

Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

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May 2010

Dr. Marvin Kurland — 2010 Hobbyist of the Year



At this year's Trenton Computer Festival Banquet, the ACGNJ Board of Directors presented the Hobbyist of the Year Award posthumously to Dr. Marvin Kurland, who recently passed away unexpectedly.

He was a Professor of Electrical/Computer Engineering at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) for 25 years. One of his passions was computers and robotics. He was the adviser/coach of TCNJ's Micromouse team. (A Micromouse is a miniature self propelled robot that can find its way through a complex maze).

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) every year holds contests in which awards are given for the fastest and best performing micromouse. These contests are between student teams from regional universities and colleges. Marvin Kurland's teams regularly won first place and had the best record of any university/college that competed in these contests.

In recognition of Dr. Kurland's contributions to the computer hobby resulting from his interest in computers and robotics, his dedication to his students and the development of a superior Micromouse, he was selected for the 2010 Computer Hobbyist of the Year Award.

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<http://www.acgnj.org>

Founded 1975

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Webmaster	John Raff	(973) 992-9002

ACGNJ News

Editor

Barbara DeGroot
145 Gun Club Road
Palmerton PA 18071
Tel: (570) 606-3596
bdegroot@ptd.net

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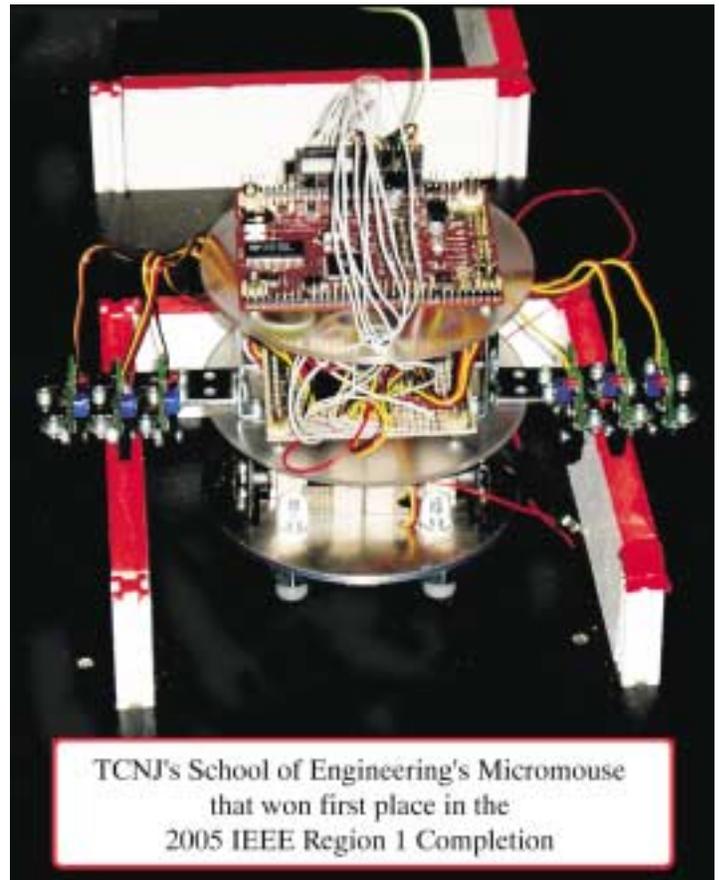
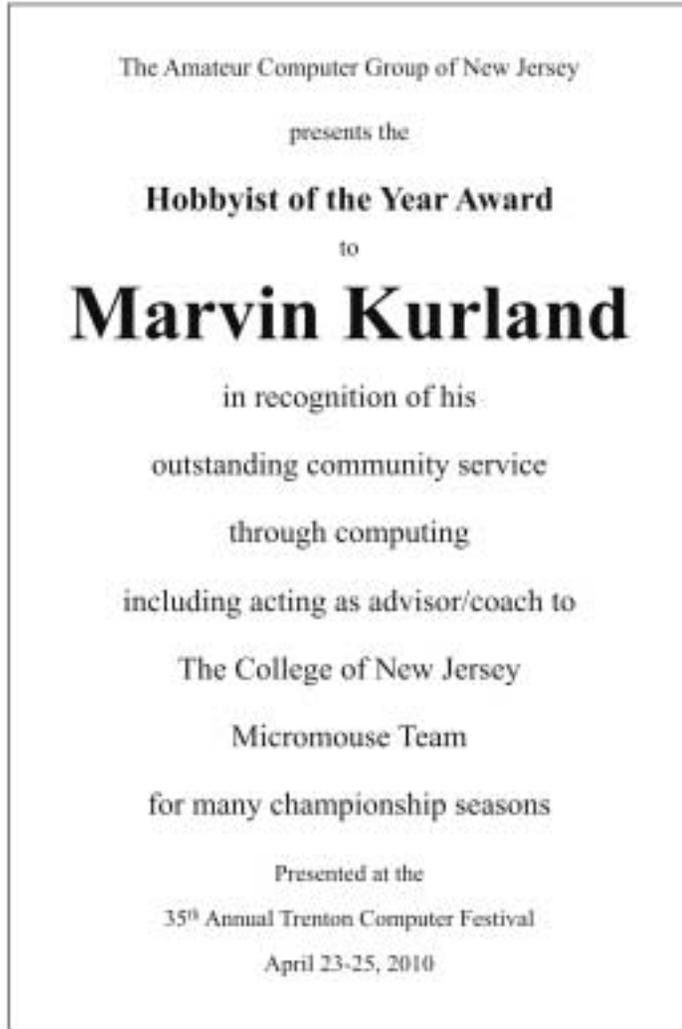
Bruce Arnold	barnold@ieee.org
Jim Cooper	jim@thecoopers.org
Barbara DeGroot	bdegroot@ptd.net
Mark Douches	pcproblems@pobox.com
David Eisen	ultradave@gmail.com
Bill Farrell	wfarr18124@aol.com
Manuel Goyenechea	Goya@acgnjdotnetsig.org
Bob Hawes	bob.hawes@acgnj.org
Sol Libes	sol@libes.com
Malthi Masurekar	malthirm@verizon.net
Don McBride	don@mcbride.name
Gregg McCarthy	greggmajestic@gmail.com
David McRitchie	dmcritchie@hotmail.com
Andreas Meyer	lunics@acgnj.org
Arnold Milstein	mrflark@yahoo.com
John Raff	john@jr Raff.com
Mike Redlich	mike@redlich.net
Matt Skoda	som359@aol.com
Keith Sproul	ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu
Paul Syers	paul.syers@acgnj.org
Lenny Thomas	lenny.thomas@acgnj.org
Scott Vincent	scottvin@optonline.net
Frank Warren	kb4cyc@webwarren.com
Evan Williams	ewilliams@collaboron.com



*ACGNJ President Paul Syers and TCF Chairman Allen Katz present the award at the TCF Banquet.
Photo by John Raff.*



Photo by John Raff



Polishing My Image

Bob Hawes (bob.hawes@acgnj.org), ACGNJ

In the past, I've written quite a few articles about backup images, and I've got at least one more "on tap"; but *this* article is about another kind of image: an ISO CD image. This year, we finally realized one of Editor Barbara DeGroot's long-time dreams. We produced a CD containing PDF copies of all our newsletters from the past thirty-five years. (All that we have, anyway. Barbara has been collecting and scanning printed copies of our "pre-electronic" newsletters for the past ten years or so, but we're still eight issues short of a complete set). Originally, we planned to use December 31, 2009 as our cut-off date, so we called this our "Beta .09 Release". (It's a Beta because of those missing issues, plus a few "less-than-perfect" PDF files as well). Literally at the last minute, I decided to include our four existing 2010 issues, too; but I kept the .09 designation. It just "felt" better.

As I began writing this article, it was Sunday evening, April 25th. The Trenton Computer Festival (TCF) had been over for just a few hours; and it was only a few more hours until midnight, my deadline for this newsletter article. However, as Newsletter Committee Chairman, it's within my power to grant myself an extension; and if there was ever a "good" time for me to callously abuse my official position for my own selfish personal gain, this would be the month for it. Due to the possibility of last-minute additions, the newsletter doesn't get "put to bed" until *after* the monthly Board of

Directors meeting; and this particular month, that was *nine* days away. (Theoretically, it's possible to have a ten day gap, but nine is the longest interval that the calendar has bestowed upon us in a *long* time. Usually, we've got way too *few* days). Therefore, my asking Barbara for a couple of those days shouldn't have caused too much trouble. (Indeed, she gave me a whole week).

However, I couldn't devote all of that time to this article. Because just three more days after the Board meeting, I'm scheduled to repeat my "Comparing Office Programs" presentation, at the May 7th Main Meeting. I'd originally intended to give this talk at the February 19th Window Pains Meeting, but things did *not* go well. That day, through hardly any fault of my own, I was very late. In a rush to get out, I couldn't take time to pack up and bring along my spare computer. So I just brought files (and *not* PDF files, either). When I finally arrived, though, for some reason none of my files (which *had* worked fine on my home computer) would run on the club computer, *or* on laptops brought to the meeting by a few of our members, either. Embarrassingly, my presentation turned out to be a non-starter. So, since I now have to pretty much completely re-do my talk, I needed to reserve some of my week for *that*, too. Now, you might reasonably ask why I hadn't done any of this *before* TCF. I've got a *really good* answer to that question; but first, having brought up the subject of

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TCF, I want to comment a bit about Richard Stallman's keynote address.

Right now, as I'm writing this, I did an Internet search for the term "father of open source". Of my first ten hits, *three* identified the Father of Open Source Software as Richard Stallman. Before listening to his keynote speech, I might have agreed with those results; but now I know that such appellations make Richard really, *really angry!* It seems to be a matter of philosophy, politics, and maybe even religion. Richard advocates Free Software exclusively; but it's not "free" as in "no cost" (though it can be). It's "free" as in "freedom", on a par with what Thomas Jefferson meant when he wrote "We hold these truths to be self-evident" in *The Declaration of Independence*. (Richard founded the Free Software Foundation, FSF, in October of 1985). My understanding is that Richard objects to the term "open-source" because a program's source code can be available; but still be extensively restricted in what users are allowed to do with it. That's *not* free. Apparently, the Free Software movement and the Open Source Software movement, despite describing similar development models, have *very* different cultures and philosophies.

To an outsider, this might seem to be just quibbling about words, but remember that Richard has been burned by semantics before; and *very* badly, too. In September of 1983, Richard launched the GNU Project to create a free Unix-like operating system, and he's been the project's lead

architect and organizer ever since. By 1991, Richard and his colleagues had completed most of the programs required for an operating system (libraries, compilers, text editors, shells, etc.); but their kernel was stalled and incomplete. That's when Linus Torvalds began writing his own Unix-like kernel, which he called Linux. In 1992, Linus dropped his original non-commercial license and released his kernel under the GNU GPL (General Public License). That same month, Owen Le Blanc of the Manchester Computing Centre (part of the University of Manchester, England) combined *many* GNU programs with that *single* Linux kernel to produce a free Unix-like distribution that was capable of being independently installed on a computer; and he called it MCC Interim Linux. Just like that, *nine* years of *hard* work by Richard and his colleagues were completely ignored; and vanished from history as far as many people were concerned.

Nowadays, there are literally hundreds of Linux "distros" out there, and the very much alive GNU Project is *still* maintaining and upgrading a considerable number of the programs included in each and every one of them. However, most sources now say; "Linux was founded in 1991 by Linus Torvalds", when they *should* say something like; "That-which-we-now-call-Linux was founded in 1983 by Richard Stallman". I don't agree with many (maybe even most) of Richard's inflammatory statements; but I can certainly understand why he might be a bit peeved. Now,

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finally, here's my aforementioned comment about his keynote address: "For the most part, I liked it. Not only was I amused, entertained and provoked; but I learned a few things, too". Well, that's enough about him. Let's give fact-checking credit to my favorite Internet reference source (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, www.wikipedia.org), then let's get back to me.

In early 2008, having seen Barbara's request for missing back issues in each of our newsletters for only about three years, it occurred to me that *whenever* we actually got around to producing a "complete newsletter collection CD", it would be obsolete in less than a month (as soon as our next issue came out). Therefore, why wait any longer? If we ever found any of those missing issues, we could always include them in our *next* CD. (Because we'd *have* to do an updated CD every year or so). So I started going through each existing PDF file from the beginning, collecting information that I split up into four files (a Complete Index file, a Newsletter History file, a Special Interest Group History file, and a "Bad Copy" file).

In May, ever on the lookout for material, I published the contents of the Newsletter History file as the *Newsletter History* section of *That's History, Officer...* (my article in the June 2008 issue of ACGNJ News). Then, I got heavily involved in the 2008 By-Laws Revision Committee and didn't do anything newsletter related again until September. That's when I got the *really* unpleasant surprise that I've

written up several times already, most recently just last month. To make a long story short, that May I'd only viewed our old newsletter PDF files over the Internet, and thus hadn't bothered to save a set of my own copies on my own computer. Big mistake. That September, I *couldn't* view *any* of the newsletters over the Internet; and in three *horrible* days, I was able to download just 275 of our PDF files, a total of only 414.6 MB. (For further details, see *A Bottleneck in the Cloud* in the 'TCF Edition 2010' of ACGNJ News, aka April 2010. For even more details, see *Turkey with Gremlins* in the November 2008 issue, *The Historical Record* in the December 2008 issue, and/or *A Great Disturbance in the Force* in the End-of-Year 2008 Supplement). Anyway, I just barely managed to publish the contents of my Special Interest Group History file as the *SIG History* section of *Halloween and History* (my article for the October 2008 issue of ACGNJ News). Then, I pretty much abandoned the CD project for all of 2009.

On April 1st, 2010 (how appropriate), I had some computer problems. I know. I'm a knowledgeable Computer Guy; but stuff like this happens, even to people like me. One of my monthly "duties" is to send out our ACGNJ Announcement. At about *Noon* on April 2nd, I managed to send out (from a friend's computer) a short message listing the speaker and topic for that evening's Main Meeting. I didn't get the rest of our usual monthly information out until the morning of April 14th. (That's when I finally got my main computer

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back "up to snuff"). I'd planned to devote most of my available April "computer time" to the Newsletter CD project, if necessary. Now, I had just *nine* days to do it *all*. Luckily, I'd already ordered the CDs.

Here, we have to take a brief digression into philosophy. On the subject of our CDs, I had an argument with a fellow club member whose opinions I usually agree with. I guess, in my own way, I'm as wacky as Stallman. In this instance, I just *couldn't* bring myself to manufacture an inferior product; and in case you don't know it, most CDs sold today are putrescent garbage: hardly likely to last more than two years. I wanted us to use Delkin Archival Gold CDs. According to Delkin, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) used accelerated aging procedures to test the longevity of these disks, and they were shown to safely store data for more than 300 years. Supposedly, their Phthalocyanine dye reacts quicker to the writing laser than dyes used by other manufacturers, thus making sharper pit edges; and should also last significantly longer when subjected to the harmful effects of heat, humidity, and UV light. Plus, these disks use 24 karat gold (one of the most inert elements on earth) in their reflective layers to prevent corrosion. Finally, their "Scratch Armor Scratch Resistant Coating" is said to protect the surface of these discs over ten times better than uncoated media. All in all, Delkin claims that their "Archival Gold" disks provide the most extreme protection for your data from long-term degrada-

tion. (The preceding information was paraphrased from the Delkin website, www.delkin.com).

On the other hand, my fellow member was of the opinion that two years was an acceptable lifespan for a CD that would be obsolete in *one* year. Unfortunately for me, when the matter came to a vote at the March 30th Board Meeting, a majority supported *him*. So I did the only thing I could do: I volunteered to pay for the first batch of Delkin CDs myself. They cost me \$59.99 for a spindle of 25. That's just under \$2.40 per CD (almost what I had to pay for each ordinary CD when I got my first CD Recorder back in 1997).

Now, back to the last-minute rush. When I picked up the CD project again, I found that my Complete Index file was hardly even started, and that there were a dozen entries in my "Bad Copy" file. There was *no* way that I could create an Index in the time available, so I had to "table" that file until next year. At her request, I e-mailed my "Bad Copy" file to Barbara. I spent the days from the 15th to the 20th organizing the new "final" source directory for my CD, which involved comparing the files in my two older source directories: One containing the PDF files that I'd downloaded individually from the club website; and the other containing files that John Raff had copied for me all at once, directly from the club server via FTP (File Transfer Protocol). To do those comparisons, I used MD5summer.exe, which can run under Linux through Wine (a Windows emulator). Most files compared equally,

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so I just copied them to my new directory; and then I ran MD5summer again to make sure that none of my files had become corrupted during that last copy. For those few files that *didn't* compare, I had to ask Barbara to e-mail me a copy of the original file stored on *her* computer as a "tie-breaker". I also made updated copies of my Newsletter History file (NLHIST09.PDF), my SIG History file (SIGHIS09.PDF), and my "Bad Copy" file (KNOWNBAD.PDF). I'd originally planned to do my ReadMe file as an HTML file, maybe featuring a master file list containing direct links to every other file on the CD. Now, however, I didn't have any time to learn how to do this (if, indeed, it was possible at all). I considered making a traditional README.TXT file instead; but every *other* file on the CD was a PDF file, so I made it as README.PDF, too.

On April 20th and 21st, much to my surprise and delight, Barbara sent me back *ten* corrected files from my "Bad" list. Plus, I created the first draft of my CD label on the 21st, too. Then, on the 22nd and 23rd, Barbara found *twenty-five* more erroneous files, fixed them *all*, and e-mailed the corrected versions to me. Also on April 23rd, I created the final version of my CD label, and printed out fourteen copies of it before 5:00 PM. (That was so I'd have time to run to the store if my printer happened to run out of ink; but it didn't). My plan was to produce an initial run of 12 CDs; but I printed a seventh sheet (containing two more labels) as a spare, just in case I ruined one or two later. At

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ran. On the other hand, Barbara uses long file names for everything on *her* computer, so *all* the files she sent me had to be manually renamed shorter.

There are two "extra" files where each *_NN* was replaced by a **three** character descriptor. The 1976 Membership Directory is named 1976DIR.PDF, and the Program for the **first** Trenton Computer Festival is named 1976TCFX.PDF. We actually **did** use X as the suffix for "bad" files. Although Barbara managed to fix **thirty-five** of them, there are still two left on the CD. The TCF Program is marked with an X because the bottom of the last sheet (containing pages 15 and 16) was torn off before the PDF file was scanned. Then there's the May 1976 issue (Volume 2, Number. 5). It's 16 pages long, with many faded and/or illegible areas. Its name is 1976_05X.PDF. When a good replacement is created, it will be named 1976_05A.PDF. If, for some reason, another revision has to be made, it will be named 1976_05B.PDF. As things currently stand, we could make up to **eighteen** new versions before coming into conflict with our next set of files: Issues published **outside** of the usual numerical sequence. Six of these are currently known to exist. Five are Supplements, and we're counting the sixth as a Supplement, too. Three were sent out in 1987: two four-pagers labeled "Supplement May 1987" and "Supplement June 1987", plus one eight-pager labeled

6:23 PM on the 23rd, Barbara sent me one more message, suggesting that we include our latest advertisement for back issues on the CD. I added it to both KNOWNBAD.PDF and README.PDF. Then, I took a **short** break for supper.

When I returned, I set about resolving incompatible naming systems. On the Internet, John Raff uses a YYYY-NN.PDF layout, where YYYY is the four digit year followed by a hyphen, and then NN is a two digit number. Mostly, those two digits represent the Issue Number; but in some years in the mid two thousands, they represented the month, instead. Furthermore, if John ever needed a few more characters or numbers for some reason, he just stuck them on the end, creating a long file name. However, to insure that our newsletter collection CD could be read by as many operating systems as possible, I decided to manufacture it as a strict ISO9660 disk. That meant **no** Joliet or Rockridge extensions, so **no** long file names; just the good old DOS "8.3" format. On the CD, names had to fit into the following pattern: YYYY_NNX.PDF, where YYYY is the four digit year followed by an underscore, NN is the two digit Issue Number (always), and X is a suffix (making use of the one additional space available in the 8.3 format). That suffix could be a single upper-case letter (or possibly a single digit number); but most often it was **not** used at all. Actually, I only had to manually rename a few of John's files. (Just those that interfered with the suffix). Because hyphens are **not** valid ISO9660 characters, the CD creation software would convert them all into underscores **automatically** as it

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"Supplement September 1987". Using S (for Supplement), they're named 1987_05S.PDF, 1987_06S.PDF and 1987_07S.PDF. Next, in 1993 (for the first time in seven years), a summer issue was published, identified as "Volume 18 Issue 6.5 July-August 1993". When sequentially sorted, though, a file named 1993_06S.PDF will not wind up between 1993_06.PDF and 1993_07.PDF. (Instead, it reads as 65, so it becomes the **last** 1993 entry). However, if named 1993_06S.PDF, it **will** fall where it should. So, even though it's not really a Supplement, that's the name we're using here. (Anyway, an S **does** sort of look like a 5). Then, we have two more recent additions: a four-pager labeled "Volume 33, Number 06S End-of-June 2008 Supplement" and a twenty-pager labeled "Volume 33, Number 10S End-of-Year 2008 Supplement". They get the names 2008_06S.PDF and 2008_10S.PDF, respectively.

Finally, there are two "combinations". In 1982, when the August newsletter couldn't actually be mailed out in August, the club put out a 40 page "Double Size" issue in September (called "VOLUME 8 NUMBERS 8 AND 9 AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1982"); and when the December 1989 newsletter was delayed, the regular January 1990 issue was published, but it was called "Vol 14, No. 10 & Vol 15, No. 1 Dec '89, Jan '90". On the CD, we made "evil twins" for each file. Thus, 1982_08.PDF and

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1982_09.PDF are duplicates; and so are 1989_10.PDF and 1990_01.PDF. (I thought about giving one file in each of those pairs a suffix T, for Twin; but I decided that it might cause more trouble than it was worth, so I *didn't*).

Therefore, the files on this first edition CD carry only three suffixes: A, S and X. The first seven characters in names marked with an A or an X are unique (not repeated in that same order anywhere else on the disk); but the first seven characters in the names marked with an S are *not*. In fact, they're *exactly* the same as the first seven characters in the names of the files listed in the CD directories directly *before* each and every one of them. I realize that this could cause confusion, especially to someone who *didn't* read the entire ReadMe file. However, this was the best system that I could come up with; and it *does* follow the order of publication as exactly as possible. (If somebody out there can come up with a better system, let us know. If we like it, we could use it on the *next* CD).

Before moving on from the topic of suffixes, I need to make a confession. There are thirty-six files on the CD that are marked with the suffix A. Unfortunately, there *should* be thirty-seven. Thirty-five of them are scanned-in PDF

files that Barbara fixed (1975_04A.PDF, 1976_06A.PDF, 1977_01A.PDF, 1977_02A.PDF, 1978_08A.PDF, 1979_08A.PDF, 1979_11A.PDF, 1984_02A.PDF, 1985_05A.PDF, 1985_10A.PDF, 1987_09A.PDF, 1987_10A.PDF, 1988_05A.PDF, 1988_06A.PDF, 1988_09A.PDF, 1989_04A.PDF, 1990_05A.PDF, 1990_09A.PDF, 1992_08A.PDF, 1993_03A.PDF, 1993_04A.PDF, 1993_05A.PDF, 1993_08A.PDF, 1994_02A.PDF, 1994_05A.PDF, 1994_06A.PDF, 1996_02A.PDF, 1996_05A.PDF, 1996_08A.PDF, 1996_10A.PDF, 1997_02A.PDF, 1997_03A.PDF, 1997_06A.PDF, 1998_06A.PDF and 2000_09A.PDF). The other two are more recent "all-electronic" PDF files. Given our extremely short deadline to publication interval, it's not *too* surprising that mistakes occasionally happen. When they do, Barbara fixes them and then we put up a replacement file on the club website. Previously, we just re-used the exact same filenames, and didn't make a fuss about it. However, two files (2008_06A.PDF and 2009_06.PDF,) were fixed by Barbara, but somehow the replacements *never* got put up. Even as I write this, I took a quick look at the club website, and the old versions were still there. **Both**

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files on the CD are the latest versions, though. Apparently, I just *forgot* to mark the second one with an A. Why is that such a big deal? Because without it, how could anyone know that different versions of that file existed, or if they had the latest version. In 2008_06A.PDF, some new content was added to a blank area on page 18, so that A is important. In 2009_06.PDF, no content was added, but the *order* of the items on page 3 was changed. Oh well, at least no information is in danger of being lost; but on the next CD, that file *will* get an A. (Considering how tired I was when I finally finished, we'll be lucky if this mistake is the *only* one that I made on the CD).

Earlier, I mentioned using MD5summer.exe to compare files. I should make it clear that MD5summer does *not* compare files to each other. It compares a group of files to a list of 32 character checksums. Usually, I include a file named VERIFY.MD5 (or sometimes _VERIFY.MD5) on every CD and DVD that I create. MD5summer.exe (or any other MD5 program) can use that file to check that every file on the disk is still good. This CD, though, was intended for a wider audience than any disk I've ever done before. If I'd included that file on the CD, I would have had to explain what it was, and how to use it. So while I still made that file, I didn't put it on the CD. I kept it in the ACGNJ_CD directory on my computer instead; but I used it *repeatedly* to insure that none of my files had accidentally become corrupted. (It's true that hard disks are *much* more reliable these days; but it's also true that you can *never, ever* guarantee that a copy operation will go perfectly. While MD5summer is not as foolproof as a bit-for-bit binary comparison would be, it's more than good enough to identify accidental damage).

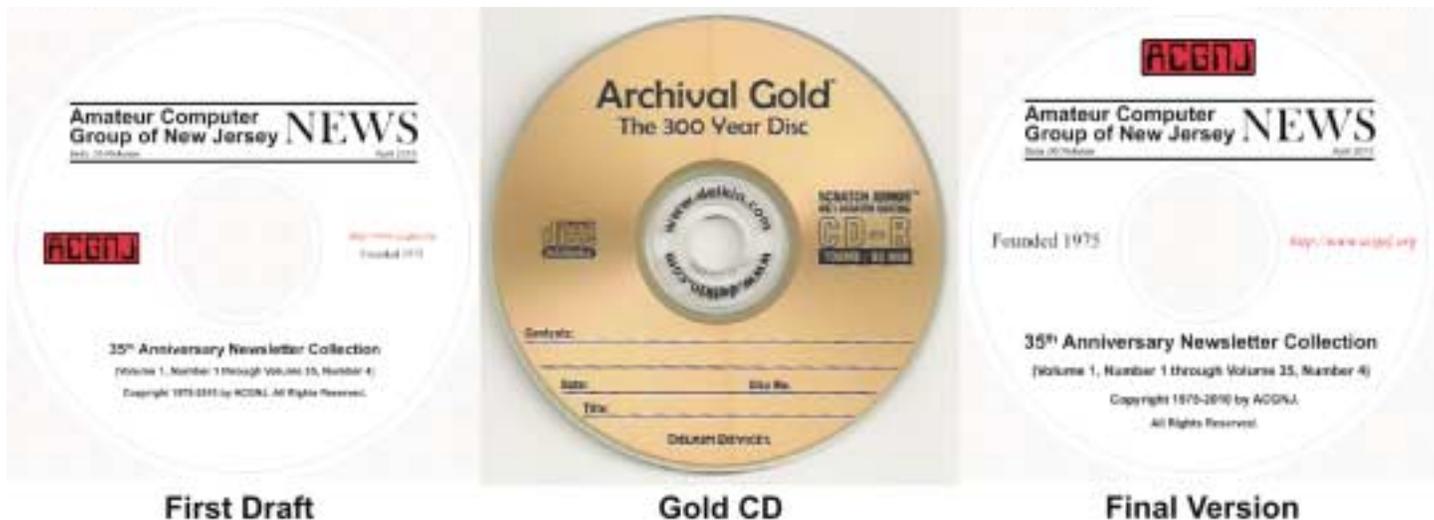
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OK. So I got the files for the CD organized, renamed and verified, made sure that I had the absolute latest versions of each and every one, and (just as important) made sure that I'd gotten rid of all the older versions. (A disadvantage of using a suffix is that it makes the new name different from the old name. Thus, the old file and the new file can sit peacefully next to each other in the same directory without conflicting). For some people, it would now be the time to burn a CD; but I've almost always found it advantageous to make a CD image first. The process is virtually identical. You start your CD creation program, select your files, choose a name for your Volume Label, pick your disk format (as I said earlier, strict ISO9660 in this case), and do whatever other things your particular program requires. The only difference is that your output is a file, not a CD.

I named my CD image file NL09_CD.ISO. Because I always do, I made an MD5 checksum file for that ISO file itself, and named it NL09_CD.MD5; and for consistency, I renamed the VERIFY.MD5 file for the 365 files *inside* my ISO image to NL09_CDV.MD5. (The V is for verify). I launched my virtual CD program, which lets me view the contents of an ISO file like it was, in fact, a CD in a CD-ROM drive. Then, I used MD5summer to run NL09_CDV.MD5 on that virtual CD, thus proving that the 365 files which were supposed to be in that image *were*, in fact, all there and all good. *Now* it was time for me to make CDs.

Gathering my spindle of Gold CDs, my fourteen previously printed labels, and a bunch of empty CD cases (nice "clamshells", donated by our Hardware Special Interest Group), I set my CD creation program to burn NL09_CD.ISO to multiple disks, then started it up. When the first CD was

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First Draft

Gold CD

Final Version

completed, I gently removed the first label from its sheet; and using my “CD label applicator guide”, I carefully positioned it on the first disk. By the time I had smoothed that first label into place, and inserted the now-finished CD into its case, the next CD was ready. The whole process went very fast. I didn’t ruin any of the labels, so I wound up making a “first edition” press run of fourteen CDs. Next, I shuffled my stack of nicely encased CDs, so that *even I*

wouldn’t know which one was the very first “first edition”. Then, though it was horrendously late, I checked each CD with MD5summer and NL09_CD.V.MD5, to insure that *all* of them were *perfect*. After that, at long last, I went to bed.

Let me say that I intended to get up early Saturday morning. Really and truly I did; but nobody should be all that surprised when I admit that I got to TCF late, at about Noon. Holding out one CD for Barbara and one for myself,

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I brought twelve CDs to TCF; and we sold *seven* of them at our club table. Now, Barbara has informed me that we owe two CDs to people who donated newsletter issues; and if my brother wants one, he’ll get it (for his invaluable assistance in too many ways to count). Assuming that we keep one for the club archives, that leaves just *one* “first edition” CD left for sale. Do I hear an opening bid?

Of course, it’s quite possible that we’ll *never* sell that last CD; but it’s also possible that we’ll get requests for more. If I do make more, should I make them identical to the existing disks, or should I enshrine those fourteen “first edition” CDs as “collectors items” by making any newer disks slightly different? I could do that by changing the label a bit. There’s some extra white space at the bottom of the existing label. If I were to move the “Copyright...” and “All Rights Reserved” lines down about a quarter inch, that would actually balance the label better, and also give future appraisers on *Antiques Roadshow* something to look for when estimating values. I’m not sure what to do. Maybe I’ll ask the Board for a decision.

I *could* blather on even longer, but this seems like a good place to stop. After all, I’ve got my image to think about. See you next month. ☺

Back Issues Needed

We are 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 will return them quickly. Thanks Joseph Gaffney, who loaned his collection for scanning, and to Alex Goldfinger for contributing five missing issues and hard copies of many we had previously borrowed. Below is a list of what we still need.

1985: June, July, August, September

1984: August

1976: January

1975: #2 and #3 (Also pamphlet-size booklets.)

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

From The DealsGuy

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

We attended the 2010 FACUG Spring Conference cruise and it was well attended with about 250 registrants and a total of 350 attendees (considering the non-member spouses). I was not enthused about the ship and its food, but most liked it. This conference had the most sessions I've ever seen, and with very talented presenters. There were also some APCUG people doing breakout sessions. You made a tough decision almost every hour with four great sessions to choose from, especially when we wanted to spend time shopping at Nassau, Bahamas. There was a photo-shoot session done ashore by Bill Campbell, a professional photographer who has traveled worldwide and written books. Bill did other photo-related sessions. We didn't stop at Great Stirrup Cay (Norwegian's private island) because of windy conditions; they just made a very slow trip continuing on back to Miami.

Shopping in Nassau I found a polo shirt with a pocket (hard to find these days) that had "Nassau" on it, and we bought a few other souvenir items. We also visited the Gucci store for the experience. A beautiful women's purse was on sale for "only" \$3,500, marked down from \$5,000, but darn, I had accidentally left my plastic in our cabin safe. I was disappointed not to get it for her! Maybe it will still be on sale if we visit Nassau again (and we win the lottery).

I was surprised that Microsoft was not a sponsor. Only Corel joined us on the cruise, but Smart Computing sent

lots of magazines. There were 33 breakout sessions during the Saturday and Sunday conference hours. The presentation "Technology of the Space Program" by Jeff Fishkin (works for NASA) was extremely interesting and informative. Carey Holzman's keynote talk about computer security was outstanding and informative. Carey hosts a radio show about computers.

The ship's navigator gave a great talk and we learned about an unexpected weather problem the night before that most were not aware of. It seems a sudden storm came up and the ship quickly listed about six degrees before they could correct it, which is not a serious danger, but some bottles slid off the shelves in the liquor store. Good thing we were unaware or some of us might have been there with straws helping clean up the liquor store floor. He said they quickly used pumps to move water or fuel to the proper ballast tanks to correct the listing situation. Ten lucky people got a tour of the navigation room. Everyone enjoyed a Welcome Cocktail Party on Friday evening and a Farewell Cocktail Party Sunday evening, with door prizes. I had great conversations with people that I only see at that event. Some pictures are posted at <http://www.facug.org>.

I heard varying opinions about this event, but most sounded positive, even when they were originally against it. The pluses were no traveling from a hotel for events, vendors didn't need to buy attendees meals, and everything that

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went on was only a few steps away from your room. No sessions after 7PM meant you could take in shows, live music in the lounges, late night buffet parties, or other ship events. I saw the best musical show I have ever seen on any ship we've been on. I enjoyed the comedian the next night. The Cruise Director announced at the musical show that 51 different countries were represented on that cruise, the most that ship ever had. Whenever my wife and I went to the buffet for a snack, we saw a few people with FACUG badges having snacks together and often meeting for the first time. All of us wearing badges were often asked what it was about, so we got a chance to promote user groups.

Next year's conference is already planned, but is in jeopardy because of very slow registrations, in spite of a positive survey taken after our return. I think it's too early in the year to start the registration, but maybe the cruise line will relent and give us more time to get the 100 registrations needed. It's a day longer and on a better ship. There will be no sessions next year during certain hours in Cozumel, Mexico.

***Another users group gives up**

I received a message from Dick Hiatt recently telling me that their San Diego Personal Computer User Group was disbanding. They have published the DealsGuy column for years and Dick has been the editor for years. Their member-

ship was at an all time low and so was their meeting attendance. I didn't ask when I called him, but I assume that, like most groups, the officers have all held their jobs for years. Their final meeting will be sort of a party without smiles, but most of the active members are likely to affiliate with other computer related groups in the area. In their good times, they had about 200 members. With all of the help for computer users, and the great camaraderie, it's hard to think that user groups are becoming an endangered species.

***Diskeeper Introduces An Update**

Most of you are familiar with the Diskeeper and Undelete products <http://www.diskeeper.com> and their great performance capability. Diskeeper Corporation has introduced an update. Diskeeper features a breakthrough technology called IntelliWrite that prevents the vast majority (up to 95%) of fragmentation from ever occurring. InvisiTasking technology is an important breakthrough that allows processes running in the background to run invisibly with zero conflicts. They say the Titan Defragging technology is about the strongest ever built, and the Terabyte Volume Engine technology rapidly defrags multi-terabyte volumes. (DealsGuy comment; check comparison-chart.aspx to better understand that statement.)

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They say that Boot-Time defragmentation defrags and consolidates directories to improve application speed, eliminating slows, hangs, and crashes. Defragmentation during boot-time handles those files that cannot be moved while the system is active. All Diskeeper 2010 editions are fully compatible with Windows 7 (Home Edition is not compatible with Windows 7 Enterprise). Registered users receive full 90-day telephone tech support and special upgrade pricing. I found that Diskeeper works fast and efficiently. There's more, but I don't have room for every feature here.

Undelete 2009 is not updated, but is a fascinating product. It protects files that the Windows recycle bin and backup systems miss: The following is from their Web site, but I'm not sure if it all pertains to the Home version as well.

"Undelete 2009 with InvisiTasking to the Rescue — Undelete replaces the Windows recycle bin with a catch-all Recovery Bin™ that intercepts all deleted files, no matter how they were deleted. Lost file? No problem! Use the Recovery Bin's Windows Explorer-like interface to navigate to the file, or take advantage of Undelete's powerful search capabilities. Right-click the file, select Recover, and the file is back. The Microsoft Office Version Protection functionality can even restore your earlier, saved over versions of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) files.

Undelete includes Emergency Undelete, which can recover files deleted before Undelete was installed; provided they haven't been overwritten on your hard drive, and SecureDelete 2.0, an electronic shredder to completely erase confidential files.

Innovative Set It and Forget It™ features and technology (InvisiTasking) guarantee that new Undelete 2009 will safeguard your computer silently and automatically." There's more, but I don't have room. Here are some special offers for a limited time:

Diskeeper 2010 Home 2-pack \$49.95 (Save \$30) **Home**

Diskeeper 2010 Professional 2-pack \$99.95 (Save \$20)

Professional

Diskeeper 2010 Pro Premier 2-pack \$169.95 (Save \$30)

Pro Premier

Undelete 2009 Home and Diskeeper 2010 Home bundle \$49.95 (Save \$20) **Bundle**

***How About A Smart Uninstaller!**

A guy was telling me about his favorite uninstall software called Zsoft Uninstaller. I don't think it's an exclusive feature, but it has a way to keep track of any changes on your hard drive when you install a new program. If you don't like the new program, Zsoft can completely remove it even

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if there is no uninstall tool included. Prior to installing a new program, Zsoft will make some type of hard drive image to use as a reference if it has to uninstall that software. I have not tried Zsoft, but it sounds like it has a good concept and it's free; however, as with most freeware, they accept donations if you like it. Check it out at zsoft.dk/index/software.

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 <bobclick at bellsouth dot net>. Visit my Web site at

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



Eliminating Obsolete Windows Device Drivers

Vinny La Bash (vlabash (at) comcast.net), Sarasota PCUG Inc., Florida (www.spcug.org)

Device drivers are programs that are designed to control (drive) specific types of hardware (devices) that are attached to your computer. These devices can be attached through wires or by wireless connections. No matter how the device is attached you need a program to tell it how to interact with the computer.

An operating system such as Windows comes with myriads of device drivers built into it so when you bring your new computer home, attach your printers, external drives, etc., most of them work fine.

The caveat is that drivers are hardware dependent and operating system specific so your external CD-ROM, which worked flawlessly under Vista, may not work with Windows 7 until you install an updated device driver designed for the new OS.

Every operating system directs device drivers to communicate with their devices through the computer bus or a communications subsystem. It is a process which is largely invisible to those trying to get work done on the computer, much like the internal workings of an automobile are

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largely invisible to a driver trying to get from home to the grocery store.

The invisibility of device drivers is a good thing when everything is working smoothly, but it tends to hinder troubleshooting when trying to track down the cause of a problem. When you upgrade or change hardware, Windows doesn't usually delete the old device drivers. Sometimes these obsolete programs can cause hardware conflicts. Seemingly unrelated quirky behavior on the part of the computer can often be traced to a no longer used device driver.

Resolving device driver problems in Windows can be difficult. In this article we're going to focus on finding outdated device drivers and eliminating them from your system.

Manually searching for device drivers on a Windows system can be frustrating, time-consuming, and mostly a waste of effort. Conveniently for us, Microsoft has provided a way to locate unused device drivers and remove them.

The directions herein are designed specifically for Windows 7, but the general process will work for Vista and XP. There are slight variations in the process with each of the operating systems; just be careful when reading each screen. Let's get on with it.

The Device Manager as it comes from Microsoft is not set up to display device drivers that are no longer being used. The Device Manager has to be configured to show obsolete drivers so we can remove them. You need to add something

called a special Windows Environment Variable. This is a text string that contains a path, file name or drive. Programmers refer to this as a system property. We don't really care what they call it as long as it works.

- From the **Start Menu**, right-click on **Computer**.
- Select **Properties** at the bottom of the list.
- From the **System** window, select **Advanced** system settings.
- From the **System Properties** dialog box, select the **Environment Variables** button. (See illustration)
- The **Environment Variables** dialog box contains two panels, **User variables** and **System variables**.
- Click the **New...** button.
- In the **New System Variable** dialog box, type `devmgr_show_nonpresent_devices`
- Type 1 in the **Variable Value** text box.
- Close all the dialog boxes.

In most cases there is no need to restart the system. Let's test the results of our labor.

- Access the **Start Menu**.
- Right click **Computer**.
- Select **Manage**.
- When the **Computer Management** window appears, select **Device Manager**.
- Open the **View** menu and select **Show Hidden Devices**.

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From now on whenever you open a branch within the Device Manager tree structure and device icons are "grayed out" or appear faded, these are unused drivers. You can safely delete them. Whenever you add, remove or change your hardware configuration, check for left over drivers and avoid problems.

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Book Review: Office 2007 - The Missing Manual

George Harding (Georgehardingsbd (at) earthlink.net), Tucson Computer Society, AZ (www.aztcs.org)

O'Reilly Publishing has a series of "Missing Manuals" that are described as "The book that should have been in the box." These books give you a detailed and complete description of all you could possibly want to know about the application in question. In this case, the book deals with the major components of Office 2007: Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access. Microsoft provides several versions of Office, all of which include Word and Excel. PowerPoint and Access are included in some versions.

The book is extensive, being nearly 800 pages long plus two appendices and several indexes. It starts out with some of the rationale for the ribbon system used in Office 2007. It explains the Quick Access Toolbar and how to customize it. The book spends little time on the Office button, which is unfortunate. This is a major area for customization of your version of Office. There are four major sections:

Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access, plus the initial section of the Office Toolbar and ribbon.

Word

There are eight sections: Creating, Opening and Saving documents; Entering and Editing Text; Formatting Text Paragraphs and Headings; Setting Up the Document; Themes and Templates; Spelling, Grammar and Reference Tools; Printing; and Planning with Outlines.

Each of these sections gives explicit instructions for doing a particular task; this is done in terms of the ribbon, its menus and submenus. If you are familiar with prior versions of Word, you will understand the function, but may not know where in the ribbon to find the tool you need. The sections will lead you to the proper place in the ribbon.

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Excel

There are eight sections: Creating and Navigating Worksheets; Adding Information to Worksheets; Moving Data Around a Worksheet; Managing Worksheets and Workbooks; Formatting Cells; Viewing and Printing Worksheets; Building Basic Formulas; Tables and Charts.

Here, too, the book gives explicit instructions about performing a given operation by using the tools in the ribbon. If you have used Excel before, you should refer to these sections to see how to efficiently perform in Excel 2007.

PowerPoint

Nine sections: Creating a Basic Presentation; Editing Slides; Formatting and Aligning Your Text; Formatting and Laying Out Slides; Editing Your Slideshow; Adding Charts, Diagrams, and Tables; Delivering Presentations; Printing Presentations; Images and Transitions.

This portion shows you in detail how to construct a PowerPoint slide show. You can find out the details behind any facet of the procedure, but in terms of using the ribbon. PowerPoint has been improved quite a bit and made easier to use. Reading the sections will be worth your while.

Access

There are nine sections: Creating Your First Database; Building Smarter Tables; mastering the Datasheet; Blocking Bad Data; Linking Tables with Relationships; Queries and Reusable Searches; Creating Reports; Creating Simple Forms; Importing and Exporting Data.

Access has been expanded in several ways. If you are a master of Access in prior versions, these sections will show you the many improvements in Access 2007. If you have not or rarely used Access, these sections will give you a good introduction to this powerful and versatile program. There are two Appendices, one covering "Customizing the Quick Access Toolbar," the other "Getting Help." Help includes not only built-in Help, but also the Microsoft Office website, and the several tutorials at Microsoft's website.

Finally, in a departure from traditional indices, there are separate indices for Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access. The last page of the book points out that more material is available. If a CD-ROM had been included, it would have various references, which are bookmarked at the O'Reilly page for this book. Many of the references are to Microsoft's site, but they are nonetheless helpful. This is a very helpful book for the new user of Office 2007, or those that are transitioning from a prior version of Office to 2007. Authors: Chris Grover, Matthew MacDonald, E.A. Vander Veer

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Windows 7, Thanks, But No Thanks!

Herb Goldstein (editor (at) spcug.org), Sarasota PCUG, Florida (www.spcug.org)

I am a devout XP user. It's not by any means perfect. It has its own set of quirks (like everything else), but it's better than anything that came before and it works quite well. It's like my house...I know where everything is. I can navigate it in the dark. I've got it furnished and decorated just the way I want it, and it took me, bit by bit, a long time to do. So why should I move across the street and start all over again? For whose benefit?

Some time ago, Microsoft provided their release candidate of Windows 7 free for all. I installed it on a spare hard drive and have been playing with it now and then. It's a nice functional operating system, but from a practical standpoint it provides me with nothing that I need or must have that's missing in XP. If you are starting as a new computer user with a new computer, it's just fine. In fact it will be on your new computer right from the get-go, want it or not.

For many reasons, there is no upgrade path to migrate from XP to Windows 7. You need to start from scratch reinstalling all your programs, all their updates and upgrades, and all the customized settings you have factored into them over time. That's providing you have your original installation disks or some record of those that you originally downloaded for which you have no installation disks. You

will need all their serial numbers that you were originally required to provide. Talk about monumental tasks!

As though that were not enough to completely turn off the bravest among you, Windows 7 has another curve ball to pitch at you. Whatever applications you want to install in Windows 7 must have perfectly valid drivers that it will recognize. Windows 7 is much more fussy about what it wants to approve. Many smaller software publishers whose applications you may now be using in XP may not have developed drivers that will work in Windows 7. You may well have to kiss some of your most fabulous freebies goodbye. The loudest argument I have heard by those urging the switch is that Microsoft will cease to recognize XP. If the automobile industry operated in similar fashion you would be forced to junk all cars more than a few years old.

So pardon me folks while I continue to avoid fixing what isn't broken. Unless and until Microsoft can offer a much better operating system that will easily migrate everything I am currently using in XP, thanks but no thanks!

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Convert a PDF File to a Text File

Sr. Dorothy Robinson (srdorothy(at)gmail.com), Olympia Microcomputer User Group (<http://olymug.org>)

Have you been wishing you had a piece of software that would convert PDF files to text files that you can edit? And maybe also didn't cost an arm and a leg?

BCL Technologies has such software called easyConverter Desktop that costs about \$20. That sounds like a good buy to me. But it only works with Windows (2000, XP, Vista and Win 7), that leaves a lot of people, namely Linux users, out in the cold.

The good news is that BCL also has a free, online utility that does the same thing. And your operating system doesn't come into it. Open your browser and go to <http://pdfonline.com/pdf2word/index.asp> and take a look.

On the left side, under a header that says "Convert PDF to Word for Free" you'll see a place to browse your computer and select a file. Note that there is no need to provide your email address, since you'll just download the file directly.

Find your file and double click it (or click once then click Open), then click the Upload and Convert button. Press it **only once**, and wait; larger files may take a while to upload. The conversion is pretty fast, under a minute for the one or two page files I tried. There is a 2 MB limit on uploads, so really big files won't work.

This part is where, if you wanted to do a lot of files, or large ones, it would be great to have an application on your computer to do it — thus eliminating the time to upload.

The next step is downloading the text file. I'm not sure why the instructions say to Right Click on the link to download the file, because for me at least it didn't work. I Left Clicked instead and the download dialog opened.

You'll see that the file is a rich text file (.RTF or .rtf) which can easily be opened by Word, OpenOffice Writer, Abiword, or other word processors or text editors and be available for editing. When you save it you can save it as a .doc if you like.

The dialog asks, What should (your browser) do with this file? The first choice is to open the file with the default application (mine showed OpenOffice) or you can choose another from a drop-down list. The second choice is to save the file, and if you choose Save the file, your download manager will save it to the default location — or you might get a Save as dialog and choose where to save it. One caution: opening the file directly rather than downloading it got me a Read Only file, which of course I couldn't edit. So for editing purposes, save the file before opening.

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Make your choice by clicking a radio button, then click OK. You now have a text file you can edit. And the quality is very nice, too —f or **mostly text** documents. I tried a PDF file that I had originally created in OpenOffice Writer which contained a calendar in a table. The results were not pretty! And for a postal PDF which was a requisition form using tables, the results were somewhat better but still unusable since the tables overlapped, hiding some of the text. On the other hand, I made a list of data (several rows and columns) in an OpenOffice spreadsheet, exported it to PDF, then uploaded it and converted it. When I downloaded this file, it was perfect—and perfectly editable.

For me, using Ubuntu Linux, this free, online version is a good thing. Windows users have a choice of the web version or the computer application. And pdf2word gives the best results I've seen for this kind of web application.

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Book Review: Beyond Digital Photography Transforming Photos into Fine Art with Photoshop and Painter

Iris Yoffa (irisonthego (at) gmail.com), Tucson Computer Society, AZ (www.aztcs.org)

When I heard of this book from Cher Threinen-Pendarvis and Donal Jolley, I was eager to work through the pages and try all the recipes. I use both Photoshop and Painter and am always looking for new and interesting approaches to transforming photographs into art. Beyond Digital Photography is not a beginner's tutorial on the basics of each program. However, the authors' directions are broken down into clear steps that can be understood by any level of user.

Chapter 1 covers basics of working with pixels and resolution, Photoshop and Painter workspaces, a selection of palettes from both, cloning and painting, Photoshop Camera RAW, and using the Wacom Tablet. Photoshop and Painter are much the same on Windows and Mac, and recipes include keystrokes used on both. The companion web site, beyonddigitalbook.com, contains updates and many project images. Most projects begin in Photoshop or Photoshop Camera RAW with preparing the photo for image manipulation. In addition to tips for working in the applications, there are suggested camera settings, and photo shoot and production tips for improving the quality of your pictures. The first exercise is a straight forward method for creating pop-art from a photo. The recommendation is to use an image with good contrast and large, simple shapes. Filters are

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blender brushes, create a border and paint detail back into an image, resulting in a lovely pastel. (We hope.)

The last project recreates a textured charcoal study in black and white. Once again, the focus is Painter and how to use the program for retouching, cloning, painting and blending.

Chapter 5 contains two projects to step through the process of simulating the look of water color. In the first you recreate a landscape and the second is close-up of a young child. This is the point at which we finally get to really paint!

Painting with Painter's Digital Watercolor and Watercolor Blenders brushes, you are actually taken through the process of building up watercolor washes. The Dry Digital Watercolor option in the Layers menu is used to set the imagery, simulating waiting for the washes to dry in the world of actual watercolor.

Chapter 6 includes four projects to guide you through achieving acrylic or oil painted results. These include recommendations of Master Artists to study for inspiration and the training of your artist's eye. Painter's Real Bristle Brushes are used for the first project. The second is an investigation of Chiaroscuro lighting. Painter's Cloning and Artists' Oils brushes are used to achieve results inspired by lighting and tones found in the art of the old masters.

Using Noise in Photoshop to transform an image into digital oil is next. This lesson includes using Photoshop's Lens Correction filter to address barreling and chromatic aberration in the image due to normal camera lens distortion. Oil techniques are accomplished using Photoshop's blending

applied to layers then blending modes are used to create an interaction between one layer and the one below it.

Chapter 2, "Painterly Techniques for Non-Painters," is filled with methods for turning your photo into a hand rendered painting or woodcut without picking up a paint brush.

Chapter 3 puts the focus on creating a focus. In the first project you use a mask to protect the object that should draw in the eye and remain in focus. Then a lens blur and brushwork is applied and lastly a painted border finishes up the exercise. The next two projects use the approach of blurring and brushing away most of the image background detail, then painting back areas of focus using Painter. In the last three brief exercises you create a focus using layers and Photoshop's dodge and burn tools, adjust the saturation of a selection to create focus and use a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to create a Sepia-tone background.

Chapter 4 begins with a project to illustrate some of the power of working with a RAW file in Photoshop Camera RAW. Photoshop's Art History Brush is employed to create a textured and painterly effect for your image.

Working with clones and pastels in Painter follows. You get to build a textured manila paper and custom cloners, use

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layers and a variety of noise filters. The last project of the chapter presents the Painter approach to re-creating an old masters style of oil painting.

Chapter 7 is quite brief and shows two approaches for transforming your photo into abstract art. The first project is accomplished entirely with Photoshop, the second is done in Painter. The last chapter introduces methods and ideas for consideration when collaging together multiple images. In the first exercise Photoshop layers, masks, and filters are used to build a rather complex composite image.

The final exercise of the book works with both Photoshop and Painter to create a composition from multiple photos. The elements of whitespace, size relationships between elements, consistency of shadows, texture and color, and drawing the viewer around the page, are the focus.

In Summary: Working through the pages of this book was a wonderful adventure in exploring new ways to use Photoshop and Painter to transform photos into art. I give it a definite "thumbs up" recommendation for anyone interested in furthering their artist's eye and skill set with the Photoshop and Painter digital toolboxes.

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SIG News

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

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, May 17.* ☐

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmajestic@gmail.com)

<http://www.NJGamers.com>

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be May 14, 12 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! ☐

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 as well. We meet on the first Monday of the month at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information.

Our next meetings, May 3. ☐

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.

May 21: Introduction to Investing/Financial Software, by Philip Lees. ☐

Main Meeting

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

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

May 7: Comparison of OpenOffice.org, MS Office, and other Office Suites, continued from Feb., by Bob Hawes. ☐

Web Dev

Evan Williams (ewilliams@collaboron.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. 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 other languages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola - MAC etc. *Next meetings May 12.* ☐

Java

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

<http://www.javasig.org>

May 11: Developing Applications for the BlackBerry using Java and Eclipse

This month Manny Goyenechea will be making a presentation on the Blackberry Platform and Blackberry Platform APIs.

He will show:

- * How to sign up to become a Blackberry Application Developer
- * Where to obtain Blackberry Developer emulators, SDKs, and tools
- * How to install and configure Blackberry Developer emulators, sdks, and tools

Finally, he will demonstrate:

- * How to develop and test a custom theme for Blackberry emulator and phone
- * How to develop and test a custom application for to Blackberry emulator and phone ☐

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 meetings: May 13. ☐

Hardware Activity

Mike Reagan (hardware@acgnj.org)

This group is dedicated to repairing, refurbishing and/or recycling older computers. Ten people attended the first meeting of the ACGNJ Hardware Activity; so there is still a market for this type of event. One guy came all the way from the Bronx! Although we looked at some of the older equipment stored in the back room, most of our time was

spent in 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. If you have a hardware problem, bring it in and we can all help fix or demolish it. (no guarantees either way)

Our next meeting May 27. ☞

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.

April: This was a "Members Night". Members were encouraged to bring in C++ questions, problems, and even

programs to be discussed by the entire group. Additionally, we had a review of topics covered during the last few months. Most of the programs previously presented used the latest C++ compiler in Microsoft's Visual Studio 2008.

Our next meeting: May 18. ☞

Google Voice, Free Long Distance

Hank Pearson (hank.pearson@asciigroup.org), Arizona Society for Computer Info., inc. (www.asciigroup.org)

What is Google Voice?

- A phone line? No
- Instant messaging? No
- A new Google telephone? No
- A new wireless phone plan? No
- VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol)? No

It is totally free? Yes!

- Free long distance? Yes!
- Free phone number? Yes!
- Intelligent forwarding? Yes!
- More versatile voicemail? Yes!
- And a lot more free features? Yes!

Do you have to be at a computer to use Google Voice? No. Use Google Voice from any phone. Google Voice is free, but you need an invitation.

Just Google for 'Google Voice invitation.' When you receive your invitation, select a free phone number.

When someone calls your Google number, some or all of your phones can ring at once - your home phone, mobile phone, work phone, your cousin's phone where you are visiting. You can answer from any of them.

You can organize your contacts into groups and let some contacts ring all your phones, others ring certain phones, others go straight to voicemail, and still others get blocked.

You can personalize your voicemail greeting for groups or even individuals.

You can listen to your voicemail from any phone or listen online, or receive email or SMS (texting) notification. You can read voicemail transcripts visually online, and see each word underlined as it is spoken by your callers.

When you are online, you can just click a contact to call local or long distance. Or you can call from any phone by dialing extra digits. You can call any number without setting up a contact. All calls to the contiguous 48 states are free! Check out the rates for other locations

You can send, receive, and store SMS (texting) messages.

You can screen calls and record calls.

Similar to a mobile phone interface, you can review calls placed, received, missed, and so on.

Can you port your existing phone number? Officially, not quite yet. "We hope to offer this option in the near future." But a few people have been reported to have ported their numbers. News on this subject might change fast. To keep up with the latest stories, Google for "Google Voice port existing number."

There's even more to Google Voice! And it's free!

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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@prod-igy.net

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

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

	US/CANADA	FAMILY OF MEMBER	Dues	STUDENT	SENIOR CITIZEN (Over 65)
1 Year	\$25	\$10		\$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



<http://www.apcug.net>

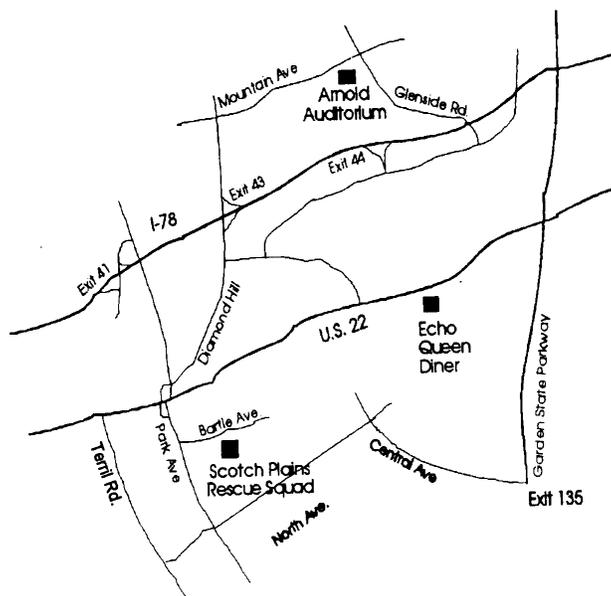
Radio and TV Programs

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. ☺

Editorial Bits

Patrick Libert (dacseditor (at) optimum.net), Danbury Computer Society, CT (www.dacs.org)

Computers and Healthcare

We have all probably had it “up to here” with the health care debate. Medicine is in the twenty-first century; medical record keeping in the nineteenth!

Pet peeve? When I visit my physician’s office, a new computer monitor adorns the exam room. Is it used to access my medical history during my visit? Not in the least! It’s much easier to leaf through a copious file folder, unable to find (once again) whether or not I had a recommended exam the previous year. Time wasted: several minutes which could have been better utilized to discuss current health topics.

In my opinion, the only in way in which we are going to accelerate this modernizing process is to use the populist approach. Tell your doctor(s), your hospital, your medical insurance company that you **demand** an immediate improvement. You will be pleasantly surprised at the power of a letter or of an email. I do it all the time; so can you!

New and Notable

Readability! (<http://lab.arc90.com/experiments/readability/>)

How cool is this! How many times have you opened the link to a web page and seen a gobbledygook of mixed messages and ads surrounding the article you really want to read? Install this free bookmarklet in your browser’s bookmark bar, click on the bookmark after you have chosen the page you want to see. Abracadabra! All the clutter on the page is removed.

Many of you may already be aware of this site (<http://www.komando.com/>). Kim Komando has a syndicated nationwide radio show and columnist. Her site has a multi-

tude of useable information for all computer users, PC or Mac. I have bookmarked many links found on her web site.

Lala (<http://www.lala.com/>)

After reading that Apple had bought lala, I joined their site and began to delve into their music library. According to some, Apple’s motivation for this investment was to have the capability of having members not only download their mp3 music but to have the option of assembling a music collection “in the cloud.” Great idea!

Lala has an extensive music library which one can download to one’s computer or, at a much lower cost, buy and add to one’s lala “cloud” collection. I used the free 30 song credits offered for joining to save many different songs in my new account. I can sign on to my account on the lala.com site, access my “collection” and play it through my computer. If networked to my home audio system, I can listen to this music in different rooms.

The cost? The price to download a song varies from \$0.79 to \$1.29. However, adding a song to the cloud collection: TEN CENTS! In my opinion, that makes it a very attractive way to compile a substantial collection of one’s favorite music.

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ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Tuesday, May 4

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, May 7

8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Paul Syers (paul.syers@acgnj.org).

Monday, May 10

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

Tuesday, May 11

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

Wednesday, May 12

7 P.M. - WebDev SIG, Evan Williams (ewilliams@collaboron.com)

Thursday, May 13

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

Friday, May 14

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

Monday, May 17

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

Tuesday, May 18

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

Friday, May 21

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

Thursday, May 27

8 P.M. - Hardware, Mike Reagan (hardware@acgnj.org)

Tuesday, June 1

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, June 4

8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Paul Syers (paul.syers@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.