Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

The Board Reports

Voting on By-Laws Revisons and Officers and Board Members will be on December 5 — plan to be there to cast your vote!

http://www.acgnj.org

Founded 1975

At the November 4 ACGNJ BOD meeting, the Board accepted and approved the By-Laws Committee's Final Report. The Board decided to post the proposed revisions on the club website (see *http://www.acgnj.org/cablc/cblc.html*). We'll publish them in the newsletter AFTER they are approved (we hope) by the members present at the December meeting.

Also here are the Nominating Committee's candidates for the December elections:

Officers

President · Mike Redlich

Vice-President · · · · · · · · · · Mark Douches, Paul Syers

Secretary · (open)

Treasurer · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · Malthi Masurekar

Directors (through 2010)

· Bill Farrell

· David McRichie

· Lenny Thomas

· Don McBride

As usual, elections will be held at the Main Meeting on December 5. Nominations will be accepted from the floor until the actual voting begins, and yes, you can nominate yourself. 💻

Officers, Directors and Leaders

Officers			Board of Directors		
President	Mike Redlich	(908) 246-0410	Director Emeritus	Sol Libes	(609) 520-9024
Vice President	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366	Through 2008	Bill Farrell	(732) 572-3481
Treasurer	Malthi Masurekar	(732) 560-1534		David McRichie	
Secretary	Paul Syers	(732) 388-1345		Lenny Thomas	
Past President	Evan Williams	(908) 359-8070		Don McBride	(732) 560-0369
Special Interest Groups			Through 2009	Gregg McCarthy	
.Net	Manuel J. Goyenechea			Arnold Milstein	(908) 753-8036
C Languages	Bruce Arnold	(908) 735-7898		John Raff	(973) 992-9002
Firefox Activity	David McRitchie			Bob Hawes	
Genealogy	Frank Warren	(908) 756-1681	**Standing Committees**		
Investing	Jim Cooper		APCUG Rep.	Frank Warren	(908) 756-1681
Java	Michael Redlich	(908) 537-4915	Facilities	John Raff	(973) 992-9002
Layman's Forum	Matthew Skoda	(908) 359-8842	Financial	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366
LUNICS	Andreas Meyer		Historian	Lenny Thomas	
NJ Gamers	Gregg McCarthy		Membership	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366
			Newsletter	— open —	
VBA & Excel	James Ditaranto	(201) 986-1104	Trenton ComputerFest	Mike Redlich	(908) 246-0410
Web Dev	Evan Williams	(908) 359-8070	Vendor Liaison	Arnold Milstein	(908) 753-8036
Window Pains	John Raff	(973) 992-9002	Webmaster	John Raff	(973) 992-9002

ACGNJ News

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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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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.

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

E-Mail Addresses

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

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The Historical Record

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

December 2008 marks the end of my first year serving as an ACGNJ Director. I'd like to think that I did a good job as a "rookie". I certainly got involved in a big project: The 2008 By-Laws Revision Committee. I'll have more to say on that subject in a few minutes; but first, I want to make a few general remarks about our club's structure. Unlike most clubs, ACGNJ doesn't have a monthly "Business Meeting", where the members vote on club business. ACGNJ is organized as a Non-Profit Educational Corporation. Its Officers and Directors meet at BOD (Board of Directors) Meetings (usually monthly, but held as often as necessary). There, *they* vote on club business. Under normal circumstances, the general membership votes just once a year, at our Annual Meeting; electing said Officers and Directors, and voting to approve or reject only the really "big" issues. This year, our proposed revised Constitution and By-Laws qualified for addition to the Annual Meeting's agenda.

Before we continue, a note about my timing: It's not great, but it's as good as I could manage. At best, this newsletter will be published only a few days before our Annual Meeting (December 5th, 2008). Thus, it can't have much of an affect on the vote. Unfortunately, a lot of this stuff didn't get "finalized" until *way* after the previous newsletter's deadline, so this is the soonest that I could get it in. Anyway, this article's main thrust concerns our historical record. Whether the By-Laws are passed or rejected, these are (hopefully) some of the more interesting actions we took this year. So, no matter what, I want to get them preserved in print. A further note about BOD secrecy: It doesn't exist. Any member can attend any Board meeting if they want to. They can even present business to the Board. They just can't vote on it. There *is* such a thing as a Closed Meeting, but even then, "members in good standing" may attend. Our By-Laws only allow for the exclusion of outsiders. Since none of the 2008 By-Laws Revision Committee's operations were restricted, we can publish them here. If you ever wanted a behind-the-scenes inside story about club operations, this could be it. (And believe it or not, this is the *short* version).

Introductions and Explanations

We posted our proposed revisions on the club Web Site rather than here in our newsletter because they were still subject to change. Once (we hope) approved, they will be moved to their permanent positions (replacing the December 2001 versions), and also published in this newsletter. However, the two introductory paragraphs to the proposed revised Constitution and the three introductory paragraphs to the proposed revised By-Laws will be deleted first. Therefore, to help explain why we did what we did, I've decided to copy them here:

First, from the Constitution; "Former ACGNJ President (and current Director) Bill Farrell has said that the Constitution describes 'what' the corporation is going to do, and the By-Laws describe 'how' the corporation is going to do it. This By-Laws Revision Committee has interpreted that statement to mean that while the By-Laws should always be 'up to the minute', the Constitution should have more of a 'timeless' feel to it; providing a bridge between the intentions of the club's founders thirty-three years ago and the realities of conditions as they stand today.

"We've restored some language from the original version that had been removed during previous revisions, we've resolved some previously existing conflicts between the Constitution and the By-Laws, and we've added some provisions to address any future conflicts. In our opinion, the following amended Constitution accomplishes all our goals (and also corrects 31 typographical errors)".

Now, from the By-Laws; "We went over the current By-Laws Section by Section, examining every word. We made additions or deletions to twenty of the sixty-seven Sections in the existing document, and we created three new Sections as well. Plus, we found at least one typographical error in twenty-one further Sections that we would otherwise have left alone. That worked out to changing forty-four out of seventy total Sections. Rather than splitting our proposed revisions into many small presentations, we decided to make one large presentation, recommending a single comprehensive revision of the entire document.

"We found and corrected 115 typos. Since typographical errors are by definition mistakes (rather than conscious decisions that were voted upon and approved by our predecessors), we weren't even sure that we had to go through the revisions process before changing them. However, we've taken a rather broad view, defining 'corrections of a typographical nature' to include misspelled words, properly but inconsistently spelled words, uppercase/lowercase confusion, layout inconsistencies, missing or extra spaces, extraneous punctuation marks, etc. Basically, these modifications affect the way the document looks, but *not* what it actually says. For example: After the 2001 revision, 'By-Laws' was spelled with an uppercase 'B' 71.4 % of the time, and a lowercase 'b' 28.6 % of the time; but never with a hyphen. In this revision, it's always written as 'By-Laws'. Likewise, 'Vice-President' was spelled with a hyphen 38.9 % of the time, and with a space but no hyphen 61.1 % of the time (and both versions were often used in different parts of the same paragraph). In this revision, it's always written as 'Vice-President'.

"We also made much broader changes. For example: We found quite a few instances of 'Corresponding Secretary' and 'Recording Secretary' still present. We changed them all to 'Secretary'. In order to align our revised document with the future, we removed all forms of the word 'postmark', most variations of the word 'mail', and about half the instances of the word 'written'. We retained existing notification requirements; but for the future, we left their form to the discretion of the Executive Board. The twenty Sections containing substantive changes are now preceded by a '(Revised December 2008)' tag. The three completely new Sections are preceded by an '(Added December 2008)' tag".

Continued

Note that any last-minute amendments to the Constitution and/or the By-Laws which might change any of the "counts" above (made "from the floor" at the Annual Meeting) could **not** have been anticipated here. Any future nit-pickers who think they've found a discrepancy should keep that in mind.

Quorums Through the Years

The question of quorums was really the **last** change that our committee considered (actually presenting it to the full BOD for their decision as we made our Final Report); but it fits the "flow" of my story better if I bring it up first. Our By-Laws define two different quorums: one for a Board Meeting and one for a Business Meeting. In my opinion, the historical research and the mathematical calculations we performed as we investigated each type are worth preserving.

Our first Constitution was published in the May 1976 newsletter. It listed the President, Vice-President, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer as "officers". It also listed Directors as "officers", but didn't specify **how many** Directors there would be. It listed only one quorum (for a Business Meeting): 25% of the active membership plus at least 2 officers.

Our first By-Laws (published half-and-half in the July and August 1976 newsletters) listed the President, Vice-President, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer as "Executive Officers" **and** as "members of the Executive Board"; and listed six Directors-At-Large and the immediate Past President as "members of the Executive Board" but **not** as "Executive Officers". Two quorums were listed: 7 members of the Executive Board for a Board Meeting, and 25% of the active membership plus at least 2 **officers** for a Business Meeting. (The same as in the Constitution). Converted to percentages, that's 58.3% of the Board for a Board Meeting; and 25% of the active membership plus either 16.7% or 40% of the Board for a Business Meeting (depending on who you counted as "officers"). Do you think I'm splitting hairs here? Further below, you'll see just how much chaos can be caused by an avid nit-picker with an agenda.

I have some reservations about the Spring 1981 revised By-Laws (as published in the October 1981 newsletter), but I'm also putting off describing them until later. As far as quorums are concerned, I found no changes from the 1976 versions.

The February 1991 revised By-Laws (as published in the February 1991 newsletter) increased the number of Directors to 10; and changed both quorums, too. For a Business Meeting, it became: 7% of the "members in good standing", plus 2 "directly elected members" of the Executive Board. For a Board Meeting, it became: 9 "directly elected members" of the Executive Board (now numbering 16). I'd like to know exactly what prompted the reduction from 25% to 7%, as well as the change from "active membership" to "members in good standing". (For one thing, it would certainly have been easier to determine the number of "members in good standing"). However, I just don't have the time to investigate **everything**.

So I'll have to let that one drop (at least for now). I **do** know what prompted the change to "directly elected members" of the Board; but this, too, must wait until later. Converted to percentages, that's 56.25% of the Board for a Board Meeting; and 12.5% of the Board for a Business Meeting.

The December 2001 By-Laws Revision Committee made changes to both quorums. They listed those changes (followed by their reasons for doing so) in their Final Report to the membership, as follows: "Seven directly elected members of the Executive Board constitute a Quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Executive Board. (The Executive Board has experienced difficulty in recent years with the timely conducting of the club's business due to the 9 member requirement)", and "A quorum shall consist of at least seven percent (7%) of the members in good standing plus at least five directly elected members of the Executive Board. (With reduced membership, this change will add protection from outside interests taking control of the club and its assets)". Among other things, the 2001 committee also eliminated one Secretary (thus reducing the "directly elected members" of the Executive Board to 15). Converted to percentages, that became 46.7% of the Board for a Board Meeting; and 33.3% of the Board for a Business Meeting.

The complete 2001 Committee Report can be found in the November 2001 newsletter, beginning on page 13. However, the revised By-Laws as finally approved were only posted on the Internet, not printed in the newsletter. I have an idea on how we might fix that discrepancy; but it's still vague (and furthermore, it hasn't yet been "authorized"). Therefore, I won't go into any more details right now.

One thing the 2001 Committee **didn't** change was the total number of Directors (10). However, in that same year of 2001, the club was only able to find **9** members who were actually willing to serve as Directors. From 2002 on, there have only been 8. In our proposed revisions, the 2008 Committee changed the number of Directors to 8 (reflecting reality). Then, we calculated how that reduction would affect our quorums. Applying the 46.7% and 33.3% figures from 2001 to our new total of "directly elected members" (13) yielded quorum member counts of 6.07 for a Board Meeting, and 4.33 for a Business Meeting. We decided that the first figure might be close enough, but the second **wasn't**. Thus, we considered decreasing the Board Meeting quorum to **6** "directly elected members" of the Board (that would now be 46.2%, **very** close to the 2001 figure of 46.7%); but decided to leave the Business Meeting quorum unchanged (5 "directly elected members" would now be 38.5%, reasonably close to 2001's 33.3%). We also considered leaving the Board Meeting quorum at 7. That would yield 53.8%, close to the 56.25% "9 out of 16" quorum that the 2001 Committee considered too difficult for "the timely conducting of the club's business". In the end, we didn't make a choice.

Re-capping our Board Meeting percentages: 58.3% in 1976 and 1981, 56.25% in 1991, 46.7% in 2001, and 53.8% **or** 46.2% proposed for 2008. As I said earlier, our committee didn't actually make a recommendation on this one. We

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presented both options to the full Board, and it was a *close* vote. Up until 2001, the club seems to have gotten along OK with a Board Meeting quorum that came out just *over* 50%. In 2001, it was changed to just *under* 50%; but Director attrition almost immediately flipped it back to *over* 50% again. Many of us wondered if another downward change was really warranted. Then, Murphy's Law struck.

The Board had scheduled a Special Meeting on October 28th (a week before the usual meeting), just for the By-Laws Committee. That way, everyone could take as long as necessary to dissect and analyze the Final Report, without interfering with the Board's regular business. Unfortunately for us, Mother Nature had other ideas. Inclement weather produced dangerous driving conditions, so that meeting had to be canceled. Via e-mail, we sent copies of the Final Report to all Board members, and speculated upon methods we might use to hold a virtual Board Meeting to discuss it. We wound up scheduling an electronic meeting for Monday, November 3rd, at 8:30 PM (the night before the normal meeting), using TeamSpeak. (That's an audio-only Internet meeting program that Trenton Computer Festival committees have been using successfully for quite a while).

We had an interesting discussion for several hours that night, but that's all it was: a discussion. It couldn't be counted as a meeting because only six BOD members logged in. We *didn't* meet our quorum. (A seventh member *had* intended to participate, but he had computer problems that night: A double Murphy!) This failed meeting might have been the determining influence on the vote that just barely adopted the reduced quorum at the regularly scheduled Board meeting the next night (when we had to squeeze the Final Report in with all the other club business). So much for quorums; and now for something completely different:

SIG Leaders and Discrepancies

Now we come to the history of the 2008 By-Laws Revision Committee itself. On page one of the November 2007 newsletter, the following announcement was made (even before the annual list of Nominees was given): "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". That announcement was also repeated in the December 2007 newsletter. However, when the subject came up at that December 7th, 2007 meeting itself, it quickly became apparent that *nobody* then present knew *anything* about our current By-Laws. After several unsuccessful attempts to compose an acceptable revision (and some confusion about exactly *where* in the By-Laws it should be inserted), the decision was made to table Bruce's amendment pending further study, possibly by a new committee.

At the next Board Meeting (on January 2nd), the 2008 By-Laws Revision Committee was organized, for the purpose of doing a comprehensive top-to-bottom review. It consisted of ACGNJ President Mike Redlich, Secretary Paul Syers, and Directors John Raff, Lenny Thomas and Bob Hawes (me). As President, Mike became Chairman by default. We exchanged several messages over the next few months, but we didn't actually accomplish anything. Mike had *a whole lot* of much more important, serious and vital duties to perform. (I won't go into details here, but I'm *not* kidding. We're on shaky ground). At the June 3rd Board Meeting, I volunteered to become Chairman.

On *July* 11th 2008, I sent the following e-mail message to my fellow committee members; "Well, I said a lot of stuff when I became By-Laws Committee Chairman. But what did I actually do? I got involved in another project (my End-of-June Newsletter Supplement) and did *nothing!* That changes now". From then on, we buckled down, and slogged through the By-Laws from one end to the other. When we finally got to Bruce's problem, we had gathered enough background information to understand what was going on; and it wasn't good.

First, though, I have to tell *you* some of that background information. Since our club was originally formed, terms have changed. As far as our current By-Laws are concerned, ACGNJ is governed by an Executive Board. That term is used all over the place, and we didn't even think about trying to change it. We just inserted the parenthetical remark "(also known as the Board of Directors, or BOD)" into Section 4.8.1 and left all the other instances alone. Likewise, as far as our current By-Laws are concerned, we have either Subgroups or Activities. As a link to the terms in use today, we appended the following sentence to the end of Section 7.3: "Less precisely, either a Subgroup or an Activity may also be called a User Group (UG) and/or a Special Interest Group (SIG)".

You might reasonably ask; "What's a Subgroup? What's an Activity?" The By-Laws *don't* say, leaving it totally to the discretion of the Executive Board. (Traditionally, the Board has classified a new SIG as an Activity for the first year of its existence. If it survives into a second year, it gets promoted to a fully recognized Subgroup). You might also ask; "What's the difference between them?" Here again, the By-Laws leave that up to the Executive Board, *except* for one provision: A Subgroup Chairman is considered to be an "*in*directly elected" member of the Executive Board, while an Activity Chairman is *not*. Here we find the basis for Bruce's amendment.

Here, too, we find the inconsistencies in our historical record that prompted my earlier expressed reservations about the Spring 1981 revised By-Laws. As far as I can tell right now, the terms "directly elected members of the Executive Board" and "indirectly elected members of the Executive Board" appeared for the first time in the February *1991* revised By-Laws, as published in the February 1991 issue of our newsletter. However, in that same newsletter issue, Article IV, Section I of the February *1991* revised Constitution was printed as follows (quoting exactly, typos and all):

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"(Revised Spring 1981) The officers of this organization shall be the President, Vice President, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer. These officers along with the Directors-At-Large shall be elected by ballot at the annual business meeting for their term as covered in the By-laws. The Executive Board shall consist of the officers, the Directors-At-Large, the immediate past President, the Elected Chairmen of Board recognized subgroups, and Sol Libes, who shall be a permanent member of the Executive Board".

This would certainly seem to indicate that Subgroup Chairmen had been considered to be members of the Executive Board since 1981; but when I went to the Spring 1981 revised Constitution (as published in the October 1981 newsletter), that Article IV, Section I version *wasn't there*. The version from the original May 1976 Constitution appeared to be there instead. In fact, *both* the Constitution and the By-Laws as printed in the October 1981 newsletter were *only* dated 1976. Could it be that they printed the *wrong* versions way back then, and *nobody ever noticed?*

I did a word-by-word comparison of the Constitutions as published in the May 1976 and October 1981 newsletters. Except for some typo-like changes (punctuation and uppercase/lowercase flips that could easily have been inadvertently made during transcription), they were word-for-word *identical*. Thinking I'd made a major discovery, I began a word-by-word comparison of the corresponding By-Laws. Except for some similar typo-like changes, the first four Articles were also identical. Then, in Article V, I found some substantive changes. I found further small but significant modifications in some of the following Articles as well. Even if not clearly dated, the By-Laws published in the October 1981 newsletter had *definitely* been mildly but meaningfully revised; and they *hadn't* mentioned anything either directly or indirectly elected.

The fact that the By-Laws published in the October 1981 newsletter could be proved to be the correct version would tend to indicate that the Constitution published in that issue was also correct; and that our 1981 predecessors simply hadn't felt the need to change anything there. Unfortunately, it isn't proof. There's a precedent for a change that affected club operations to have been made only in the Constitution. Our current By-Laws mention Business Meetings, but don't define them anywhere. They're defined *only* in our current Constitution. (Our committee fixed this, and added provisions designed to see that something similar won't happen again; but I digress).

Therefore, while I strongly suspect that the version of Article IV, Section I that carried that "(Revised Spring 1981)" tag was actually added to the Constitution in 1991 (then back-dated for some unknown and possibly nefarious reason), I can't prove it; and without compelling proof, we shouldn't act. So that Section, still dated 1981 but with the typos fixed, has been carried over into our 2008 proposed revised Constitution.

My uncertainty about that Section's validity has actually helped me to accept the only decision made by our Committee that I wasn't personally satisfied with. What's more, it was actually right "next door". The 2001 Committee had deleted the previous Article IV, Section II; and left it empty. We decided that this would be a good place to commemorate the change from two Secretaries to one. So we created a new Section II, and marked it with an "(Enacted December 2001, Revised December 2008)" tag. I always felt that this tag, while accurate, was too "cumbersome". I tried to come up with a replacement, but I wound up rejecting everything I thought of, except for "(Enacted December 2001)" by itself. Though less accurate, it *was* shorter; but I didn't really like it, either. Ultimately, we went with the longer tag, which I considered to be the "lesser of two evils". Now, I'm glad we did. Someday, on some successor committee, somebody might find that little bit of extra information useful.

Getting back on topic (Bruce's amendment), why do I care when Subgroup Chairmen were granted membership on the Executive Board? Because it measures the length of a convoluted conspiracy to commit an injustice. If it was in 1991, that's seventeen years. If in 1981, that's *twenty-seven* years. Since the oldest By-Laws language I have came from 1991, that's what I'll have to go with. Consider the following six points:

1. As stated near the beginning of this article, *any member* in good standing can attend any Board meeting if they want to. They can even present business to the Board. They just can't vote on it.

2. As stated when discussing quorums above, the 1991 By-Laws specified "directly elected members" of the Executive Board for *both* quorums.

3. The 1991 version of Section 4.8.2 defined "directly elected members" of the Executive Board as "the President, Vice-President, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, ten Directors-At-Large and the immediate Past President".

4. The 1991 version of Section 4.8.2.1 defined "indirectly elected members" of the Executive Board as "the duly elected Chairmen of those Subgroups recognized by the current Executive Board". It also said that; "In the event the Chairman of a Subgroup is unable to attend a Board Meeting, the duly elected Vice-Chairman shall sit and vote in his place".

5. The 1991 version of Section 7.3 said that; "Elected Chairmen of Fully Recognized Subgroups will have a seat on the Executive Board"

6. The 1991 version of Section 7.3.2 said that; "An Activity shall have the full powers and function of a Subgroup with the exception that the Activity Chairman shall not be entitled to membership on the Executive Board.

These points taken together show that Subgroup Chairmen (or SIG Leaders, as we currently call them) *were*, in fact, granted voting membership on the Executive Board as of 1991, if not earlier. From Point 1, "seat", "sit" and "membership" *must* necessarily mean more than just being allowed to attend

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Board Meetings, but *not* to vote. (Any member can do that). Then, there would be no reason for Point 2 if SIG Leaders *couldn't* vote. It's clearly designed to prevent them from holding any meetings that *didn't* include enough "directly elected members". Furthermore, in Point 4, the word "vote" was actually used; though only in reference to a Vice-Chairman. Unfortunately, you can also see the loopholes that opposition nit-pickers seized upon to exclude SIG Leaders.

Bruce Arnold told me that, in the past, there was a motion made and passed by the members attending a regular Business Meeting that denied SIG Leaders voting rights. However, that vote was *illegal*. The By-Laws can't be overruled except by amendment. Now, there's nothing inherently wrong with not wanting SIG Leaders to vote at Board Meetings. It's a valid political position. Instead of playing sneaky back-door games, those who feel that way should just be honest and introduce their own By-Laws amendment accordingly.

As for the 2008 By-Laws Revision Committee, we did our best to close those loopholes. That met Bruce's intentions, so his proposed amendment didn't require any further additions.

Mars Attacks the Gremlins

As I write this, it's late at night and I'm feeling a bit silly. That sub-heading above is an in-joke. It's *so* "in" that *I* might be the only one who will ever get it completely. In point of fact, Mars and Gremlins will be featured below, but in different paragraphs. Thus, they don't interact or appear "on screen" together. So that sub-heading also rates as sleazy false advertising. Forgive me.

Most of the work done by our 2008 By-Laws Revision Committee can best be described as low grade tedium; but one other interesting thing happened. It involved ARTICLE X: INDEMNIFICATION OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS. Specifically, Section 10.1; and it also tied in with some mysterious circumstances that I described in my previous newsletter article.

Section 10.1 is a monster. When I first encountered it, my initial instinct was to *run*. Fast! In an e-mail to my fellow committee members, I said that it "was written either by a committee from an insane asylum, or by a lawyer. I say we don't touch it, or even breathe on it too hard". However, it contained *at least* a dozen typos. So eventually we gathered up our courage and tackled it. As you might guess, it was written in Legalese. At one point, I said; "The only difference between Legalese and Martian is that it would probably be easier to understand Martian". Even granting its possibly inhuman origins, though, there was still something wrong with its final sentence. It just didn't scan right.

Acting on a whim, I did a Google search for a dozen words pulled from the middle of that last sentence ("against whom as such the action, suit or other proceeding in question"), and *I got a hit!* On September 24th, 2004, the By-Laws of Maxi Drug, Inc. were included as one of 126 Documents and Exhibits in some kind of legal action involving Thrift Drug, Inc. With the exception of "employee", "agent" and "stock" refer-

ences that obviously wouldn't apply in our case, the Maxi Drug "Indemnification" Section was close enough to *our* Section 10.1 that they were obviously descended from a common ancestor.

Comparing final sentences, I found two transcription errors in our version. One *mis*-copied word ("of" instead of "or") and one *un*-copied word (another "or" was missing). With those changes, our last sentence was still a complicated 57 word long run-on sentence, but it finally scanned correctly. In another e-mail to my fellow committee members, I said; "I did a Google search that returned only *one* result, and that result turned out to be *precisely* what I was looking for. I never got that exact combination of question and answer before. *Not* making this change is probably against some kind of natural or maybe even Divine law". It never occurred to me that something was seriously wrong.

I'll give you a hint: How many results would you expect to get if you repeated that search now? The answer should be at least *four*. One would be the Maxi Drug By-Laws, one would be *this* newsletter article (after the search engines have had enough time to find it), one would be our current By-Laws as posted on our Web Site, and one would be our *revised* By-Laws as posted on our Web Site. (Furthermore, once we publish our revised By-Laws in a future issue of this newsletter, the hit count will go up again). Our current By-Laws have been continuously posted on the Internet for the last *seven years*, containing those exact same twelve words for all that time. It should *not* have been possible for me to get only one result.

That brings us, at last, to the Gremlins. Before, in my *Turkey with Gremlins* article in the November 2008 issue of ACGNJ News, I described how an unknown technical fault made it very difficult (if not downright impossible) for me to access any of the old newsletter PDF files that we keep stored on the Internet. Both the Adobe and Foxit PDF readers were equally stymied, even when run on two different computers under two different Microsoft Operating Systems (Windows 2000 and XP). Only when I booted from a Slax Linux 6.0.7 live-CD and ran its Konqueror web browser was I able to download copies of those files to a local hard disk (where both readers, under either MS OS, could then display them just fine). Even under Slax, my transfer speed performance was abysmal, as you should all remember. (What! You didn't read that issue? Shame on you). Over a period of three days, in just about *twenty-three hours* of real time, I was able to download only 275 PDF files; for a measly total of just 414.6 MB. (Not much more than half of a single CD).

Why bring up this subject again here? Because I made the twelve-word search described above just barely three weeks *after* that traumatic three-day ordeal; and Google (arguably the most enormous "800 Pound Gorilla" in the search-engine business) *couldn't find the ACGNJ Web Site!* It's my contention that whatever disturbance in the Internet "Force" that had previously confounded me was still out there, and that it remained pervasive enough to interfere with the operations of a really, *really* big operator.

Continued

From The DealsGuy 2008

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

*Lost In Space

A lot is written about cloud computing lately and I wonder how many of you are as confused about what that really is as I am. It would seem that cloud computing has to do with keeping your data stored on some distant server or storage service where you hope it is safe. To me, that's a new name for an old concept, uploading it to some distant storage service on the Internet. On the other hand, in any offsite concept of storage, things must go right no matter what the concept is. In reality, it's still possible that things could go terribly wrong. Read this short article from Information Week magazine about Nirvanix whose service turned sour because of a third-party vendor assisting in providing their service. A bad experience like that can shatter your confidence in Software as a Service, or Cloud Computing. The article is "Beyond Online Storage" and the crisis description is near the end of the article. *Beyond Online Storage*

Perhaps you could do your own "Cloud Computing." For example, put some servers in grandma's house. She might have a spare bedroom now that the family no longer lives there. Perhaps there are ways to do cloud computing yourself, which would make it as secure as you like, and if something goes wrong, you should still have the data, physically. That might also be an advantage since DNS hijacking is becoming more prevalent these days. (I couldn't resist a tongue-in-cheek comment!)

*Don't Trust Anybody!

I'm on my soapbox again this month. We purchased a new microwave oven (above the stove type) from Best Buy after considerable shopping because they were the cheapest at the time. Some of you might remember my lawsuit against Best Buy several years ago. We had written them off for shopping, but decided to try them again since this was a different store. We bought the unit and when they loaded it into my pickup, I checked the box closely before accepting it, and it was not damaged. That led me to believe that the microwave oven was in good condition. Later on, I had a professional installer over to help me with the installation because of the difficult mounting space over the range. When we opened the box, the microwave's metal case was badly bent and the door alignment was bad. The installer said the unit had obviously been dropped. Needless to say the unit would not work.

When I tried to take it back to Best Buy, they said that once I took possession of the unit, it was my responsibility and they would not replace it since I had probably damaged it myself. However, they sent it to their repair facility for evaluation. Obviously, Best Buy's service facility would not repair the damaged unit under the warranty and said it could not even be repaired. As a last resort, I tried calling Best Buy's corporate headquarters, but to no avail. That conversation lasted about one minute before I got the same response as the store gave me and a quick goodbye, so there went $300. No more dealings with Best Buy by us, although perhaps other stores would have also taken that attitude. I guess it could be said that you should check the contents of the box and not take anything for granted when picking something up yourself.

It was suggested by a friend to also call Samsung, which I did; but they didn't seem to care either. For what it's worth, the metal in the Samsung microwave's case was very thin and flimsy. The installer suggested not replacing it with another Samsung.

*Memory Problems With Your Passwords?

Why not give KeePass a try. Many people try the wrong methods for managing passwords, such as using the same one for everything so it's easy to remember. All the thief has to do is obtain that one password and he can have you hurting. KeePass will help you be better organized and perhaps you will develop better and safer password methods. KeePass is FREE and also open source. Check it out at *http://keepass.info/*

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

The Historical Record, *continued*

To me, that sheds a **giant** black cloud over the whole concept of "Cloud Computing". We already know that international organized crime has a **big** presence on the Internet (not to mention terrorists). Now we can add unpredictable and inexplicable phenomena that can make it impossible for us to actually make use of any data files we may have stored out there. Furthermore, our newsletter PDF files were **small**; averaging just under 2 MB each. What would have happened if we had been storing big files out there, and suddenly couldn't access any of our data? I can hear you say; "Backup, backup, backup". However, another current trend is to make off-site backups to the Internet as well. That's just begging for Murphy's Law to strike. The Internet is a **fabulous** tool, but we're just asking for trouble if it's the only one we stick in our metaphorical "tool belt".

Well, that's enough ranting for now. See you next month. 💻

FastStone Capture

Ron Hirsch (Ronhirsch1439 (at) comcast.net), Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida (www.brcs.org)

What is a Screen Capture?

When you are working on your computer, the material you are working on/looking at, is displayed on your monitor screen, as a bunch of pixels. Often, it is nice to be able to "save" the info onscreen, or parts of it, for further uses.

Windows does offer a "Print Screen" capability, to send info to the clipboard or printer, but as with many of Windows utilities, it's a pretty barren utility, with very few options. Fortunately, there are several 3rd party utilities out there, one of which I consider the best I've ever used.

My History with FastStone

When I started using FastStone Capture in early 2007, it was still freeware, with a request to send in a "contribution", if one liked it. I liked it so much, I sent off a contribution immediately, and received a very nice "Thank You".

Shortly after my contribution, it became a "paid for" utility. For $19.95, you get the program, and updates are free forever. There is a 30-day free trial period, during which you can use a fully functional version, to convince yourself that this is indeed a program that you want to keep using.

Ways to Use Screen Captures

Below, I've included some of the ways I use this screen capture program — which, by the way, I use just about every time I'm on my computer. Remember, this program can capture a wide variety of areas on your screen — see the listing below in one of the screen captured images.

1. Have you ever installed something where a variety of screens and dialog boxes came up, and had to be filled in with info for various options, etc.? Sometime later on — weeks, months, or even years, you need to know what info and options et al that you filled in. No problem — just save each screen and store the saved screens in a named folder. Then all that info is available at a moments notice. All you have to remember is where you stored it. And you can also print out each of the screens after saving them, and file those pages in a loose leaf notebook.

2. You have some digital photos that you'd like to send to someone in an e-mail. If you just "insert" the pix into the e-mail message as many people do, they may come out to a very large size — much larger than you wanted, or expected. There are of course a variety of ways to "resize" image files, but there is one that is pure simplicity. What I do is to display each picture file in a program such as Windows "Picture and Fax Viewer", or the free Fastone Viewer offered on their site. Then adjust the size of the displayed image on the screen, to what you'd like the size to be in your e-mail. Then capture the image. When inserted into your e-mail it will be exactly the size that you captured, since it captures pixels, and monitors all have very similar pixels/inch.

3. You're on a web page, and there is something interesting that you want to save, but you don't want to print out the whole page. Just select the desired area using Fastone Capture, and save/print that area only.

4. You're watching a video on your TV, and there was an image of someone/something you wanted to capture. Just pause the video, and select the area you want in Fastone Capture. Your image is captured. Remember, screen captures are just pixels. The capture process doesn't care what created those pixels.

Remember, this capture method saves things as an "image" (I use the jpg choice). It will not save text in editable form. If you want to do that, you must copy and paste into a text editor, such as Notepad. But, if you have a program such as "Omnipage" which is generally included when you buy a flatbed scanner, you can use it to convert a jpg image of text to an editable page of text.

Links

The FastStone site is at *http://www.faststone.org/index.htm* . While here, check out the other excellent programs, all of which are free, or click on the Download button for FastStone Capture to download it.

Download link: *http://www.faststone.org/FSCaptureDetail.htm* or click on "download" when you are on the first link above.

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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. 💻

Google's New "Chrome Browser" (Beta)
Not Yet Ready for Prime Time

Ira Wilsker

As I type this, the national media is playing up the fact that today is Google's tenth anniversary. In that time it has become the predominate player in the search industry, with a market share of about two-thirds. By more than coincidence, Google also recently announced the public release of a beta version (pre-release) of its free new browser with the moniker "Chrome".

It is no secret that Google is in a competitive war with some parts of the Microsoft dynasty, and Chrome is intended to be a competitor of Internet Explorer (IE). By design, Chrome may be a superior browser to IE, but in the few days that I have used it, I have to conclude that the current beta version is "...not yet ready for prime time." Several of the websites that I routinely visit, including two different webmail accounts, My Yahoo, my weather page, and some other sites would partly load and display, and then disappear with a black window with a white font and graphic displayed. The graphic is of a frowning web page, and the expression "Aw Snap! Something went wrong while displaying this webpage. To continue press Reload or go to another page." Reloading would not fix the problem on any page where the error appeared. This is why I believe that this beta version, while fast, attractive and feature rich, is not quite ready to take its place as a primary or secondary browser. For the record, every page that failed to load in Chrome, loaded flawlessly in IE and Firefox. Despite this nagging bug, Chrome is still a worthwhile free download, because it has several interesting features lacking on the competing browsers, especially its obvious target, Chrome's nemesis, Internet Explorer.

Chrome (beta) was fast and easy to download from *www.google.com/chrome*, and effortlessly installed on my XP machine. During the install I was given the option to import bookmarks (favorites), cookies, and passwords from Internet Explorer, which I chose to do. While unstated by Google, it appears obvious that later versions of Chrome will be able to import data from Firefox. Chrome will also run on Vista, and versions for Mac and Linux are in the works.

After reading about Chrome and its features, I was excited about its potential. It is written in open source code using some of the best features of other open source products such as Firefox and Apple's WebKit. The code is tight and compact, and when it works, appears to load and display websites much faster than IE. Some of the technical websites have actually tested the load times of popular websites, and Chrome may be the fastest browser available.

One feature about Chrome, which I was especially interested in, was its default display of thumbnails of the websites most frequently visited by the user. Clicking on the thumbnail would instantly open the website either in that window, or in another tab (window) at the user's discretion. The appearance of the Chrome browser is clean and uncluttered. Each Chrome tab or window is loaded in a virtual "sandbox" such that if one web page crashes, it will not take down the entire browser, but instead only close the affected tab.

More and more applications are being integrated, many of which can be run directly from Chrome. Clicking on the control icon on the toolbar of Chrome gives several options, one of which is to create instant application shortcuts which can load applications into Chrome. An icon is created and placed on the desktop by Chrome, and clicking on that icon directly opens the application in a Chrome tab, even if Chrome is not loaded or is offline. This can give near instant access to such services as Gmail, Google Calendar, or most other applications.

Utilizing a concept "one box for everything" enables the traditional address bar of the browser to perform several simultaneous functions. As information is typed in the address bar, Google (by default) will identify previous websites visited as well as suggested search topics which become more detailed as more is typed. While Google is the factory default search setting, it can be easily changed to other major search engines, such as Yahoo. Multiple sites, such as EBay, Amazon, and others can also be selectively searched as determined by the user.

Chrome uses tabbed browsing, long a staple of Firefox, but fairly new in IE. The tabs are dynamic, in that they can be dragged changing their order on the top of the screen, or into a window creating a new window. This gives the user total control over the appearance of the pages displayed for comparison or other purposes, and is an attractive feature. Another useful feature in Chrome that also previously appeared as a default in Firefox is a safe browsing function. Chrome dynamically checks websites entered in the address bar against a continuously updated database of malware and phishing (identity theft) websites, and displays the following in a red warning window in a large font, "WARNING: Visiting this site may harm your computer!".

Many users like to create lists of bookmarks and favorites, and Chrome makes book marking sites very fast and easy. There is a small star on the address bar, and clicking on the star creates the bookmark, with the option to modify the bookmark. Another common task that Chrome handles very well is downloading files. Rather than using a download manager, Chrome displays download progress in the bottom of the window. When completed, the downloaded file can be dragged to the desktop or elsewhere, or opened directly by clicking on the filename in Chrome.

Chrome has been a lot of fun to play with, despite my frustrations trying to open some web sites. Google will be releasing frequent updates, and hopefully the page loading bug will be quickly remedied. If you want to try the latest in browser technology, being fully cognizant that it is currently a beta version, then Chrome may be a worthy browser to download and install. Chrome coexists just fine with IE and Firefox, and does not interfere with them. ⌨

Cloud Computing – The Future of Personal Computing?

Brian K. Lewis Ph.D (bwsail(at)yahoo.com)., Sarasota PCUG, Florida (www.spcug.org)

You may not have heard of it, but "Cloud Computing" is the latest buzz-word in computing circles. The question is, just what does it mean? The problem is that at this point, there is no really solid definition for this term. You can search for it and you'll find a number of interpretations. So, from all that I have encountered, I'll try to synthesize one for you.

Cloud computing is being able to access files, data, programs and services all via the Internet. You would have little or nothing stored on your computer, in fact, your computer might simply be a device, desktop or handheld, that can access the web and all of its services. In addition, cloud computing offers the services of enormous computer networks that function as if they were components of a supercomputer. These networks can process tens of trillions of operations per second compared to three billion operations per second for the most powerful desktop computer. This kind of computing power can be used for analysis of risk in financial portfolios, delivering personalized medical information, and powering immersive computer games. These networks use hundreds or thousands of network servers using PC related technology.

I think this excerpt aptly describes the computer cloud. *"What is Google's cloud? It's a network made of hundreds of thousands, or by some estimates 1 million, cheap servers, each not much more powerful than the PCs we have in our homes. It stores staggering amounts of data, including numerous copies of the World Wide Web. This makes search faster, helping ferret out answers to billions of queries in a fraction of a second. Unlike many traditional supercomputers, Google's system never ages. When its individual pieces die, usually after about three years, engineers pluck them out and replace them with new, faster boxes. This means the cloud regenerates as it grows, almost like a living thing." (*Quotation is taken from a Business Week article dated 12-13-2007 by Stephen Baker.)

Although some of these services may appear to be only of interest for corporations and their IT departments, services are also being made available for home and small business users. As you might expect, the availability of this Internet computer access depends on fast broadband access. An area where the U.S. lags behind many other countries. In this country we think that having 10-15 megabits/sec on our broadband is really fast. However, in Japan, 50 megabits/sec is closer to the norm, even for home users.

So who would be providing these cloud computing services? Actually, they already exist in the form of Google Apps, Amazon Elastic Compute (EC2), Sapotek's Desktop2 (www.desktoptwo.com), Zim Desk (www.zimdesk.com) and Zoho Office (www.zoho.com). (There are also a number of companies providing these services and more to large corporations only.) Sapotek claims to have 175,000 users of their Desktop2 and their servers can handle 8 – 10,000 of them at the same time. They have a partnership with Sun that will provide the equipment to handle as many as 350,000 users. Every time I look for more information on Cloud Computing I find new companies listed that are offering these services. It is a very rapidly growing industry.

So, if you wanted to take advantage of the services in the cloud, what could you expect to find? Let's take a look at Desktop2. This is a free service that provides normal office applications: writer, spreadsheets, presentations, notepad, and a calendar. It also provides hard drive storage, e-mail, instant messaging, blogs. MP3 player, RSS service and a web site editor. The free version does come with ads as you would expect.

Zimdesks is very similar to Desktop2. Its web applications includes pop3email, file manager, sidebar, RSS, browser, word processor, spreadsheet, calendar, tasks manager, accessories/widgets, web messenger, video conference, media player, Internet radio, web TV, games, zimcommunity, zimblog, and much more. It is also a free service that incorporates advertising. Like everyone else they have to support themselves somehow.

The third of these services is Zoho Office. On their home page you not only find a list of the services they provide, they are all available for trial simply by clicking on a icon. As with the previous services, the list of applications is quite extensive.

Google Apps is very similar in its offerings to the preceding services. However, it is more oriented towards business users. It does have a free version which might be useful for the individual user.

Zoho uses Java to run its applications on the web. Other services may use Flash or Java. Either of these allow the applications to run in your browser and to operate at reasonable speeds. I have tried out the word processing and found it to be no different than using a word processor on my computer. This is true even though the speed of my Internet connection is usually only 500 – 750 kilobits/sec. When you are using a wireless card modem it is only on very rare occasions that you can match fast DSL speeds. I'm sure that those of you on cable or fast DSL would have no problem using a web-based application, at least with regard to the speed of the applications response. However, if you are preparing a graphic loaded presentation, then you might experience some slow down depending on the speed of your connection.

The idea of relying on Web-based applications and storing data in the "cloud" of the Internet has long been pushed as a way to do business on the road. Now software companies are making entire Web-based operating systems. They present themselves as a complete computer in the cloud and are aimed at a wider audience. These browser-based services could help those who can't afford their own computer.

There are also those who are convinced that this is the future of computing. However, some security concerns should be considered. Unless you know how secure your data is when you use a cloud system, you should be cautious about what you share with the on-line servers. You need to know how your data is protected from other users of the "cloud". As a service provider they should be willing to undergo external audits and/or security certifications. Also you need to know

Continued

The Global University
Use Google to Locate Free Online Textbooks

Mike Moore (ml.moore(at)insightbb.com), BGAMUG (www.bgamug.org)

With new textbooks costing upwards of $100, and some publishers devising web-based content requiring the use of new texts every year, student advocates and concerned administrators have been considering ways of moderating this cost, while at the same time making textbooks available online or on electronic books such as the Amazon Kindle, and providing incentives for publishers to use creative licensing for their intellectual property.

The open source mantra that we have written about so often in these pages is now being applied to textbooks and other intellectual property in an effort to support students, control wasteful revisions and stop killing so many trees.

For the purposes of this article, we will refer to any electronic format for a textbook as an "E-text."

Some of what I'm about to show you may surprise you, and you may wonder how it can be that these valuable multimedia materials are just lying around out there on the internet. Trust me, we are not going to be hacking any university computers, and if anything about a Google search can be said to be illegal, well, then I guess we're all in a bit of trouble. Either that, or Google is!

For those E-texts that have gone open-source (that is, are in one way or another unencumbered by copyright), the university will usually put them on a public web site, and for those of you familiar with search engines, that makes them fair game for you and I!

I am fond of saying that Google indexes only the WorldWide Web, but in this case, the WWW is exactly where we want to go. By way of caution though, I will say that just because we find something lying around on the internet, does not mean it's free for any use at all. The user/reader is at least partly responsible for respecting copyrights, particularly if you intend to redistribute or use that material in any other way beside your own personal enjoyment. For an excellent copyright primer that is targeted toward teens, see *http://www.loc.gov/teachers/copyrightmystery/*.

Even a relatively small university such as our own WKU has a truly massive web presence, and in order to filter out everything but E-texts, we need a flexible search engine that has the power to filter results based on file types.

Google more than fills the bill.

A while back we hosted a presentation featuring Google's keyword filters. For example, adding the filter filetype:pdf to your Google search will return only results in the form of Adobe's Public Document Format, which is often the format of choice for E-texts. Conversely, if you want to look at all results except for PDF files, you can add the negative sign in front, like this: -filetype:pdf.

Since we did that presentation, Google has allowed additional file types that they never previously filtered for, such as filetype:mp3 or filetype:avi, which find, respectively, compressed music or speech and video files. These file types, along with mp4, are often what you might find on a

Continued

Cloud Computing, *continued*

what kind of data protection and data recovery procedures are provided. As has been demonstrated many times, computers do fail. Finally, you need to know what happens to your data in case the company fails or is sold to another entity. This is also not uncommon in the high tech industry. As is always the case, before allowing sensitive information to be used or stored on the web, remember "caveat emptor".

Lastly, consider what computing might be like should the "cloud" become the method of choice. Certainly there would be no need for computers to have all the bells and whistles we now associate with them. Just think about the possible design of a system destined for use solely with cloud computing. It would only need a minimal operating system that would allow the computer to boot, then start the web browser which would connect to the Internet. Your cloud page would be your home page and display your chosen desktop. As for a hard drive, a 10 - 20 gigabyte solid state drive would probably be adequate. USB ports for printers, scanners, possibly other I/O ports would be included. The one thing you would want to be high end would be the graphics system. This would allow display of high resolution graphics used in online games and for viewing videos. It is possible that the graphics processing unit (GPU) would be more powerful that the CPU (central pro-

cessing unit) or it might even incorporate the CPU. This could all be contained in a 1-2 pound laptop or compressed further into a handheld computer/cell phone. Although some of these characteristics are found now in smart phones, the spread of cloud computing would enhance the features of these phones. For most of us, the available screen size on these smart phones is not large enough, leaving a market opening for inexpensive laptops such as the ASUS Eee PC or the OLPC (One laptop per child). In neither case would we need an operating system as massive as Microsoft Windows.

One thing is certain, anytime you try to predict the future you usually miss the mark by a mile. So it will be interesting to see what reality brings about over the next few years.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over 35 years, developing software and assembling systems.

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Concepts and Tools

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

One day in the near future there will be no computer "beginners" at the adult level. The children born into the world as it is today are exposed to computers from conception. After they are born, many have very sophisticated hands on use of the machines from the minute they can reach out from their parent's lap and touch the keyboard. There is no mystery to them.

But while there are still older adults who want computer knowledge, someone has to be available to instruct them. And adults do not learn the same way that babies and children learn. Sometimes, when leading a group or teaching a class, it is difficult to explain to students why they need to to understand the difference between how a computer or a program works and how to make it actually do something. In my opinion, concepts are far more useful in the long run than specific techniques, especially when dealing with someone using a computer for the first time or who has gone just beyond the basics. But how do you teach a concept?

First, accept the fact that it will take more time in the beginning to teach concepts, but it will save time later on. The real trick is to make the process interesting and easy to understand

The simple fact that a computer is basically thousands of off and on switches, the same as a light switch, seems to be information that many people find irrelevant. But once a student gets some idea of the actual simplicity of the machine, much of the mystery is removed from the learning process.

Second, CONCEPTS, once understood, are usually far easier to remember than techniques. Anyone who "gets the idea" of a computer fundamental can usually find the tools later to accomplish the end result, even if the specific steps are not used often enough to remember them in sequence.

Continued

The Global University, *continued*

professor's web site containing interesting lectures or other course material.

It might seem logical to restrict your search for E-texts to scholarly sites, such as colleges and universities. We can do exactly that by using the site:.edu filter. You can even expand this to include only one particular college site by issuing, for example, site:wku.edu along with any additional keywords we want to search for. This would search the Western Kentucky University website for articles matching our keywords. The Google search returned using site:wku.edu lecture gives the following:

There is one additional search filter in Google's bag of tricks that will help you find more E-texts and multimedia lectures than using the filetype filter alone, and that is the intitle:"index.of" filter. Intitle looks for the specified keyword after the colon, in a web page title. Looking for the keyword "index.of" allows you to hunt down information-rich index pages, which can be thought of as the best place to go for E-texts and recorded lectures on university web sites because, as the name implies, they are like a table of contents.

As an example, let's Google using these keywords:

site:.edu intitle:"index.of" (mp3|mp4|avi) lecture

The vertical bar symbol between those file types is called the pipe symbol-it is over your backslash key, which is itself located just north of your Enter key. The pipe symbol, in this context, means to search for "index.of" entries that have either mp3, mp4, or avi in their text. This search yields the following-the first of only 48 links (image on next page).

It's not really that surprising that using the MP3|MP4|AVI filter only finds 48 links-after all, there is considerably more concern about copyright issues when looking at file types that might be used to contain music, movies and the like. Just for the heck of it, though, I tried this search:

Intitle:"index.of" mp3 beatles

The resulting search was impressive at finding mp3 files of the Fab Four's recordings, but the webmasters behind the pages it found were equally impressive at not letting you play the files without paying for the privilege, and since most of this music is copyrighted, that is only as it should be.

Even so, using the intitle:"index.of" filter is extremely effective at locating E-texts, particularly when combined with the site:.edu filter to only search university and college sites.

So your best bet on Google to find general E-texts is:

intitle:"index.of" _____

And just fill in the blank with whatever subject you're interested in. I used intitle:"index.of" caves and got 315,000 hits, the very first of which was a really cool teaching site (*erg.usgs.gov/isb/pubs/teachers-packets/exploringcaves/pdfindex.html*) about caves from the US Geological Survey.

I wish I could give you an idea of what intitle:"index.of" is actually filtering for. If you can imagine the internet functionally layered, like a Broadway production; got that picture? Okay, searching the WWW with Google using plain old normal keywords with none of the fancy filters we've talked about here-will lead you to find hits on what's going on about the stage and the actor's names and so forth. Now Intitle:"index.of" comes looking, and isn't interested in the play, the credentials of the performers, the lighting-nothing on the stage. That little but critical filter ignores all of that stuff, but instead searches behind the scenes, finding hits at the level of the executive producer, the writer of the screen play, and where they all went to school. That analogy is reaching a bit, but suffice it to say that specialized filters yield specialized results.

Please share your E-text searching successes!

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Going Green

Jerry Grommes (ggrommes(at)indianvalley.com), Sandwich Computer Users Group, Illinois (www.scug.org)

During our June program, there was quite a discussion about whether to leave your computer on verses shutting it off when not in use.

I, personally, like to leave my computers run so they are kept up-to-date with auto updates and backed up with scheduled backups. These tasks are done in the early AM so my computers are fully functional when I sit down to use them.

However, others asked why not just leave them on the nights that the backup runs instead of 24/7. I didn't think it was using much energy by running 24/7 but decided to check it out and run some tests using my "Kill-AWatt" meter. (Measures watts, amps, hours, kill a watt hours, ect.) I started with my newest computer (which is approx 2 years old and probably the most efficient). This machine is running Vista and I had the Power Options set to turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and put computer to sleep to "never". With these settings the computer was drawing between 110 and 140 Watts of power with a total average of 2.63 KWH (kill-a-watt hours) per day. Cost per day was $.026 ($7.87 a month) based on my most recent bill.

I then changed the Power Options to turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and put computer to sleep "after 2 hours".

The watts dropped from between 110 and 140 while I was using the computer to 6 while in the sleep mode and the total average of KWH dropped to 0.65 per day. Cost is now down to 6 cents a day ($1.94 a month).

With the current power options (turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and sleep "after 2 hours") the computer will wake up and get updates as well as run the scheduled backups. So with a simple change to a power option, I was able to reduce power consumption by approx 76% and save $5.93 per month with out affecting my user experience.

Continued

Concepts and Tools, *continued*

Many first session lesson plans skip computer functionality and plunge straight into using software. As an example, the concept of organizing files on a hard drive seems to be much harder for new users to comprehend than teaching them to open the file manager, aka Windows Explore or some similar program. So many teachers go through the cumbersome task of showing people how to open the file system, only to become bogged down in the steps needed to find a particular file, then later to continually have people complain they have lost a file and firmly believe it has disappeared from their machine. Most new users find it difficult to make the connection between finding a file on the computer and why understanding how to find it is important. It is the instructors job to help them make the connection. The CONCEPT of hard drive storage is not easy to absorb, so the instructor must make it easy. Also many new users find it difficult to transfer keystrokes learned on a classroom computer to their own computers at home. The reason for this is that no two computers are exactly alike, so the steps learned on one machine may or may not work on another one. But if the student comprehends the idea behind digital file storage, the actual keystrokes will begin to make sense, regardless of what computer they are using. In my opinion, rote learning is not the best way to become even moderately proficient on a computer. Real understanding of basic computing processes is vital.

Since many new users have little idea of what hardware is on their own computers, talking about C:\ drives and other drives in relation to specific files means little to them. But a well developed discussion of what basic hardware CAN be on a computer and how it works is not a waste of time, answering questions along the way. Many new users won't see the value in a technical discussion, so it is important to present hardware demonstrations using common sense terms rather than obscure technical language. It is never necessary to impress new students with what you know, but rather to make the information as easy for them to understand as possible. With practice, a teacher or presenter can develop the dialog necessary to convey essential information and still keep the listeners engaged. Students appreciate being encouraged in the idea that they may not know much to begin with, but they will leave each session armed with useful information and techniques that will build a good basic foundation for them. Biblically we were taught not to build our houses on sand. Why are the pyramids in Egypt still standing? Because underneath all that sand there are foundations built on bedrock. Good computer skills begin the same way.

Nearly all programs are far too comprehensive to be taught in detail to beginners. But if the most basic use of the program (the program's CONCEPT) can be presented in a way that is useful to students, they will get their feet wet. From there they can then be encouraged to not only attend study groups and advanced classes, but to explore their favorite programs on their own. Again, the difference is between teaching new users the fundamental use of the program itself as opposed to teaching them to use specific program "tools". Obviously some techniques need to be taught in early sessions, but teaching the use of most tools is best done in intermediate and advanced classes. My experience has been that only when people have a need for or enjoy using any computer software will they continue to explore and expand their knowledge of the program.

How long did it take you to figure out that the "d" in d:\ stands for any non-specific "drive" when dealing with program instructions (often installation procedures) and not specifically for the "d" drive on your personal computer? Admit it, there was a time when you didn't know that. Just think how confusing the term is to new users. There is a concept here if you can find it.

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Ubuntu & Linux Software

Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D. (bwsail (at) yahoo.com), Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group (www.spcug.org)

I suppose some of you might be wondering why I have been writing about the Ubuntu Linux operating system and Linux software. As I noted in last month's article my laptop is now my sole computer. Although it has a Pentium 4 processor it only has 512 MB of RAM. Naturally, that means it is incapable of running Windows Vista. But it does easily run Ubuntu with more than enough memory to do multi-tasking with no reduction in speed. I also know that there are a number of the members of the SPCUG that use computers that are running Windows 98 or Windows XP. The point is, that it is not necessary to try to upgrade these computers to run Vista or to buy a new computer. Instead you have the free alternative of installing Ubuntu or another version of Linux. This article will discuss some of the range of free Linux software and how easy it is to install it.

The original installation CD of Ubuntu included OpenOffice software. OpenOffice includes a word processor, spreadsheet and presentation applications. These are fully compatible with the components of Microsoft Office. I frequently receive documents prepared in MS Word and they open directly into OpenOffice Writer. I can edit, comment and save a copy in the OpenOffice format. Then I can return the modified document to the originator in MS Word format with all the edits and comments intact. The same is true for spreadsheets. The OpenOffice presentationapplication (Impress) reads, writes and modifies PowerPoint files as easily as Writer works with documents. OpenOffice also includes a Drawing application. Drawing is an application that I haven't used.

Other included software with Ubuntu are Ekiga (internet phone software), Pidgeon (internet messenger), Evolution (e-mail), and a remote desktop viewer. Graphics software includes the F-Spot photo manager, GIMP Image Editor and Xsane scanner software. Also, there is a CD burner, movie player for DVDs and two music players.

I grant you that the included software doesn't always meet all the needs for many users. So Ubuntu has several ways of installing additional software. I mentioned last month about installing the drivers for my printer, scanner and the wireless modem. This month I will continue with other applications that are the equivalent of those that I used under Windows. The installation of these applications was much easier than installing drivers for the accessory hardware.

The first step in installing any application is to go to the Applications – Add/Remove menu. When this application runs it provides you with a list of all the software available through Ubuntu and its third-party providers. On the left side of the window are listed various categories that you can highlight and the appropriate applications are then listed on the right side. When you highlight a specific application, a description appears in the lower portion of the window. There is also a search box that you can use to find a specific program or a group of programs.

Since I maintain my financial records on my computer I wanted a financial program that ran under Ubuntu. Not knowing the specific name, I just searched on the term "finances". This brought up a list of financial software. One of the interesting aspects of the Add/Remove application is that programs are rated based on feedback from users using 1 to 5 stars. There was a 5 star application listed, GNUcash, which can import files in the Quicken format. So I put a check mark in the box by the application name and then clicked on the "Apply Changes" button. This brought up another window for verification of the changes to be made. After clicking on "OK", the application was downloaded from the Internet and installed on the hard drive without any further action on my part. A shortcut icon was also added to the Office portion of the applications menu. There was no reboot required to complete this process. After the installation, the "Add/Remove" application reported the successful installation and remained open in case I wanted to use it further.

My Windows financial software was Microsoft Money. Supposedly it will export its data files in the Quicken format. I did that and then copied the files from the Windows partition to the Ubuntu partition. However, the import into GNUcash was not really successful. I'm not sure why but I suspect there was information missing which resulted in misidentification of some of the accounts. Anyway, I selected an arbitrary date and entered opening balances for that date. So now, it is working perfectly and is in agreement with my bank balances. Using it is even somewhat easier than working with either Money or Quicken. Plus, the price is right.

Another application that I needed for Ubuntu was a genealogy program. Here again I was able to find a five star program, GRAMPS. (Very appropriate name I thought.) It was also available through the "Add/Remove" application so installation was completed quickly. GRAMPS imports GED files as do many genealogy programs. So I exported my files from my Windows software in the GED format then copied the GED file to the Ubuntu partition. The import into GRAMPS was essentially a two-click operation. Everything, including notes and references, were now available in an Ubuntu application. GRAMPS also has more report formats than my Windows software included. So I consider it a very successful replacement.

Continued

Going Green, *continued*

I plan on testing my XP machine next to see what it is costing and to see if it can be reduced.

To get more info and tips on energy savings try
http://www.energy.gov/forconsumers.htm

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For quite some time I have used a PDA, specifically a Sony Clie which runs Palm Pilot software. The Sony CD loaded the Windows version to the hard drive and also included software to synchronize with the PDA. Since I have considerable contact information in the Clie along with many memoranda, I really wanted to be able to run this under Ubuntu. In the System-Preferences menu there is a selection for PalmOS devices. Now that sounded like it would be quite simple to install the applications necessary to run the Clie. Clicking on the selection runs the Gnome-Pilot application which helps the user to determine the settings for synchronizing with the Clie. Unfortunately, it could not find the Clie PDA. So I had to go back online to the Ubuntu forums to see if I could find the secret. It turns out that getting a PDA recognized and synced with Ubuntu is not always simple. After spending considerable time reading various solutions I came across a command line entry that showed the entries where my Clie was being recognized by Ubuntu. The PDA was properly identified by vendor and product ID's. Now all the information I had gathered indicated that the PDA should be listed as using a USB connection and usually ttyUSB0 and ttyUSB1. Much to my surprise my printout showed the Clie as using ttyUSB9 and ttyUSB10. The Gnome-Pilot software refused to accept either of these as valid locations. However, another application, J-Pilot, accepted ttyUSB10 and synced with the Clie when the sync button was clicked. The synchronization transferred all of my information directly into the J-Pilot software. This software works on the desktop in a very similar manner to the Clie and Pilot software I had used under Windows. Successive synchronizations have also been successful. So that was one less application that would need to run under Windows.

There has been one big disappointment in the hardware setup. I have a multi-function media card reader built into the laptop. It reads SD cards as well as xD, MMC, and memory sticks. This reader works great under Windows as a way to transfer photos from my camera to the computer. However, there is apparently no driver available for this to work under Ubuntu. The card reader is manufactured by 02 Micro and they apparently don't believe Linux is here to stay so they have no plans to create Linux drivers for any of their products. At least that's the quotation from a response to a query from a Ubuntu user. So when I have photos to transfer to my computer I can either reboot into Windows, or I can connect the camera with a USB cable. The USB cable works fine as Ubuntu recognizes the camera right away. It also opens the F-Spot Photo Manager which allows me to choose the pictures and the location where I want them saved.

One of the applications included with Ubuntu is Brasero, a CD/DVD burner. When I first tried to use it, it refused to recognize my DVD+R discs. It would read and write DVD-R/RW with no difficulty. Since I had a supply of the +R discs I decided to look for other DVD burning software. In the ADD/Remove application there were several CD/DVD burners listed. One of them was five star application called K3B. It was written primarily to work with the KDE destop that is an alternative to the GNOME desktop. The KDE desktop comes with Kubuntu and has an interface that is closer to the one found in Windows. Anyway, K3B will work with GNOME,

so let ADD/Remove install it. Any software that you add through Add/Remove can be removed simply by locating it in the list and removing the checkmark that indicates it has been installed. So now I have both Brasero and K3B installed. I also found, the next time I wanted to burn a DVD, that Brasero would now work with my external burner and the +R discs. I do like the interface for K3B better than Brasero, but they both work.

As you can see one of the nice attributes of using open license software is the ability to install it and use it at no cost. If you don't like it, you simply remove it. It's certainly not that simple in Windows. So, if you want to try a Linux OS on your computer download a "Live CD" and try it out. Also check out the online help forums. I think you'll find them easier to understand than much of the material Microsoft makes available. Whatever you decide, enjoy your computing!

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems.

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Have a Merry Christmas!

The Art of Keeping Cool
Part 2: Non-fan Computer Cooling

Jerry Goldstein (Attygoldstein(at)tiac.net), The PC Users Group of Connecticut (www.tpcug-ct.org)

Last month we went into how to cool off your desktop PC with fans. In Part 2 we look at alternative and leading edge ways to cool your computer. We also discuss how to keep your laptop from frying.

To reduce computer noise pollution computer designers have come up with many solutions to reduce the heat. Strangely, liquids have proven successful in cooling computers. Liquids provide two benefits over air cooling your computer. Liquid computers run quieter than fan cooled ones and water is better than drawing out heat than air. For complete submersion of computer parts manufacturers have immersed the computer in a variety of oil, synthetic motor oil works well but cooking oil is also used. The oil is low conducive so the electrical parts are not damaged. Complete submersion is typically only used on extreme density computers made for business purposes. One problem with oil is that it evaporates so proper maintenance of topping off the oil must be done.

You may say water and electronics don't mix (go ahead and say it, no one is around) but computer designers have worked out a way. The water flows inside tubes through the computer passively pulling the heat off the components of the computer. It works the same as your cooling system in your car. A number of computers hit the market last year using water cooling systems. The obvious problem is leaks but since water cooling has proven successful with gamers, due to waters increased heat absorbing ability over air cooling, you'll probably see more computers next year cooled by water. Just make sure you don't change a water cooled computers parts in excess of the manufacturer's parameters or you may overheat the computer and cause a pipe to leak or burst.

To assist in reducing CPU heat sinks are used. Heat sinks are the fins you see rising above the CPU. Often the CPU fan rests on top of the fins as well. The heat sink works by giving additional square footage for the heat to dissipate. Kind of like when you spread out to cool off in a summer breeze. The extra space lets the air get to the heat.

Laptops pose a unique cooling problem as they are tightly packed and sit flat and horizontally and compared to the desktop's vertical tower. Heat likes to rise but, with the laptops configuration the heat gets trapped and needs to be blown out the bottom or sides. Laptops are more prone to user error as people tend to forget the laptop sides need to be kept free of anything that could block the exhausts. No exhaust equals a fried computer.

When this happens it may be cheaper to buy new laptop than to try to fix the parts. Then again it may be better for you to avoid laptops if you cannot remember to keep them clear of blockage.

A common mistake laptop users make is using them in bed. The laptop sits ensconced in the bedding getting all nice, warm, and cozy. That is until they fry. If you want to use your laptop in bed buy a laptop writing pillow. These are pillows with a hard surface on one side to keep the laptop free to breathe. Than you only have to make sure you don't fall asleep with your finger on the delete key erasing your "great American novel".

To assist the cooling of laptops you can buy a laptop external fan. These are powered off the laptop's usb and some even come with additional usb ports so you don't lose the port. These fans blow cool air on the bottom of the laptop helping to drop the temperature. You can also try to save some money by buying a notebook stand that will raise your laptop a bit off the desk to give the laptop a bit more air space below it to cool off. I find that the stands are being penny wise and pound foolish though. The money you invest in the laptop fan will save you more in the long run giving your laptop added longevity

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Have a Happy Channukah

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: Manuel Goyenechea presented on how to use iScript. For these who have not heard about iScript, it is a markup language that generates source code. iScript is an open source object oriented scripting language written in Java that mixes the best of Java Script, Visual Basic Script, PHP, Python, Perl and other scripting languages in rich new ways. Although iScript presently is written in Java in the past he has ported prior releases to .NET! Too bad Microsoft is getting rid of J#, it makes it much easier, but going from Java to C# is not too bad, basically some syntax changes and class name / method changes.

Our *download site* has code and programs from most meetings.

Our next meeting December 16. 🖳

Main Meeting

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

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

December 5: Care & Feeding of iPhones (You too can have a book of bills) by Dave Mara (or Apple Store)   🖳

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 19: How to Copy a DVD (Blue Ray?), Gregg McCarthy 🖳

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. 🖳

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. *Our next meeting January 5.* 🖳

Web Dev

Evan Willliams (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 December 10. 🖳

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.

November: Technical Overview of iScript 2.0

Manuel Goyenechea presented on how to use the latest version of iScript, an open source, Java based platform independent, object-oriented, dynamically typed, scripting, markup programming language that he has been developing to improve productivity, code abstraction, quality and consistency. For these who have not heard about iScript, it is a simple, yet powerful templating markup language and preprocessor that can be used to generate source code, object-relational (OR) mappings, html, xml and other dynamic, data driven content from simple templates and scripts that have full seamless access to Java objects and methods.

Our next meeting December 9. 🖳

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 11. 🖳

Wish List for Windows 7

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

Besides the obvious - a stable system that performs fast, without vulnerabilities - I have thought of a few things I'd like to see integrated into the Windows 7 OS which may be released in 2009/2010.

When it comes right down to it, I don't care if I can use 10 fingers to Paint with or other iPhone-like multi-touch features, or if Internet Explorer can recall a previous browsing session. Simple file management enhancements are at the top of my wish list.

I want to be able to print a list of my files and file information — a print directory feature. In the "old days" of DOS, you could do this. And now, you can use third party programs to accomplish this, but why isn't this already built-into Windows?

In Windows 3.11, there was a simple undelete feature. In later versions, the Recycle Bin gives you a chance to recover files you delete in haste or ignorance. But, what about files you deleted from the Recycle Bin? If you don't have a third party program installed, the files are really history.

Wouldn't it be great to have autofiltering in Windows Explorer? Clicking on the top tab in a folder allows you to sort by Size, Date Modified, Type, etc., but you still have to scroll through all the files in a directory to get to the specific file you are looking for. If you could set an autofilter, such as Excel has, you could choose which extensions would be viewable, click on one, and only those files would be visible.

Windows 3.11 had the capability to only show certain types of files. This was closer to what I'd like, but it was a little involved to set it up and then be sure you reverted to the default file view afterward.

And what about being able to flag a file and see the flag in Windows Explorer? Or, jot a post-it like note and attach it to a file?

DOS also allowed you to rename extensions on an entire directory of files. That would be a handy tool now.

What happened to the "quick view" inside of a word processing file in a directory? I want it back again.

A constant aggravation is the Open and Save As boxes in Windows and applications. Sometimes there is a miniscule box to view an entire directory in bitesizes. Why can't all the boxes be large ones? And, why can't they be modified permanently so you can always view them the way you like them, such as you do in Folders?

Another drawback to these windows is that despite file names that are not very long, to the right of the file name I have to slide the first two columns - Size and Type - closer, scrunching them together, so I can see the Date Modified tab in the same window. Sometimes you can scroll to see the Date Modified tab, but that is still not handy.

I have rearranged the headings to suit my need for selecting files by the most current. But, after closing and reopening an application, I have to modify the list again. Why can't my modifications be permanent? Also, I'd like to see these types of windows open up larger or have a resizing option to drag a corner border to make them larger.

Why do directories sometimes get scrambled? They aren't alphabetized or in any other order. Before I can open a file (not every time), I first have to click on the Name bar to alphabetize the directory. (Yes. There is a trick to closing a window to retain the order when it's reopened. Hold the Shift button down as you click on the "X" in the corner. But, you shouldn't have to do this.)

I'd also like to be able to format file names and related information in a directory. Maybe make some bold and orange, or some a bit smaller. Or, add stars or a ranking notation to files. The logical next step would be to set-up a sort function to be able to look for all items in a certain color or in 8 point type, or the file ranking.

Do you see the usefulness of these changes in sorting files? Modifying directory listings can be very helpful. It would allow users to see at a glance which items are important, or used most often, etc.

This is my short list. Have I mentioned anything on yours?

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SIG News, *continued*

FireFox Activity
Firefox@acgnj.org

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for **all** FireFox and Mozilla techniques and technologies, to encourage the study and development of web sites of all kinds. All the browsers will be considered and examined. All are encouraged to "think out of the box" about new web site design. All members and guests are invited to check out the design concepts and voice their opinion. ***Our next meeting December 15.***

NJ Gamers
Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

http://www.NJGamers.com

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be December 12, 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

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Sign up online at *http://www.acgnj.org/membershipApplication.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
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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*

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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.

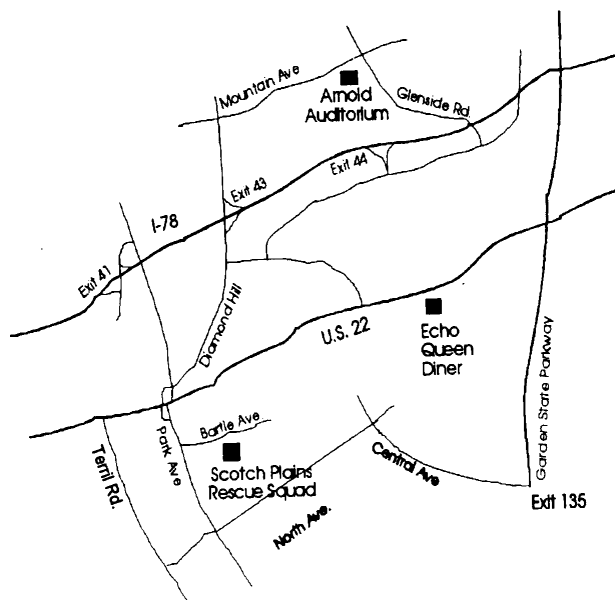**PC Talk**, Sunday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., 1210 AM Philadelphia. 1800-876-WPEN, Webcast at *http://www.pctalkweb.net*.

MarketPro Shows

http://www.marketpro.com/

Dec 20-21: Raritan Center, Edison

Jan 3-4: Meadowlands Expo Center Secaucus

Jan 17: Edison Holiday Inn

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.

Anti-Virus Virus

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

I hate writing about computer viruses. It always reminds me of how many unscrupulous, money-hungry people there are in the world. Yet, there are times when I feel that I must write about a certain virus because it is causing so much havoc for everyday computer users. Unfortunately, that time has come again. In the past two weeks, my company has removed a very bad group of viruses from six different computers. So I feel it is time to send out a warning.

There are many different variations of this virus and its cousins. They have many different names, including Antivirus 2008, Antivirus 2009, SpywareScanner 2008, and AntiVirXP08. Some experts are calling them viruses. Some are calling them malware. Symantec calls them misleading applications. McAfee lists them as a PUPs (potentially unwanted programs). Whatever you call them, they are terribly invasive.

By most accounts, these awful applications piggy-back on programs that are downloaded from the Internet. However, some experts are warning that your computer may become infected by simply visiting certain websites, especially if your operating system and/or antivirus software is not up-to-date.

The gist of the matter is that once your computer is infected, you will begin to see pop-up windows that give an exaggerated report of the number of threats that your computer is infected with. The window may say something like "Your computer has become infected with 231 computer viruses and spyware." These pop-ups try to scare you into purchasing their antivirus or antispyware software. If you purchase it, they send you a registry key, but it doesn't work because the program they sell you doesn't exist. These viruses are also being spread by malicious websites that sell fake antispyware software.

On top of that, there are many other viruses or pieces of malware that can piggyback on the main virus. So this malware can dramatically slow down or even stop your computer. The infections being caused by these viruses and malware programs are extremely harmful and can be very difficult to remove. They often require a cleanup by a professional or a complete reformatting of the hard drive and reinstallation of the software.

As an everyday computer user, you need to be very careful about the software that you download from the Internet. Make sure that it is from a source that you know to be reputable or a website that has been recommended by a trustworthy source. You can also use a program like the McAfee Site Advisor to help you assess the validity of the website before you download the program. McAfee's Site Advisor is a small program that is used by your Internet browser to indicate the safety of websites. It is a free download available at *www.siteadvisor.com* and it is a valuable tool.

Also, as usual, be sure that you update your operating system and antivirus software regularly. Don't fall for any program that pops up on your computer trying to scare you into purchasing antivirus or antispyware software.

Yes, the bad guys are out there and they have a lot of computer savvy. So we all need to be smart about the software we download and the websites we visit.

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ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Monday, November 1, 2008
8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*)

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

Friday, December 5
8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*).

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

Tuesday, December 9
7:30 P.M. - Java, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*) 908-246-0410.

Wednesday, December 10
7 P.M. - WebDev SIG, Evan Williams (*tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com*)

Thursday, December 11
8 P.M. - Investing, Jim Cooper (jim@thecoopers.org).

Friday, December 12
6 P.M. to 5 A.M.- NJ Gamers. Gregg McCarthy (*greggmc@optonline.net*), 732-721-6507. Break 8 to 10 P.M.

Monday, December 15
7 P.M. - Firefox Activity, David McRitchie (*firefox@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, December 16
7:30 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold (*barnold@ieee.org*), 908-735-7898

Friday, December 19
8 P.M. - Window Pains, John Raff (*john@jraff.com*).

Tuesday, December 30
7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Monday, January 5
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.