2009 Hobbyists of the Year

Leonard Thomas and Eric Hafler

Lenny and Eric proudly display their award placques

Although the Hobbyist of the Year Award is presented at the annual TCF Banquet, it's actually given by ACGNJ alone. Honorees do ***not*** have to be members of ACGNJ, or involved with TCF (or, for that matter, with any of the other organizations that sponsor TCF). Once the ACGNJ Board of Directors even considered a person who we didn't know for certain was alive or dead. This year, the Board faced a dilemma. Two extremely excellent candidates had been submitted. Here are some excerpts from their nominating petitions:

Nominated Person: Eric Hafler. **Reason for Nomination**: Eric is an Apple/MAC enthusiast and one of the original computer hobbyists. He is a member of several computer clubs. Eric has been a Trenton Computer Festival (TCF) volunteer and committee member from the very beginning. Even after PACS dropped out as a sponsor he continued to support TCF and was involved in the Steering Committee. For the last few years he has chaired the Publicity Committee and was a major contributor to design and production of posters, media announcements and signs for TCF. This year's festival would not be possible without his efforts. He has contributed a huge amount of time and even offered his own funds to keep TCF going. He definitely is worthy and deserving of the award. I can think of no one more appropriate to receive it this year.

Nominated Person: Leonard Thomas. **Reason for Nomination**: For outstanding efforts in volunteer coordination/supervision every year at the Trenton Computer Festival. Lenny is usually one of the first people to arrive during the early morning hours and one of the last to leave on Saturday and Sunday to get vendors organized (load/unload, etc.) and direct other volunteers accordingly. He has also served on the ACGNJ Board of Directors, and for the past few years as ACGNJ Historian. This year, he bravely tackled the rampant chaos (out of date or completely missing information, etc.) left behind by MarketPro after they quit TCF. He put in countless hours tracking down and signing up vendors, making extensive use of Bmailer (a bulk e-mail program written by Bruce Arnold for the ACGNJ C/C++ Users Group) and

BY-LAWS VOTE HELD – ALL PASSED

At the Main Meeting on May 1ˢᵗ, the latest amendments to the ACGNJ By-Laws were adopted. For further information, see *Day 1: The May 1ˢᵗ Main Meeting* under *Two Days in May* below.

![ACGNJ]

http://www.acgnj.org

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ACGNJ News

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Submissions: Articles, reviews, cartoons, illustrations. Most common formats are acceptable. Graphics embedded in the document must also be included as separate files. Fax or mail hard copy and/or disk to editor; OR e-mail to Editor. **Always confirm**. Date review and include name of word processor used, your name, address and phone *and* name, address and phone of manufacturer, if available.

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

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

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

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

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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Two Days in May

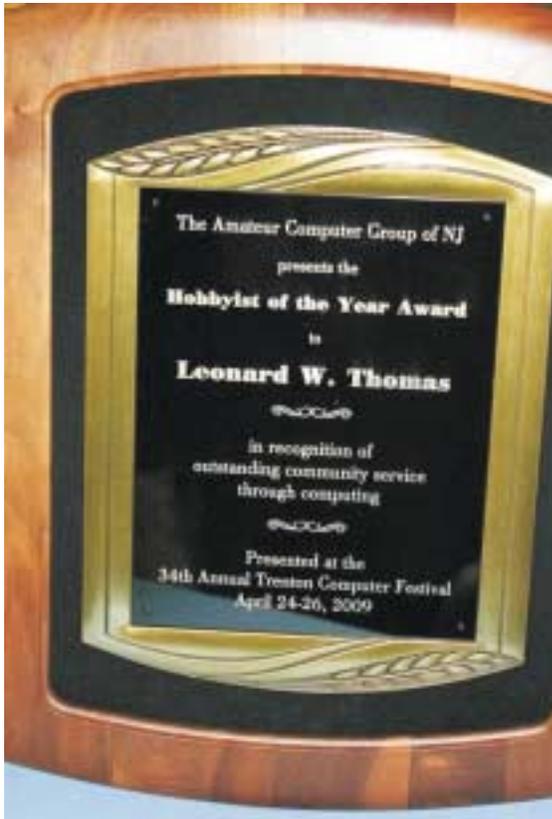*Bob Hawes (bob.hawes@acgnj.org)*

Since our August 2008 Planning Meeting, we've had a hard time scheduling speakers. (For one thing, two of our perennial "go-to guys" are no longer available). It got so bad that even *I* volunteered to host a "Holiday Party", following the Business portion of the Main Meeting/Annual Meeting last December 5th. (For further details, see *A Solstice Party* in the January 2009 issue of ACGNJ News).

This year, it's been even worse, leading me to volunteer for *two* May meetings. (The true measure of our desperation can be realized not so much by my volunteering, but by the fact that *both* of my offers were accepted). Here's what happened:

Day 1: The May 1st Main Meeting.

One month previously, in accordance with both the old and new versions of our By-Laws, the May 1st Main Meeting had been designated as a Business Meeting, for the purpose of voting to accept or reject the seventeen new attorney-suggested amendments to our By-Laws. Unfortunately, the timing for this meeting couldn't have been worse. Everyone was deeply involved (as, indeed, they **should** have been) with preparations for the Trenton Computer Festival (held on April 25th and 26th). As a result, though, the new amendments accidentally **didn't** get posted for member review on the club web site during April (as was *also* required by both the old and new

Continued

2009 Hobbyists of the Year, *continued*

Magic Jack (an Internet phone device that was PC Magazine's 2008 Product of the Year). Lenny also gave a talk on Magic Jack at the April 3rd Main Meeting of ACGNJ.

After long and careful deliberation, we still couldn't decide between them. Finally, we stopped trying and declared it a tie.

Therefore, at the 34th Annual Trenton Computer Festival, held on the weekend (Friday-Sunday) of April 24-26, 2009, we proudly awarded Hobbyist of the Year plaques to *two* deserving individuals. ACGNJ President Michael Redlich announced the winners at the Saturday evening banquet, as follows:

"Lenny Thomas has been a member of ACGNJ for approximately ten years. He currently serves as a Director and Historian for the club. He has contributed countless hours volunteering at TCF for the past ten years. He's usually the first to arrive and the last to leave as he coordinates volunteer activities. His contributions to ACGNJ and TCF have certainly been appreciated".

"Eric Hafler has been a long-time contributor to TCF including serving as a steering committee member. His attention to detail is impeccable especially as the steering committee proof-reader. He is certainly a valued member and his contributions to preparations to every TCF have certainly been appreciated". 🖳

versions of our By-Laws). Fortunately, there was a way to "work around" this mistake. According to the By-Laws, whenever a vote to amend those By-Laws is officially scheduled and held, ***anyone*** may propose their own additional amendments "from the floor", to be voted upon immediately. So that's exactly what I did. I presented the new amendments as seventeen separate motions from the floor. They were all approved, but not without a little bit of equipment related drama; and explaining ***that*** requires that we now take a relatively brief digression.

Recently I've been experimenting, using PDF files to make presentations. I start out in OpenOffice.org Writer, with the pages set to "landscape" orientation (instead of the usual "portrait" orientation). Then, I export my pages as a PDF file, with view options set to "single page only" and "full screen". After that, I can take my new PDF file to just about any computer, and use the Page Down (and Page Up) keys to display those pages just like a slide show. Lots of computers don't have PowerPoint or similar presentation software, but just about every single one has a PDF reader (usually from Adobe). Plus, if I should ever run into a computer that doesn't, it'll be easy to install one, make my "presentation", then uninstall it afterwards.

Anyway, I'd made such a PDF presentation file, containing the new amendments. Now, all I had to do was transport it to the club computer. That's where I hit my first roadblock. My computer wouldn't recognize the stick memory that I carry around on my key chain. Naturally, this happened just as I was ready to run out the door and head for the meeting. Hastily, I copied the PDF file to my external USB hard drive, and took that to the meeting instead. There, I plugged my drive into the club computer. Then, through Windows, I found my file and double-clicked on it to launch my "presentation".

Things went OK for a couple of pages. Then, Windows suddenly stopped recognizing my drive, then "found" it again and recognized it anew. The next time I pressed Page Down after that, I got a blank screen. I'd lost the connection to my file. I had to close and exit the PDF reader, re-double-click on my file's name to re-start from the beginning, and then keep pressing Page Down until I got back to the right spot. This cycle repeated several times. It got so that my audience could tell exactly when it was going to happen. I, of course, was exasperated. They, equally of course, were amused. However, flaky equipment couldn't hold us back forever. We finally pushed through to the end. Voting was done at last, and it was time to celebrate.

I proceeded to reprise my December concept, holding a "Finally Finished With The By-Laws Party". Serving ice cream cake had gone over well before, so I did that again. However, I didn't bother making coffee this time; and I showed a shorter, more intense video selection. This time, the ravening hordes didn't quite consume the whole cake, either. I got to take home a ***small*** piece, about two inches by two inches square.

The two entertaining, informative, and sobering videos that we saw make up a joint talk given by Professor James Duane and Officer George Bruch, at the Regent University School of Law, in Virginia Beach, VA. In the first, Professor Duane (an

18 year faculty member) makes a case for using the 5th Amendment to protect yourself, ***especially*** if you're innocent. Then, in the second, Officer Bruch (a 28 year Police veteran) backs up the Professor, and speaks about the methods and means of confession. The moral here is; "If you think the 5th Amendment is only for the guilty, think again!" If you missed these videos, or if you want to see them again, here are some links. In my opinion, this is such an important (and well done) subject that ***everybody*** should watch them at least once.

"Don't Talk to the Police" by Professor James Duane (27:25) May 21, 2008. James Duane explains why innocent people should never talk to the police.

http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-4097602514885833865

"Don't Talk to the Police" by Officer George Bruch (21:13) May 21, 2008. George Bruch from the Virginia Beach Police Department responds.

http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=6014022229458915912

Despite the technical glitches, I think things went pretty well. (Actually, I'd also brought a backup copy of my PDF file on a floppy disk, "just in case"). We met our quorum, took care of our business, and consumed mass quantities of ice cream cake. All in all, we had a good time.

Day 2: The May 15th Window Pains Meeting.

My original title for this article was *Murphy's Law Rides Again*. Not only because stuff went wrong at ***both*** of my meetings, but also because it tied in to the "opening joke" slide I'd made for the PDF file that I showed to the Board in March. It had three lines equally spaced on the screen. The top line (in blue letters) said; "Return with us now to those thrilling days of Yesteryear:" The middle line (in ***big*** red letters) said; "The By-Laws Revision Committee Rides Again!" The bottom line (in blue letters) said; "(Imagine that we're playing the

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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. 🖳

William Tell Overture in the background)." I love using jokes, even lame ones. So, though I eventually changed my title (going with a twist on the 1962 political thriller novel/1964 movie *Seven Days in May* instead), I decided to leave this reference in. As you'll see, Murphy *really* clobbered me. (I wonder if anybody ever held a Murphy Family Reunion? If so, did all sorts of things keep going wrong the whole time?)

Anyway, I'd already hosted two "party" meetings; but at this Window Pains Meeting, for the very first time, I planned to present some real technical content. My topic was *Installing and Using Ubuntu 9.04*. The idea was to demonstrate "live on stage" an installation of that just-released version of Ubuntu, roughly following the same steps that I'd recently described doing for Ubuntu **8**.04 (in my May 2009 article *Thirteen Things?*).

At home, I set up an older, currently unused computer as my "test bed", gave it some spare hard disks, and installed Ubuntu 9.04. I wound up installing it *five* times, timing everything down to the second. Each time, the installation sequence went as follows: I'd hook up an *empty* hard disk and boot the computer from the Ubuntu CD. Initially, on the screen, I had to make a few opening choices. Then, I had nothing to do while the computer ran by itself for two minutes. Then, I had a bunch more choices to make. After that, I sat twiddling my thumbs for another fifteen more minutes before installation of the basic Ubuntu system was completed. Then, I'd fill out that "bare bones" system by installing various additional Linux programs, following the *Thirteen Things* list. Finally, I'd briefly demonstrate what you could do with some of those programs.

For the meeting, my plan was to follow that sequence through the second set of choices. Then (in the tradition of Julia Child and other great TV Chefs of yore), I'd abort that installation, reach into my metaphorical "oven", bring out an "already cooked" hard disk, and continue to install those additional Linux programs. Furthermore, I'd have already pre-installed any of the extra programs that took more than a minute to load. Thus, the longest "dead spot" that I'd have to fill would be that two minute gap right at the very beginning. So I wrote up a short speech describing the computer I was using (detailing its processor, memory, and accessories); and I tweaked that speech until it took me *exactly* two minutes to say it. That was the plan. Here's what actually happened:

When I set my equipment up at the meeting, my computer *refused* to boot! Now, this is not all that unusual an occurrence. Occasionally, during transport, something will "shake loose". I'd experienced this behavior before (though not in recent years), so I had some idea on how to proceed. Unfortunately, nothing I could do that night would fix it. So I had to give up and look for another computer. I tried the second computer stored in the club closet, but it was a Pentium II; and it was just too slow. Ultimately, despite the trepidation of some members present, I had to use the official club computer.

I disconnected the club's hard disks, replaced them with my own, and *finally* began my demonstration (only an hour and a quarter late). Having switched computers, my thoroughly practiced two minute speech was now thoroughly irrelevant.

So I had to "wing it" through that "dead spot". I got a bit nervous when I switched to my "already cooked" hard disk, but it worked fine. (I'd prepared two of them, just in case. As it turned out, I brought a back-up for everything *except* for the thing that actually went bad). Having started so late, I had to cut short some of the things I'd planned to do, but I got through it. How my audience received it, I couldn't say; but most of them stuck with me. (Though I did hear occasional muted conversations going on in the background). Hopefully, they learned something.

As an aside: If my topic had been *Installing and Using Windows Whatever*, I'd have been "dead in the water". Because if I'd installed any of Microsoft's NT family of operating systems (that's everything *except* Windows 95, 98 and ME) onto a hard disk connected to one computer, then moved that hard disk to a different (*non*-identical) computer, Windows would have bombed. You just can't do stuff like that with MS. Linux, it seems, is much more versatile.

A Third Day?

Well, maybe; but definitely *not* in May. As I write this, we don't have speakers confirmed for *either* the June 5th Main Meeting or the June 19th Window Pains Meeting; and (unfortunately for me) my fevered imagination has come up with something that I could do (fairly easily, too). The topic: *Using Scribus to Create a Newsletter*. I'd have to assemble a *different* traveling computer, but otherwise I'd just be demonstrating something that I'm already committed to, anyway — creating short ACGNJ newsletters for July and August. If nobody comes up with any last minute speakers by the June 2nd Board Meeting, I'll probably be doing this at one of those two meetings. Am I a "glutton for punishment", or what?

Past and Future Milestones.

Last time, I forgot to mention an anniversary. Four years and one month ago, I submitted my first article to ACGNJ News. It wasn't the first newsletter article I'd ever written. In the early nineties, I wrote newsletter stuff for a train club *and* a car club that I belonged to. (I had an "in" on that first one, since I was also the Editor of the train club's newsletter). In 2005, I'd been an ACGNJ member for a year or two; but the idea of writing articles for this club might never have occurred to me except for an unusual circumstance. Quoting myself from *Linux Dual Boot Experiments* (in our May, 2005 issue): "Last month, John Raff ran into some difficulty while adding a Linux dual boot option (in this case, Fedora Core 3) to the club computer. Now, I've got years of computer experience, but I'm a Linux newbie, so I wasn't any help. I could only watch from the sidelines as he wrestled with GRUB (the FC3 bootloader). Of course, John finally got the computer to work the way he wanted, but not before he gave me an idea. He had to be very careful not to do any damage to the club's existing XP SP2 system, but I can recklessly and irresponsibly blow out all the hard drives I want, and that's exactly what I decided to do".

From then on, I've submitted an article (sometimes more than one) for each issue of our newsletter. Unfortunately, I don't

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have a "streak" going. That's because Barbara (our Editor) was forced to postpone the article I submitted for the October 2005 issue until November. (She didn't reject it, and I hadn't missed the deadline; but she couldn't use it that month, either). I was disappointed, but I had to accept that her reasons for doing so were "good and sufficient". Even so, I'm closing in on another milestone. I'm nearly up to *fifty* articles. (Maybe I'm there already. Usually, a person enumerating his or her accomplishments will tend to "adjust" their total upward. I, on the other hand, have been fudging my figures *downward*).

Occasionally, I've submitted small (fifty words or so) announcements. I'm *not* counting them. Last June, I sent out my End-of-June 2008 Supplement as a plain-vanilla e-mail message. However, in it I said that "eventually, for the archives, there'll be a PDF version". I actually finished that PDF version in September, but I haven't yet posted it in the newsletter section of our web site. So technically it hasn't been "published" yet. When I do get around to putting it up, I'm going to count it all as only one article. My End-of-Year 2008 Supplement hasn't been published yet, either. It got stalled because a major portion of it concerned the 2001 and 2008 By-Laws, and their legal review by our attorney wound up taking five long months. We didn't expect that. When it's *finally* finished and posted on our site, I won't count the By-Laws parts, because I didn't create them. I'll count the part detailing my production of the award certificates that we handed out at the December 5th Main Meeting as one article. The rest of the non-By-Laws content dovetails nicely together, so I'll count it all as just a single second article.

Finally, I'm not counting articles only made up of stuff I copied rather than created. I'll give you one example. I'm credited three times in the January 2009 newsletter. *Cut It Out* on page four is my usual monthly article, so I'm certainly counting that. *A Solstice Party* on page three is my report on the later part of the December 5th Main Meeting (which I hosted). At only 464 words, it's short, but it's mostly my own concoction, based on my personal experiences that night. I even put my own silly spin on the little bit of background information that I downloaded from the Internet. I'm definitely counting it, too. However, I'm *not* counting *Election and Business Meeting Report* on page one. It's attributed to Paul Syers and Bob Hawes; but as far as I'm concerned, Paul should have gotten sole credit. While it's true that I spruced it up and sent it in, I *didn't* create any of it. I just condensed and re-arranged Paul's official minutes of the Annual Business Meeting part of that evening into an article. (Much like I used to ruthlessly slice and dice submissions from my various contributors, back when I was the Editor of my train club newsletter. I don't think I *ever* published a submission "as is". Now that I've discovered just how much I hate being edited, I probably should track down all those guys and abjectly apologize to each and every one of them). So what's my current count? Right now, it's 45. When the End-of-June 2008 Supplement (containing one article) and the End-of-Year 2008 Supplement (containing two articles) are finally posted, it'll jump up by three to 48.

Recently, I was appointed as Newsletter Committee Chairman (a post which had been vacant for a *long* time). Now, in the time-honored tradition of politicians everywhere, I intend to indulge in some self-serving corruption. This year (as I mentioned earlier), for the first time in this century, we'll be releasing July and August issues of ACGNJ News. I'll be writing *both* newsletter issues myself, because I want two more excuses to use Scribus, my wonderful desktop publisher. (It's fabulous, fantastic, and *free*). I had originally planned for them to be two-pagers, just highlighting the ACGNJ Reduced Summer Schedule for each month. However, our legal review process took *so* long that we didn't get to publish the new By-Laws and Constitution in the January through May newsletter issues. Therefore, after consulting with Barbara, I decided to skip over the June issue as well, and use the By-Laws and Constitution to "flesh out" our two new summer issues a bit more.

My plan is to add the new Constitution to the summer meeting announcements in the July issue, and add the new By-Laws to the summer meeting announcements in the August issue. There'll also be an article called *The Last Amendment* in July and the annual Planning Meeting announcement in August. Of all that, *The Last Amendment* will be the *only* thing having content original with me. So that'll bring my total up to 49. Thus, if everything goes according to plan, my submission for our September 2009 issue will be the "official" number 50. I'm sure looking forward to it. How about you?

Last Words.

Mistakes happen. Two months ago, in the *Special TCF Edition 2009* newsletter (our April issue in everything but name), the last *twenty-one* words of my *Moving into the Future* article were accidentally cut off. Normally, I would have asked Barbara to fix it and produce a replacement PDF file. However, this is the one issue each year that we still put out in actual ink, on real live paper (for use as Trenton Computer Festival handouts). Unfortunately, we don't possess the kind of magic wand that it would take to retroactively fix all of those printed copies. So this particular error must remain "carved in stone" forever, silently mocking us for all of eternity. Fortunately, the loss isn't all that obvious, since the shortened now-final sentence still makes sense. If you didn't happen to notice that it ends with a semicolon rather than a period, you might not even realize that anything was missing.

So, what's the true damage? I lost a dig at Microsoft (no big deal, as there'll surely be plenty more of them to come); but I also lost a double-edged Jim Morrison reference. How often can I possibly expect to get one of those? Therefore, I'm going to end this article by *repeating* in full that article's three closing sentences. First, for easy reference, here's the part that *did* get printed: "So now I'm striding boldly into a hopefully glorious future, where Linux and other Unix-like operating systems rule;" Last, to finish us off, here's the part that got omitted: "and where Microsoft's abominations matter little, if at all. (Cue Jim Morrison singing *This is the End*). See you next month". 💻

From The DealsGuy

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

I was reading the Orange County IBM PC Users Group newsletter (nibbles & bits) and noticed an interesting article. Linda Gonse does a great job of editing this great newsletter and those of you who don't get to read it are missing a real treat. I don't own an iPhone, but many of my readers do. Lorene Romero, North Coast Macintosh Users Group President (in Santa Rosa, CA), wrote the article about some unique items available for iPhones. Three that I found interesting are quoted below with Lorene's permission:

"***Coffee Break***: $1.99 (****): Great app for those who love coffee! It has a very 'fun' interface with appropriate company cups. It has the usual suspects (Starbucks, Pete's and Seattle's Best), but it also has a category for 'Other Coffee Places.' It is a great app if you are a coffee hound, like I am. The seller is Marco Pifferi"

"***AroundMe***: Free (****): Cool little app that lets you find banks, coffee places, gas stations, supermarkets, and even an Apple store, located near you. First it finds your location and then accesses a database filled with local shops. I used it in Seaside, OR and found a wonderful coffee shop right down the street."

"***Say Who Free*** (****): Finally an app that brings back voice activation to the iPhone! Say any name (Jon Jones Mobile) and it will dial it every time for me."

You can download these from the iPhone store: *http://www.apple.com/itunes/whatson/appstore.html*

*Why Not Scrap The Crap?

One of the Vendors at the FACUG/APCUG Florida spring conference was Sunbelt Software. They offer Vipre Enterprise. They call the product a non-bloated antivirus, antispyware, and antirootkit software that includes other technologies to make it an all-in-one protection. They say it offers Real-Time Monitoring with Active Protection. Removing rootkits is supplemented by VIPRE's FirstScan™, which runs at the system's boot time. FirstScan bypasses the Windows operating system to directly scan certain locations of the hard drive for malware, removing infections where found. They say Vipre's Active Protection delivers real time monitoring and protection against known and unknown malware threats. Active Protection works inside the Windows kernel, (the core of the operating system), watching for malware and stopping it before it has a chance to execute on your system.

VIPRE includes comprehensive protection against e-mail viruses, with direct support for Outlook, Outlook Express and Windows Mail; and support for any email program that uses POP3 and SMTP. In reading their product information, I found more good information on the product than I could possibly include in this column, so please visit their Web site and look it over carefully for full information. *http://www.sunbeltsoftware.com/Home-Home-Office/VIPRE/*.

This company is not based on some small Pacific atoll, or some strange sounding name of a country you never heard of, but is located in Clearwater, Florida where their tech support will speak good English (maybe Spanish if you need that) if you need to talk to them. Trip Kirk, Sales Engineer for Sunbelt Software, said they'll offer user group members the following coupon code (DealsGuy) that's good for $5 off of any Vipre consumer license through August 31, 2009 at *http://shop.sunbelt-software.com/licensing.cfm?product=VIPRE*. Trip says that can be a single license, a two-computer license, or even the unlimited home license, which is good for as many computers as someone has at their one home address; or if they have computers in Florida and also in another state, such as snowbirds can, they can use it for all of the computers that they personally own. I guess that being surrounded by seniors in Clearwater has influenced them favorably.

For what it's worth, I realize that you can instantly name at least six places to find FREE protections of all types, but it can also be said that "you get what you pay for?" Just about every free protection product also offers a pay version with added features that they hope you'll buy later on to give better peace of mind. Here you get the peace of mind right up front. I have not had the chance to try this product.

*What's This, A Photo Production Line?

Bits&Coffee has released BatchPhoto V 2.5, a powerful Windows photo manipulation program that makes it easy to annotate, touch up, transform, apply effects, convert, and rename hundreds of pictures in a single operation. BatchPhoto lets you select a group of images, define a series of edits, and apply them in a single operation rather than individually.

With version 2.5, BatchPhoto introduces Raw Photo Development. DSLR digital cameras can save the raw image data as read by the optical sensor without any loss or additional processing. The resulting files, often called raw images or digital negatives, need additional processing on the PC with specialized software. Almost every digital camera manufacturer has one or several different file formats for storing the raw image data, which leads to poor support from software vendors. BatchPhoto can read and convert most of those formats, including formats from digital camera makers like: Canon, Nikon, Sony, Olympus, Fuji, Kodak, or Pentax.

By taking advantage of multi-core processors, BatchPhoto can convert hundreds or even thousands of raw images to common image formats like JPEG or TIFF in a single session. Custom defined settings, like White Balance or Demosaicing, allow the user to control the development process in detail. Additional filters and transformations can be applied to photos in the same session (e.g. Watermark, Resize, Sepia and so on).

BatchPhoto can convert the raw images to dozens of image formats, including: JPG, TIF, PDF, PNG, GIF, BMP, EPS, TGA, and PSD. It can also change the meaningless names assigned by digital cameras to custom keyword based names, in the same operation. A second new feature is the ability to create PDF documents from multiple images. In the same process each image can be annotated, watermarked, and adjusted.

Continued

File Management – Part Two

Ron Hirsch (ronhirsch1439 (at) comcast.com), Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida (www.brcs.org)

This month's lesson picks up where we left off last month. We're now going to do some file operations on the special file we created for the exercise.

1. First, we're going to set up a new folder, and prepare to move testfile.txt into that folder. In the left hand listing, click once on the My Documents folder. Go to the menu at the top of the Explorer window, and click on FILE>NEW>FOLDER. Now you will see a new folder named "New Folder" directly below My Documents. It should be highlighted. If not, click once on it, and then click on the F2 key. This puts you in "edit" mode, and you can change the name of the folder. Change it to "Files for your name" (type in your name, without the quotes). After typing that in, hit the enter key. Now you have a new folder which is a personalized place for you to store your documents.

2. Next we're going to move the testfile.txt document to the new folder. One simple way to do this is to drag it from its present folder to its new home. Get the listing of all the folders on C: in the left hand window. Then double click on My Documents. The new folder we just created should be showing in the listing on the left, and also in the right hand section listing the contents of My Documents. Click on "testfile.txt" to select it, and then drag it onto the new folder which you just person-

alized with your name. The file has now been moved. To confirm that, double click on your new folder, and it should open and list the contents.

Depending upon what Windows version you are using, and what file manager you are using the dragging protocol may be slightly different. Generally in Windows, dragging moves the file, if you're dragging to any folder on the same drive. Dragging to a different drive, copies the file. And holding the CTRL key down while dragging, always copies the file, and using the Shift key always moves the files, irrespective of the target location. To be sure that you move or copy as yo want to do, hold the SHIFT key down and drag to move, and the CTRL key down and drag to copy. This will work under any circumstance. Windows does give you a "hint" about this. If you drag and see a small + sign in next to the moving mouse cursor, the process you are doing is copying. If there's no + sign, then you are moving.

3. Next, we're going to copy this file to a floppy disk. Insert a floppy into the drive A. Left click on testfile.txt in the new folder to select it. Now, hold down the CTRL key while dragging the file to drive A. To confirm that you have copied to file, double click on drive A on the left hand listing of Explorer. It should show the file listed there. Then go back to the

Continued

From The DealsGuy, *continued*

Overall, BatchPhoto has more than three-dozen graphical filters that can be applied to pictures. The filters are divided into four main categories; Annotate, Touch Up, Transform, and Effects. BatchPhoto adds itself to Windows Explorer's contextual (right-click) menu, so the user can apply predefined, or custom defined profiles to groups of pictures with ease.

BatchPhoto V. 2.5 runs under all versions of Windows, including Windows Vista and Windows Server 2008. Home version is priced at $29.95 (US), and Pro at $59.95 (US). User group members get a 40% discount on the purchase of BatchPhoto by using the discount coupon 5A1398E4 when ordering, and it's good through June 2009. *http://www.batchphoto.com/*.

*How About Better Efficiency

Almeza Company has announced LeaderTask Company Management 6.4, a smart solution for managing employees' projects, processes, company documents, and relations with clients. Designed to facilitate and streamline workflow, the system offers essential tools for managing task assignments, scheduling appointments, tracking project status, evaluating employees' efficiency, and many more.

To save time and effort, LeaderTask Company Management has been developed. The system provides advanced workflow management capabilities, storing the information on all tasks, projects, and appointments and delivering it in the convenient form. The software doesn't require a server and works via Internet or LAN. LeaderTask provides each user with an organizer and can serve as a task planner, personal information manager, calendar, project manager and contact

manager, allowing the user to add tasks, contacts, notes, links, projects and categories.

LeaderTask PDA Organizer is a mobile version of LeaderTask for Windows Mobile. LeaderTask PDA allows having an instant summary of tasks by projects, contacts, and categories on the pocket computer. At the same time, it's easy to quickly add new tasks and make notes. The program features customizable filters with flexible viewing options. A user can easily sort and filter projects and tasks by key elements and tags such as due date, priority, employee, project, and category, etc.

LeaderTask Company Management requires MS Windows 2000 or higher and costs $69 for a workstation license. User Group members will get a 10% discount. Further information on the product, as well as its free evaluation copy is available from *www.leadercommand.com*. To order with the discount, e-mail them at *abramovsky@almeza.com*. Because I haven't gotten a response to my request for instructions,. and with a minimum of five workstations per order, look the pricing over carefully if you are interested.

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. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click. Visit my Web site at *http://www.dealsguy.com*. ⌨

original folder for your documents, to see that it is still there also. If it is - you've succeeded. If your system does not have a floppy disk drive, or another hard drive, copy to a flash drive. If you have none, just skip this step

4.Since this isn't a file that you want to keep, let's delete it. Click on it once to select it on, wherever it was copied to. Then hit the delete key and OK. Repeat the process for the other location also.

NOTE: During these activities, you probably have noticed small "+" and "-" signs on certain of the listings in Windows Explorer (or any file manager). The "+" sign indicates that there are subfolders within the folder listed. To expand the listing to show them, click on the "+" sign. The "-" sign indicates that the folder has subfolders, and they are already shown. To collapse that listing, click on the "-"sign. Clicking toggles the situation back and forth. NOTE: Windows Explorer is not "Internet Explorer", so don't get confused here.

This is the end of the exercise on the beginning basics of file management. Obviously you can modify any of the procedures given to suit your specific needs. And, if you are now adept at all the steps, you've got a good start on things. As with most things in Windows, there are generally several ways to so things. Rather than confuse things, I'm keeping things as simple as I can.

If you had difficulty following the previous steps, it might be a good idea for you to consider one of the introductory Windows courses given by various organizations in our area. When someone asks me "what do you mean by 'click'?", I pass for the moment. It's like the person who called Compaq tech support. He couldn't find the "any key", when the instructions said "click on any key", he said his keyboard didn't have an "any key."

Now that you can handle file management basics, you should consider getting a better file manager. There are two good choices out there. As with all things, if you plan on using a file manager often now, you should use a more capable program. It's like a car. If you plan on driving a lot, a new 2008 Lexus is generally more fun than a stripped down old 1965 Chevy.

I was disappointed when I saw that Microsoft has done very little with Windows Explorer. Of all the good programs MS may have provided, Windows Explorer was not one. Not to worry though - all the things you've learned so far will carry over into any file manager. There are a variety of good and one GREAT file managers out there. Do a general Google search for "Windows file managers", and a bunch of hits will display. Some are add-ons to Windows Explorer, and others are standalone programs. If you want the finest file manager ever created for Widows, look at Opus 9 at *http://nudel.dopus.com/opus9/*. Be warned however, that this is not a cheap program. It costs about $57 (US), but it is without peer. If you are an advanced user, this is the one to get. For others, there are lots of freeware and shareware programs. Review the Google search results to see what will fit you best, assuming you would like to work with something superior to Windows Explorer.

Another good (and free) choice is PowerDesk . You can get a free copy of version 7 of the program by downloading it from *http://www.snapfiles.com/get/powerdeskfree.html*. ZDNet should

also have it available. If you like the program, you can purchase a registered version, with a few more features, and no nag screens.

With any of these file managers, or Windows Explorer, the best way to learn is to "browse around", and play with things. Click on various menu items, practice copying and moving files, and be inquisitive. And, REMEMBER, all the things you learn in these exercises apply to all the programs you'll be using on your Windows computer.

Computer learning can be likened to taking piano lessons - you can't learn to play if you don't practice. Maybe someday we'll be able to get a "chip" that we can plug into our brains to acquire all sorts of capabilities without the time consuming old-fashioned learning process. But for now, we have to rely on present techniques which take time and effort. But, in the long run, the effort is well worth it

Learning to manage your files is a very important activity for all computer users to learn. So, how about getting started on that right now. Remember, you don't always have to be doing a formal lesson. Start exploring and investigate all the areas where you haven't been before. Instead of surfing the Internet, surf you own computer. You'll find lots of exciting things. And remember, any time you want to get help on something, just press the F1 key, and a help window should pop up.

This concludes the brief learning experience of file management. Remember, you've only scratched the surface here. This is similar to learning chess. Many people think that when they have learned to move the pieces, that they know how to play chess - but they are a long way from being a "chess player." The name of the game is practice. This lesson is just a start towards a better understanding of that marvelous machine you have at your fingertips.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site *www.brcs.org*. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a loose leaf notebook for future reference.

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Manual! Manual! My Kingdom for a Manual!

S. Jack Lewtschuk (Blacklion (at) royal.net),

MBUG-PC (www.mbug.org)

Have you had an instant when you had a question or a problem with one of your 21st century electronic gadgets and the dog ate the manual? Have no fear bunky, SmartComputing to the rescue! Go to *www.retrevo.com/samples/index.html*.

DesktopZoom

Bonnie Snyder (Bonniels21(at)gmail.com), Pikes Peak Computer Application Society (http://ppcompas.apcug.org)

One evening while surfing the Web, I stumbled across a free screen magnifier called DesktopZoom. I downloaded it and put it through its paces. And, I was quite impressed with it. There are those freeware programs that "you get what you pay for," and then there are those that give you a whole lot more value. DesktopZoom is definitely in the latter category.

When you first load DesktopZoom, it comes up with a settings screen, with two tab areas; in the top area, the default is 3) Entire desktop and in the bottom tab area, the Mouse is the default tab. You can type in a numerical size for the mouse pointer and then select a shape and color for the mouse pointer. The "Big Mouse" option is selected by default (if you unselect it, you don't get a mouse pointer at all… not good). Other options on the Mouse tab include selecting a Crosshair, selecting a thin red Rectangle which helps you focus on the working area of your application (don't use the Crosshair and the Rectangle together because the Rectangle won't move if you do), and another default selection: Hide real mouse (recommended).

Moving from left to right on the tabs, the first tab is for Zoom. The Zoom selection area has two input boxes for the size of the magnification. Default is 3000/1000. You'll have to fiddle around with the numbers to find the best for you. There are three checkboxes, the first is to hide the configuration screen when the program is running (it is not checked, but I would recommend that you check it). The second is for No screen changes when not zoomed (it is not checked, but I would recommend that you check it). The third is Stop zoom if mouse in right bottom corner (I checked it because I find it a convenient option).

The next lower tab is for Keys. These key combinations are for increasing or decreasing the magnification on the fly. By default, the Mouse Wheel option, a radio button, With Ctrl-key, in a combo box, is checked. There are three other key combinations you can select from. If you prefer to use the arrow keys instead of the mouse, you can select the Arrows radio button with Without Key selected in the combo box (there are three other key combinations to select from in the combo box). Finally, the Alt-Keys are selected by default in a checkbox with six possible settings for on the fly changes (Zoom in and out; Zoom on or off; tracking and crosshair – each option has a character to press with the Alt-Key to accomplish its task).

The Mouse tab comes next (we've already covered that); then comes the Color tab. There are three checkboxes: the first is for Grey shades (it has a combo box/edit box with seven choices of shades of grey including an option to type in a number of your preference); the second is for Invert Colors, and the third (checked by default) is for Smoothing. You can have all three boxes checked if you wish. Finally, it has an edit box for Show original screen (you can type in a numeric percentage — 0 is the default). This one makes me crazy. What it does is show the original screen as a kind of background of the magnified screen. But, it was probably included because somebody needed that feature!

Then we move on to the Tracking tab. The first Tracking option has a combo box from which you can choose three tracking items: None, Caret, Caret + Menu; the default being Caret + Menu. Next addresses specifically Track MsWord Caret (checkbox checked by default). Then you get to select the Tracking delay time by typing a number in an edit box (30 is the default). Another check box comes next for allowing display of a Thumbnail with your choice of ratio (in an edit box). The Thumbnail is similar to a histogram in an art program; it displays the entire screen in miniature in the bottom right area of the screen. Finally, there is a combo box for choosing View. The options in this combo box include Follow the mouse, Static – changes when hitting the border and Static – Jump to mouse. The default is Static – changes when hitting the border. You'll just have to check these out yourself to see which works best for you. For the present, I am using the default. And then, the final lower tab is for Speech. I have noticed that people with low vision will experience visual fatigue with long documents to read. The addition of speech in DesktopZoom is an excellent option when the eyes are ready to give out (or put you to sleep). The Speech option picks up on any SAPI5.0 voices you might already have on your computer as well as any premium voices you have acquired. You can turn the speech on only when you want it and you can control volume and speed in this tab.

There is more, but I really ought to leave some of the mystery so you can enjoy setting the program up. DesktopZoom has many really good features. My biggest complaint is that it does slow down movement on the screen. Ah well, nothing is perfect. Give DesktopZoom a try if you feel the need for some screen enlargement to help you read your computer monitor. Just Google DesktopZoom and you'll be taken to a site for download.

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Significant Bits

Sean N. Henderson (pr (at) dacs.org), Danbury Area Computer Society, CT(www.dacs.org)

On Software Installations

I received as a gift Ahead's Nero 9 – a CD/DVD burning suite with some authoring and backup tools as well. I have a combination of software pieces already on my laptop that in some way do some or all of what Nero 9 claims it can do. However, the promise of having all these tasks integrated into a single package seemed appealing, so I decided I'd give it try. I had also recently reinstalled my copy of Nero 6 on my downstairs PC and was pleasantly reminded how much better I liked Nero 6's interface, so this was another push to try Nero 9.

The Nero 9 installation took 45 minutes on my laptop. One colleague mentioned that maybe I should have tried the install with my antivirus software turned off to speed up the process. Except for operating systems, I'm curious why a software package would take 45 minutes to install in this day-and-age of high-speed processors and drives.

Nero 9 is much more involved than Nero 6 and similar versions, where Nero 9 includes media players, some authoring tools, and looks like it will replace the need for other software items. In my case, my laptop had separate programs already for viewing DVDs and authoring DVDs/VCDs.

Remember when installing any software, and especially anything that's a "suite" to make a restore point first and backup your system. I'd also recommend if the install left some installation related files, to keep those around, since some software titles need the leftover installation files to uninstall themselves.

First impressions of Nero 9 are that it will extensively "hook" into the Desktop environment, changing file extension associations, and adding context-menu options. For myself, I'm more fond of applications that do not touch the registry and or are "portable" in nature, so Nero 9 has already a bad score in my book before I've even done anything with it yet. While the installer gives options for which components and templates to install, there is no expert mode to prevent Nero 9 from messing with the file extensions. Also, Nero 9 claims some file extensions that are common or else used by another application.

Opera Mini and Palm TX Part II

You'll recall I had mentioned previously about using Opera Mini on my Palm TX. After a month or so of usage, I'm finding that it works okay most of the time, but it is not really optimized for different networks. In one instance I had to delete all the scanned entries for other Wi-Fi hotspots so that it would stop trying to logon to my distant and not present work network. So currently, I only use Opera Mini on my TX for home use, and the Blazer otherwise. Be forewarned, having installed the particular Java layer and Opera Mini, my Palm TX has tended to crash more when using Opera Mini or Blazer.

Editing Just About Anything

Something I find somewhat irritating when trying to help another computer user with a problem or task is when the person really has not taken the time to learn their software or operating system from a navigational perspective. I can tell they do not know the software well if they do not use the keyboard and/or keyboard shortcuts. (These keyboard shortcuts are also referred to as "hot keys" or "key combinations", and so on.) This is where the person helping, such as myself, says, "Please get out of your chair and let me drive." If you use a computer and do not know your hot keys, read on.

The mouse and graphic desktop are great at giving people quick access to files and a shorter learning curve for applications. However, if someone's primary way to interact with a computer is by way of the mouse, then they may likely take longer to do a task, especially spreadsheet work. The reality is that people are capable of typing (keyboarding?) faster than they can point-and-click (or speak), menu diving or clicking around the screen at teeny-tiny hieroglyphs that may-or-may-not be a link.

A quick way to learn all the key combinations for your desktop and applications is to go cold-turkey and simply to take the mouse off of the computer, have a list of shortcuts and go from there. Here are some hot keys in Windows XP that are pretty common to help get you going. (Check your manuals and or on-line for your particular desktop, application and operating system if different.)

Ctl-EscStart MenuAlt+F4Close window, application, or Windows itselfF6Select or highlight whatever is in the location field, if present (browsers, directories)F1Show helpCtr-F1Hide helpF2Rename a file (Windows and many applications using the standard open file dialog)Ctl-cCopy selected area into the 'Clipboard' aka the bufferCtl-vPaste from the Clipboard (buffer)Ctl-zUndo last action

One of the reasons I think laptop manufacturers get away with their unique (and thus horrid) keyboard layouts is that most people never take the time to learn how to use the control key in combination with the page keys, arrow keys, and home keys. If people used the navigational keys and hot keys more, I'm guessing the random placement of these keys on laptops would not occur. (Pet peeve: Control keys not being the outermost key on the spacebar row.)

The other thing to consider is that the availability of hot keys are what make local applications so much easier to use than Web applications. Below are some links that list more Windows XP keyboard shortcuts.

Links

Keyboard Shortcuts for XP
http://support.microsoft.com/kb/301583

Excel 2003 Keyboard Shortcuts
http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel/HP052037811033.aspx

Sean N. Henderson is regular contributor to DACS.doc. More information at http://seannhenderson.net/dacs.html.This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Reinstalling Windows

Vinny La Bash (vlabash (at) comcast.net), Sarasota PC Users Group, Inc., FL (www.spcug.org)

No matter how diligent you are at computer housecleaning and tuning your system, at some point you will need to reinstall Windows. One of the most infuriating things about the process occurs after the installation when you realize you have forgotten something important like exporting your Favorites folder. Several weeks ago I reinstalled Vista on my laptop and almost forgot to do something elementary. So perhaps it's time to review the basics.

There are many reasons to reinstall windows. Perhaps the registry has gotten corrupted or it could be an accumulation of little things that are driving you nuts. Whatever is annoying you, a clean install is always the best option. Careful planning will keep you out of trouble.

The detailed procedures outlined here apply specifically to Vista, but the general concepts apply to any version of Windows and even other operating systems. There are three main areas to a reinstall. You need proper preparation, the install itself, and the aftermath to clean up any mess you may have inadvertently created. That means you don't schedule a reinstall the night before any deadlines.

Start by documenting any critical login identifications and passwords. If you pay bills online, access financial information, eBay, PayPal or anything else important to you., now is the time to write it all down. Some folks use a password protected spreadsheet file. Others use some kind of encrypted application to store the data. I prefer good old reliable pen and paper stored in a safe place, not taped to my monitor.

Do you have your Windows product key available? You need it to reinstall Vista. Are there any other applications you will reinstall that require product keys? Gather them all, including any drivers you may need to reinstall hardware, like a printer or mobile smart phone.

A clean install requires that you backup your data files. This is especially important if you're planning to reformat your hard drive. Backup email contacts, calendar entries, and anything you consider important. Don't forget anything special you may have saved on your desktop. That's an easy one to overlook.

Have you installed new hardware recently? Any new devices, except physical memory, require some kind of driver software to work properly. You can get the most up-to-date drivers by visiting the manufacturer's web site and downloading them. Go to the Device Manager for a list of installed hardware or use Belarc Advisor for a more detailed description.

Do some housecleaning. Search your drive for files that are obsolete or otherwise unnecessary. It's amazing how much digital detritus can accumulate over time. Perform a full deep virus scan so your new setup can get off to a clean start. Use Disk Cleanup if you want to reduce the number of unnecessary files on your hard disk to free up disk space and help your computer run faster. It removes temporary files, empties the Recycle Bin, and deletes a variety of system files and other items that you no longer need.

Back up the My Documents folder and any sub-folders that may exist. Backup Links if you use Internet Explorer; Bookmarks if you use Mozilla Firefox. If you're not sure you've backed up everything you need, back up the entire disk. If you've forgotten anything, your data can be recovered.

By now you should have:

- Documented all logins and passwords
- Backed up all important data including My Documents and any sub-folders
- Have all product keys and activation codes handy
- Backed up your email contact list, and calendar entries
- Backed up Favorites, Links, Bookmarks, etc.
- Collected Driver disks

Check everything at least twice to make sure you haven't overlooked anything essential and you're ready to go. Insert your Windows disk and reinstall the operating system.

After the process is complete, there is still work to do. Use Windows Update to retrieve and install the latest service packs, security updates, and any necessary patches. After bringing your operating system up-to-date, turn your attention to applications and device drivers.

If you reinstalled Vista from the manufacturer's installation or system restore disks, drivers for the original software and hardware that came with the system are likely to be either no longer relevant or out-of-date. You may need to visit several manufacturers' web sites to download and install the most recent drivers. This is part of proper preparation, but if you neglected this step it's not a fatal mistake.

Restore any data you backed up earlier, reconfigure network settings if applicable, and tweak the system to suit your personal preferences. Create a system restore point, and do an image backup of your entire system in case you need to reinstall again.

Don't fool yourself. Reinstalling the operating system, applications, drivers and such is never as simple or as easy as it should be. If you plan carefully however, it doesn't need to be stressful.

SIG News

C/C++ Programming

Bruce Arnold (barnold@ieee.org)

http://acgnj.barnold.us/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.

May: Using Windows Event Log. The program this month is called TESTMAY. (I'm testing something and this is the month of May.) It writes to the Event Viewer. Anyone who's done diagnostics on Windows machines from Windows 2000 up to Windows 7, knows the Event Viewer is very powerful and there are thousands of messages that appear there. It's a perfect place to store information. The Event Viewer includes several different Logs: an Application log, a Security log, a System log, an Internet Explorer log and others. Wouldn't it be nice if Your Program could use, let's say, the Application Log of the Event Viewer to record diagnostic information for future reference. That's what this program does.

When you run this program on Windows Vista or Windows 7 you find what appears to be a "Catch-22" problem. In order to write to the Registry and the Event Viewer, you must register the source program doing the writing (that's your program). The first thing to do is to check if the program has been previously registered. But, unless you are an Administrator, you can't do the checking. Almost anything you try produces a system error message regarding permissions.

When the program starts, it "catches" the errors that are created and advises the user to first run the program as the Administrator. This is the only time you will have to do this. This is almost like "Installing" the program, but the program doesn't get installed because it is a simple stand-alone executable. Once this has been done, the second time the program starts, the check to see if the program has been registered allows you to query that status (even though you are not an Administrator). We have gotten past the catch-22 and we can use normal writing code to write information to the Event Viewer. The basic function we will use is called "WriteEntry() " which is very simple and allows you to add text information to the Application Log of the Event Viewer. The key to the whole thing is getting past the initial errors when the program is used for the first time.

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

Our next meeting June 16. ⌨

Window Pains

John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

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

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

Our next meeting June 19. ⌨

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 June 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.

June 9 : Subject to be announced.

Main Meeting

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

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

June 5: Creating a newsletter with Scribus. Bob Hawes will use Scribus (the fabulous, FREE desktop publisher) to produce the actual ACGNJ newsletter that the club will put out in July. (And maybe, if there's time, he'll do the August issue, too)." ⌨

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: June 11. ⌨

Things You Can Do With That Flash Drive

Ira Wilsker

With the demise of the floppy disk, and the approaching demise of the CD disc for data purposes, the USB flash drive has become the defacto method of saving and transporting files between computers. These small USB drives are known by a variety of monikers, such as flash drive, pen drive, pin drive, and thumb drive. Since their introduction a few years ago, their capacity has increased, and their prices have plunged. They are readily available in the big box stores, discount stores, club stores, and online. The most recent ones I purchased for the holidays were 8 gig size (almost the equivalent of the data stored on 2 standard DVD discs, about a dozen CD discs, or about 5700 floppy disks), and cost under $15 each. In the after-Christmas sales, some 8 gig flash drives were advertised for $9 each (after rebate). This amount of non-volatile storage for the price was inconceivable just a few years ago. I thought I was getting a bargain a few years ago when I bought my first flash drive, a 64mb Lexar, for $49, and now a drive with about 64 times that capacity is about one-fourth the price! I have co-workers and students who wear their flash drives on cords around their necks, where they are referred to as "geek beads".

Most of us use the drive simply for portable storage, the ability to carry files around with us, but in reality these flash drives can do much more than to simply be used for storage. Most of the USB flash drives on the market today comply with the USB 2.0 standard for high speed transfer, while there still are a few inexpensive, low capacity drives that are of the slower USB 1.1 speed standard, or only about 3% of the speed of the USB 2.0 drives. From a practical viewpoint, the user will not notice any significant difference in speed if small files are saved and read, but will notice a difference if large files are used.

There are some other standards for USB flash drives that many users may find beneficial, if their flash drives have the capabilities. Users of Microsoft Vista (Home Basic, Home Premium, Business, and Ultimate versions) may find it advantageous to purchase flash drives that are labeled as "ReadyBoost". According to Microsoft, "Windows Vista introduces Windows ReadyBoost, a new concept in adding memory to a system. You can use non-volatile flash memory, such as that on a universal serial bus (USB) flash drive, to improve performance without having to add additional memory "under the hood." If the drive is compatible with the ReadyBoost standard, some of the flash memory in the drive can effectively and temporarily be added to the RAM (memory) installed in the computer, with an improvement on

SIG News, *continued*

Hardware Activity
Mike Reagan

This group is dedicated to repairing, refurbishing and/or recycling older computers.

On **May 28th**, ten people attended the first meeting of the ACGNJ Hardware Activity; showing that there is, in fact, still a market for this type of event. One guy even came all the way from the Bronx! Although we did look at some of the older equipment stored in the back room, most of our time was spent in "random access": talking about past experiences and planning for the future. Hopefully, we can establish a viable long-term schedule of projects, and keep the interest of those who attended this inaugural meeting.

Our next meeting June 25.

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 June 1, July 6.** ⌨

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 June 15. ⌨

NJ Gamers
Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

http://www.NJGamers.com

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be June 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

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

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

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

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

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Dues

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

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

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal ☐ Address Change

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ E-Mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ URL _____

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

Other Local Computer Groups

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

Classified

FREE TO MEMBERS. Use our classified ads to sell off your surplus computer stuff. Send copy to Classified, ACGNJ NEWS, P.O. Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076 or e-mail to the editor, *bdegroot@ptd.net*. Classified ads are free to members, one per issue. Non-members pay $10. Send check payable to ACGNJ Inc. with copy. Reasonable length, please. Deadline: 1st of preceding month. (For example, April 1 for May issue.)
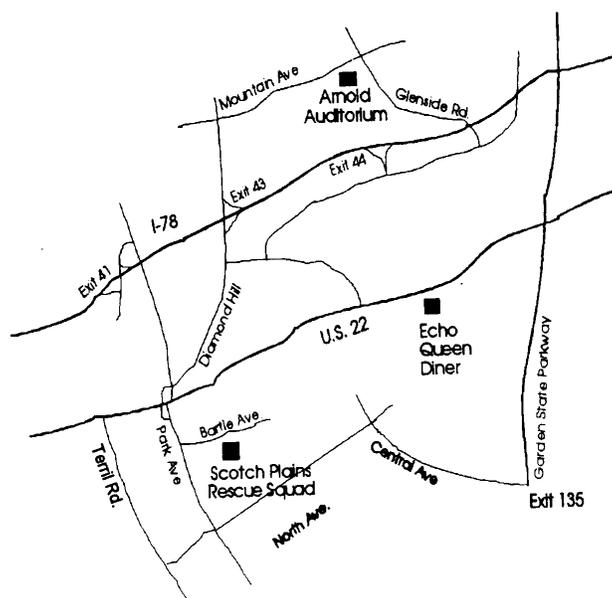
APCUG Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

http://www.apcug.net

Radio and TV Programs

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

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

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

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

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

From New York City or Northern New Jersey

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

From Southern New Jersey

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

From I-78 (either direction)

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

From US 22 Westbound

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

From Western New Jersey

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

performance. If the Vista user with a compatible flash drive right clicks on the flash drive letter displayed under "My Computer" or Windows Explorer, and then left clicks on Properties – ReadyBoost, Vista will recommend how much of the available memory on the drive can be effectively and safely utilized by Vista. Other data stored on the ReadyBoost drive is protected from damage, and will not be harmed if the drive is used as a ReadyBoost drive. Because of the higher performance requirements, ReadyBoost compatible flash drives are slightly more expensive than standard drives, but are often the least expensive way to add memory to a Vista computer.

Another useful feature often found on a USB flash drive is known as "U3". Drives that are U3 compatible are labeled as such. A U3 powered flash drive allows the user to carry special versions of hundreds of programs on the flash drive that can be run directly from the flash drive without being installed on the computer. This is an effective way to carry the actual software the user is familiar with, and run it on other computers. When unplugged from the computer, U3 leaves no data or other information left on the computer that was used. Some of the popular programs that come in U3 formats are the Firefox browser, Skype telephone, McAfee Antivirus (about $15), RoboForm Password Manager, OpenOffice (the comprehensive suite of office software including a Microsoft compatible word processor, spreadsheet, presentation program, database, and more, free), Thunderbird email client, and dozens of games. Most U3 drives come preinstalled with password protection and a "U3 Launchpad" which is a menu driven directory of the software on the U3 drive.

For those of us who have standard non-U3 drives, there is now an alternative that provides for the same functionality. This alternative to U3 that will run on almost all contemporary flash drives is called "PortableApps", and can be found online at portableapps.com. According to the PortableApp website, "A portable app is a computer program that you can carry around with you on a portable device and use on any Windows computer. When your USB flash drive, portable hard drive, iPod or other portable device is plugged in, you have access to your software and personal data just as you would on your own PC. And when you unplug the device, none of your personal data is left behind." Dozens of portable apps are available, including the Firefox browser, OpenOffice office suite, antivirus software, games, password managers, and many other pieces of software. The PortableApp Suite is totally free, and does not contain any spyware or adware. In addition to the bundled suite, there are many other programs available, almost all free, which will run as portable apps. The PortableApp website keeps a running tally of new software that is available, including new releases and versions, as well as beta (pre-release) software. A simple click will install the selected software on the flash drive.

Now that many of us are routinely carrying flash drives, it is nice to know that they may be capable of doing much more for us than just transport data.

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ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thursday June 25
8 P.M. - Hardware Activity, Mike Reagan (

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

Monday, Jul 6
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.