter)	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.pmu.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, bdegrout@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.

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.

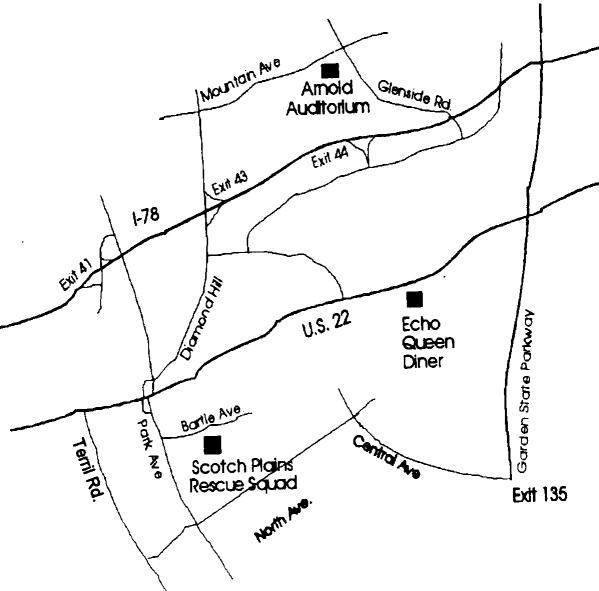
PC Talk, Sunday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., 1210 AM Philadelphia. 1800-876-WPEN, Webcast at <http://www.pctalkweb.net>.

MarketPro Shows

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

April 19 & 20: Meadowlands Expo Center Secaucus

April 26 & 27: Trenton Computer Festival (TCF) at The College of New Jersey, Ewing NJ Saturday 10-5 & Sunday 10-4



<http://www.apcug.net>

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

From New York City or Northern New Jersey

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

From Southern New Jersey

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

From I-78 (either direction)

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

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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. ☐

E-Mail Responsibilities

Bob Schwartz ([bobx\(at\)hal-pc.org](mailto:bobx(at)hal-pc.org)), HAL-PC (www.hal-pc.org)

E-mail is a very valuable method of almost instant communication. However, many people operate under an illusion that it is private. It is not. Once sent, it is effectively broadcast to the world. So one should NEVER send anything that they might regret. Once it is sent, it is now in other people's hands. The recipient may or may not care as much about controlling your e-mails distribution as you do.

Just suppose you send something clever about someone you know to a friend or acquaintance and they bring it up on the screen. Then, they take a break and go to coffee, leaving it on the screen. Another person passes by, snoops, and sees the e-mail. They also think it is clever, and make a copy of it and send it to someone they know, etc.

Or, the employer records all e-mail traffic passing within their company, which they have every right to do, since the equipment is theirs.

Worse yet, some people send messages that they believe are benign and strictly business, yet some self-anointed "god" thinks otherwise.

Yet even sneakier are viruses that can unknowingly, by you, forward your e-mails elsewhere; or, police and other snoops tapping your connection. There are innumerable ways by which your "private" traffic can go public.

So, the bottom line is: compose your messages with care, check the addressees listed, and review the message before pressing the "SEND" key.

Oh, by the way: do not think that once sent and "deleted", that the file is gone from your computer. When you "delete" a file, this **does not erase the file**. All this does is change the first let-

ter of the file name in the directory. The file, in all its glory, remains untouched on the hard drive, which is why it is so easy to recover it. Technology has provided a variety of means to recover and reconstitute "deleted" files.

To conclude, e-mail is a tremendously valuable means of almost instant communication. Just make sure that you use it carefully, thoughtfully and wisely.

Bob Schwartz is a HAL-PC member, retired EE, 14 patents, technical writer, active in civic affairs: President, Brays Bayou Association; Vice President, Marilyn Estates Civic Association; Correspondence Secretary with the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy.

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ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, April 4

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

Monday, April 7

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

Tuesday, April 8

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

Wednesday, April 9

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

Thursday, April 10

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

Friday, April 11

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

Monday, April 14

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

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

Tuesday, April 15

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

Wednesday, April 16

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

Thursday, April 17

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

Friday, April 18

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

Monday, April 21

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

Saturday & Sunday, April 26 & 27

10 P.M. - Trenton Computer Festival

Tuesday, April 29

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, May 2

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

Monday, May 5

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