

# Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

Volume 35, Number 9

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## Desktop Publishing Adventures

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This year, like last year, I produced July and August issues of this newsletter “all by myself”. These were actually the fifth and sixth newsletters that I created for ACGNJ (and the **seventh**, too, as I’ll explain in a bit); but they weren’t the **only** newsletters I ever created. Shall we reminisce? I got my first Personal Computer just about twenty-two years ago, in late 1988. (Some people have told me that I **completely** missed the **true** “era of the computer hobbyist”; but I disagree). A few months later, I suddenly became President of a car club when my predecessor resigned unexpectedly. One of my new duties was to write a monthly “From Your President” message for the club newsletter. Then, from 1990 to 1994, I edited (and often wrote) a monthly (more or less) newsletter for the Bayonne Train Club. Several (make that many) paragraphs down, I’ll be returning to these last two subjects in more detail. For now, though, let’s get back to my ACGNJ newsletters.

The first was sent out in 2008 on June 30<sup>th</sup>, as e-mail. In it, I wrote; “This June, we had two last-minute speaker changes. While it’s unlikely that such a coincidence will happen again, it revealed a flaw in our organization. We don’t have a way to quickly get information to our members, and to know for sure that they all got it. Up until six and a half years ago, our newsletter filled that function; but now it’s just a side-section of our web site. In this particular case, even the newsletter in its glory days wouldn’t have done the job. When the June issue was ‘put to bed’ on May 25, two very different events were scheduled. Then, we had two extremely last-minute lucky breaks. John Raff quickly

put up detailed notices about both meetings on the ACGNJ web site. However, there wasn’t any way to insure that our members read them. Fortunately, we had enough attendance for each meeting that we didn’t embarrass ourselves; but both these guys were really, really good! They deserved a larger audience. Furthermore, our full membership deserved the chance to see and hear them. This newsletter supplement is an experiment to solicit member reaction to an All-Member e-mail system”.

To give it an additional function, I listed the eleven ACGNJ meetings that **were**, in fact, scheduled to be held during July and August. Then, I “put some meat on its bones” by writing two short reviews of those two June meetings. Finally, I closed with a Member Survey. While we didn’t get as many replies as I’d hoped, we **did** get enough for a consensus. That resulted in the monthly “Announcements and Newsletter” e-mail messages that we’ve been sending out ever since. A few months later, I used Scribus (my free Desktop Publisher) to produce a PDF version for our archives. Although I named it End-of-June 2008 Supplement, called it Volume 33, Number 06S, and even wrote; “This isn’t a summer newsletter issue. Really, it’s not”, you’ll find it in the July 2008 slot of the Newsletter grid on the club website. There really wasn’t anyplace else to put it.

The second (more like the fourth, truthfully, because it fell **way** behind schedule) was named End-of-Year 2008 Supplement and called Volume 33, Number 10S. Its primary reason for existence was the historic preservation of the

*Continued on page 3*



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### In This Issue

DealsGuy for August, <i>Bob Click</i> . . . . .	7	Next Hope Conference 2010, <i>Cass &amp; Ruth Lewart</i> . . . . .	9
DealsGuy for September, <i>Bob Click</i> . . . . .	11	Internet Shopping — One of the Best, <i>Ron Hirsch</i> . . . . .	12
Customizing Word 2007, <i>Nancy DeMarte</i> . . . . .	14	Broadsides, <i>Ron Broadhurst</i> . . . . .	15
SIG News . . . . .	12	Microsoft Security Essentials, <i>Lynn Page</i> . . . . .	17
Guru Corner . . . . .	14	What are RSS Feeds?, <i>Constance Brown</i> . . . . .	20

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# ACGNJ News

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

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**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.

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December 2001 versions of the ACGNJ Constitution and By-Laws (and, as it turned out, the December 2008 By-Laws as well). Unlike previous amendments, they had never been printed in the newsletter; just posted on the club website. Once newly adopted revisions were put up in their place, they would have vanished forever. Now, they won't. If (for some currently unknowable reason) somebody in the future should need them, they'll be available. Its secondary reason for existence was to demonstrate an experimental "two column/half page" layout. However, due to circumstances beyond our control, only **two** of its twenty pages (3 and 8) actually followed that format. The rest just naturally fell into a "full page/two column/side-by-side" format instead. So the experiment was extended into the July and August 2009 issues as well. For "meat", I added a few curiosities that the 2008 By-Laws Revision Committee had turned up, plus an article about the Award Certificates that we handed out at the December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Annual Business Meeting. That last contained **twelve** illustrations, and was much too complicated for me to have submitted as a regular newsletter article. The End-of-Year 2008 Supplement was never given a slot on our website's newsletter grid. However, it **was** included on our 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Newsletter Collection CD (which is accessible through our sister TCF website). So it can be found at:

[http://www.tcf-nj.org/acgnj/nl/2000\\_09/2008\\_10S.PDF](http://www.tcf-nj.org/acgnj/nl/2000_09/2008_10S.PDF)

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and submitted an article, which I included in the July issue. There, I also wrote a four page article titled *December 2009 Award Certificates*, which contained ten illustrations. (Thus continuing my tradition of being too complicated to use as a regular article). In August, I wrote *Forgotten Secrets From The Ancient Past*, a **ten** page article containing **nineteen** illustrations. (The most complicated yet). We'll be taking a closer look at this article soon; but first, what about that **seventh** newsletter?

As I've said before, once I've gone to the trouble of typing something into the computer, I **really** hate not using it somehow. I never actually got started on the July issue using Ventura Publisher, so I didn't lose anything there; but I **did** get more than halfway through page 4 of the August issue before being forced to stop. Rather than just throwing that work away, I decided to save it as a curiosity. So I tweaked and annotated its contents to explain my actions. Then I used Ventura to produce a newsletter containing just those first four pages, which I identified as "Volume 35, Number 08S, Rejected First Version of August 2010". I plan to include it under the name 2010\_08S.PDF on our next CD. Because it won't fit into the newsletter grid on our website, it might not be accessible on the Internet until that next CD gets posted. (Probably **after** next year's TCF).

Actually (as I reported in *About This Issue* on page 3 of the regular August 2010 newsletter), I was also able to transfer

My third and fourth newsletters (July and August 2009) had **three** reasons for existence. First, the historic preservation of the December 2008 version of the ACGNJ Constitution (July) and the May 2009 version of the ACGNJ By-Laws (August). Second, the publication of the summer schedule. Third, more extensive testing of the aforementioned "two column/half page" layout design. (It worked out so well that we've been using a version of it ever since). As "meat", I added to the July issue a five page article describing some (**not** all) of the "hoops" our By-Laws Revision Committee had to jump through, and I added a half-page article about Linux and a three page article about Fonts to the August issue. (That last contained **seventeen** illustrations, and was also much too complicated for me to have ever submitted as a regular newsletter article).

Now we come to my fifth and sixth newsletters. For the first time, this year's summer issues had only one reason for existence; to publicize the summer schedule. In an attempt to create a valid second purpose, I decided to produce them using Ventura Publisher instead of Scribus (my free Desktop Publisher, which has hyperlink problems that its authors seem determined **not** to fix). Unfortunately, I couldn't do it. (For further details, see the *About This Issue* sections in each of those July and August 2010 issues). So that just left publishing my own stuff. Until, that is, David McRitchie (the Chairman of our Firefox Special Interest Group) wrote

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a small part of my earlier Ventura work into the new Scribus version. Slightly more than half of that same page 3, in fact. In theory, Ventura can export single pages as EPS (Encapsulated PostScript) files, and Scribus can import such files. In practice, pages 1 and 2 **didn't** work, but page 3 **did**. So both headings (*Brief SIG Information* and *About This Issue*), plus the three footer entries at the bottom (*August 2010*, *ACGNJ News* and *Page 3*) and the two text blocks occupying the top half of page 3 were really created by Ventura. Only the two text blocks in the bottom half were created by Scribus. As it turned out, this whole idea was a **mistake**. I didn't properly understand the nature of EPS files. I thought that, like PDF files, they had both graphic and text elements. However, this particular EPS file came in as a pure image. Thus, unlike all our other newsletters since July of 1998, words from the top half of page 3 can **not** be copied as text and then pasted directly into another text document. The top of that page is now an image **only**. I thought it would be fun to create a hybrid Ventura/Scribus page; but as a result, we lost functionality. That's a no-no.

Now we come to *Forgotten Secrets From The Ancient Past*. It's about my first forays into Desktop Publishing, during the good old DOS days, concentrating on the computer created illustrations that I made and used back then. It's in our regular August 2010 newsletter, which I produced using

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*Continued on page 4*

Scribus. Because of my time-consuming and ultimately futile detour into Ventura, I didn't actually start writing *Forgotten Secrets* until July 29<sup>th</sup>, **way** behind schedule. In my rush to complete it, I wasn't as meticulous as usual, and I left out a few things. For instance, I didn't really explain "up front" that the article's main focus would be about images. I just dived right in; and I didn't explicitly direct attention to my various little trains. I was very proud of them. Given **less** than a quarter inch of height, I still managed to produce distinct and recognizable profiles. (Though sometimes the photocopying process smeared them too much). Also, I didn't explain why some of the newsletter pages that I scanned in had a label with my name on it. (That was so, as I was stapling together each month's "batch", I'd know which copy was mine). Obviously, I didn't put a stamp on my own copy. In fact, I didn't put stamps on the copies going to a half dozen or so members who lived within a few blocks of my house. Those I hand-delivered, to save money. In addition (subtraction?), I accidentally left out a description of the **three** different DOS image programs that I used, and the different image formats that each supported.

Back then, most DOS image programs could handle only one file type, for both input and output. Many manufacturers included conversion programs to change their particular format into "foreign" formats. Usually, they provided several converters, since each would only work with one other

file type. My hand scanner came with a very good image editor, which used TIF files (or TIFF, for Tagged Image File Format). It edited images nicely, in color or black and white; but its DOS printer driver (at least the one that matched the printer I had then) was **really** horrible. To print in color (for badges, etc.), I had to convert my images into the PCX (Personal Computer eXchange) format used by PC Paintbrush, my second image editor. PC Paintbrush had an excellent reputation, but I hardly ever used it to edit files. (I was quite happy with my TIF editor). However, its DOS printer driver was excellent, too. (Again, at least the one that matched my printer). I used it for **all** of my color printing. When WordStar was upgraded to include images, the product itself wasn't changed all that much. Instead, if it needed to print a graphic, WordStar launched a new add-on program to perform that function. Of course, that new program could only work with its own proprietary image file type, as well. One of the first batch files I wrote could run one of those image converter programs inside a "For" loop, enabling it to process multiple files of the same format using the DOS "wild card" characters (\* and ?). I made four versions, each controlling a different file converter program: TIF to and from PCX, and TIF to and from WordStar's format. They served me well for years.

Note that I **didn't** tell you the extension used by WordStar's image file format. That's because, when WordStar for DOS vanished into the mists of history, those

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initials went "up for grabs". Currently, there are three different programs using them in various ways; and **not one** of them seems to trace its ancestry back to WordStar's add-on program (whose name, you'll notice, I didn't give you either). Rather than risk spreading false or misleading information, I decided to just hush everything up. (Hopefully, this tactic will work better for me than it did for certain politicians, **also** unnamed).

After I got into DOS Desktop Publishing, I **still** used WordStar as my primary text editor. Then, when everything had been edited to my satisfaction, I imported those WordStar files into my publisher. (Even today, Scribus advises you to do as much of your editing as possible in a word processor; and to only import your text "at the last minute"). Now, WordStar was quite happy to use the DOC extension for its files; but it was smart enough to recognize which files were written in its own internal format, and which weren't. Therefore it could, in fact, mark its files with **any** extension at all, and not experience problems of any kind. So I used date specific extensions as I wrote or transcribed my train club articles. For instance, 923 would be the code for March 1992, and 93C would be the code for December 1993. (C is 12 in hexadecimal notation). Thus, I could set my Desktop Publisher's input filter to \*.92A, for instance, and it would display **only** those files written specifically for the October 1992 issue. Neat, huh?

In *Forgotten Secrets*, I **did** mention some of the physical limitations of my hand scanner, but I'll repeat them here. It could scan in most drawings, but it couldn't do photographs, or **very** small image details. For them, I had to leave appropriately sized blank spaces in my computer files. Then, after I made my printouts, I had to glue or tape separately produced photocopies into those blank spaces on my printed pages. A **lot** of my pages contained paste-ups of one form or another.

That brings us to the illustrations used in *Forgotten Secrets*. Ten of them were old newsletter pages that contained paste-ups. I scanned them in using my relatively new full page scanner, and then cropped them to size using the GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program). Some of them were yellow with age, and the scanner picked that up. I adjusted those colors as best I could. Unfortunately, it didn't occur to me at the time that I could have avoided this problem almost entirely if I'd just set all but one of those images to monochrome (black and white). The **only** time I **ever** used color in one of my Bayonne Train Club newsletters was on the December 1990 cover (scanned into page 6 of the August issue). There, I separately hand colored each and every copy, making the two lights on the "crossbuck" signal red, and the single light on the "bullseye" signal green.

The other nine illustrations in *Forgotten Secrets* were TIF files that I'd originally created years ago. Eight were for my

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train club, and one was for my car club. I found them on a CD (volume label OLDTECH\_C\_D) that I made not long after I got my first CD Writer (in 1997). Often, I “self-document” by writing verbose ReadMe files, and this CD did, in fact, have a README.TXT file; but it wasn’t much help. It only said that a directory named C contained 7,799 files in 232 subdirectories, and that a directory named D contained 5,986 files in 248 subdirectories. Almost from the beginning, I adopted the policy of **not** storing my data files on the C: drive. So I looked under the D directory first. There, in a subdirectory named TIFFFILES, I found those old files; but not my **very first** image. For that, I had to make do with just giving a description (near the end of the second paragraph on the first page of *Forgotten Secrets*).

Unfortunately, some of the files on that CD were unreadable, including one named PRESHEAD.TIF. That name made me suspect that it contained a copy of my first image; but I couldn’t access it to make sure. Its size was 3.36 KB, and its date was listed as December 18, 1989. Now, if that file was, in fact, what I thought it was, that date had to be **wrong**; and probably the size, too. (It **should** have been dated February or March 1989 at the latest; and most of the other files in that subdirectory were in the 10 to 20 KB range. A few were **much** bigger). Fortunately, neither of those circumstances refuted my theory. That’s because a bad copy operation can leave two obvious signs: the size can come out too small, and the time and date can be

changed to the **current** time and date. This file was definitely corrupted. So if it had been damaged somehow on December 18, 1989, **both** of those listings could actually still be “accurate”. Unfortunately again, there didn’t seem to be anything more that I could do to find out.

Working under Linux (as is my preference), I’d double-clicked on that filename. That launched Eye of Gnome, Ubuntu’s default viewer for TIF files. In its window, it displayed a gray checkerboard pattern. (That **wasn’t** what it saw as the file’s content; but rather its default image for **any** unreadable file). Then, still in Linux, I tried the GIMP. It displayed a blank white screen. (Again, that’s not what it really saw. Apparently, that’s the GIMP’s default). I couldn’t think of anything else to do, so that’s how I left it when I published the August issue; and it might have stayed that way, except for a lucky break.

As I was putting together my pencil notes for this article, I realized that I hadn’t written down the size and date values for PRESHEAD.TIF. At that moment, my Linux computer was turned off, but my temporary Windows 98 SE system just happened to be on. (I’d been playing Solitaire). So I stuck the CD into that machine, and got the information I needed. Then, on a whim, I double-clicked on that filename; and I got an image! Corel Photo-Paint, which Ventura Publisher had automatically added to my installation, **could** read that file. Imagine that. A twelve year old Windows program could do something that two up to the

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minute, state of the art Linux programs couldn’t. How embarrassing.

Anyway, what I saw was a large black screen, with a small white “From Your President.” letterhead in the upper left hand corner. To the right and below it was a relatively enormous amount of dead black space. How negative. However, that white letterhead seemed to be perfectly legible; and (just to the right of “President:”) it did, indeed, contain a copy of the **very first** computer image that I ever created. (Well, modified from a clip art image, anyway). Obviously, that file contained defective color and size information; but its bitmap information seemed to be intact. Now that I’d accessed it, maybe I could fix it and copy my image out. So I tried to use “Save as” to write that file to my local hard disk. That’s when I ran into something weird.

Normally, Corel Photo-Paint listed about two dozen image file formats that it could work with (many of which I’d never seen or heard of before); but this time, it only gave me **two** choices: CPT (its own proprietary format) or PSD (the Adobe Photoshop format). I don’t know if this was a feature (applying some kind of esoteric internal logic to determine which output options would be available for each particular file) or a bug (random wackiness). Luckily, I happened to know that the GIMP reads PSD, so that’s the file type I chose.

I named my new file BOBCOMP0.PSD. (Because I’m a hidebound, reactionary old fogey, I still use DOS ISO9660 8.3 filenames whenever I can. Usually, I would have used the number one as my eighth character; but when something odd is going on, I use a zero instead. This file certainly qualified as “odd”). I was very surprised by this file’s size: **1,113** KB. That’s **331 times** bigger than its source, the 3.36 KB PRESHEAD.TIF. I transferred BOBCOMP0.PSD from my experimental Windows 98 SE computer to my main Linux computer, opened it with the GIMP, and **immediately** re-saved it as BOBCOMP1.GIF. That file’s size was 2.2 KB, **506 times smaller** than BOBCOMP0.PSD, and about a third smaller than the original PRESHEAD.TIF. Wow! Obviously, the inflated size of that PSD file was some kind of corruption-induced anomaly, hopefully now repaired.

You might ask, though, what made me choose GIF as my new output file format? GIF files (Graphics Interchange Format, pioneered by CompuServe in 1987) are quite small, and they feature lossless compression. They also support only 256 colors; but in this case, there’s just black and white, so who cares? Ultimately, however, I chose GIF as an experiment. Lately, we’ve been having “blur” problems with images in Ventura Publisher. From my admittedly limited Ventura experience during this past August, I’ve formed the theory that GIF files, being the smallest of all the available file types (and thus having the

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least “overhead”), will blur the least, too. This restoration of my very first custom modified image is just the beginning of a series of experiments to test this theory.

Speaking of restorations, lets continue with this one. I closed and exited the GIMP, then restarted the GIMP again and reopened BOBCOMP1.GIF. From the “Colors” menu, I used “Value Invert” to switch my image to black printing on a white background. After that, I immediately re-saved my image again as BOBCOMP2.GIF. (As you might expect, another 2.2 KB file). Then, I closed and exited the GIMP. This follows a “modify/preserve” sequence that I often use, although in this case I was being particularly picky. Do you get what I did? It’s a two stage process. First stage: After each change, I saved the file under a different, numerically sequenced filename. That way I had each of my steps preserved. If, at some point, things went wrong, I could easily go back and resume at whatever step was necessary. Second stage: Between each step, I closed and then restarted the GIMP. This stage was probably unnecessary, but it allowed me to be **absolutely** sure that the GIMP didn’t “skip around” a step by staying loaded and holding something in memory rather than saving everything to a new file each time. (I’m not going to keep retyping it, but realize that I **did** repeat this second stage between each of the steps I’ll be describing below). I use a less rigorous version of this sequence when I’m writing. When I make a significant change, especially when it involves deleting paragraphs, I’ll “freeze” the current version and add one to my filename be-

fore I continue working. This article I’m writing right now is unusual in that it’s almost finished and my file is still named DTP\_ADV1.ODT. Normally, I’ve “gone up” several “generations” by this point; but I digress. Let’s get back to the restoration.

I re-opened BOBCOMP2.GIF and took some measurements by putting a plastic ruler up against my monitor. I found the on-screen width of the “letterhead” to be 4.375 inches. Assuming that my original letterhead would have used left and right margins somewhere around  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide, that meant that my “letterhead” itself would have been from 7 to 7.5 inches wide. By calculating the ratios of 7 and 7.5 to 4.375, and then multiplying the measured on-screen height and width of my entire image by each of them, I determined that the “real” size of my entire image was from 6.8 to 7.6 inches high and from 12 to 12.9 inches wide. Repeating those calculations for just my first image (which was, after all, the only part of the entire image that I really wanted to keep), I determined that its “real” size was from 1.8 to 1.93 inches high and from 2 to 2.14 inches wide. Rounding those figures a bit, I “regularized” that size to 2 inches high and 2  $\frac{1}{8}$  inches wide. Then, finally, I actually did something to the image: I cropped it. Starting from the top right, I set the boundaries of my crop rectangle to include the entire image height, but only 60 % of its width. That retained my first image, but cut off **most** of the rest of the letterhead. It also retained a **whole lot** of empty white space below and to the right of my first image.

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(That 60 % was just a guess, but as you’ll see in a bit, it was a **good** guess). After that, I immediately saved my image again as BOBCOMP3.GIF (a 1.8 KB file).

I re-opened BOBCOMP3.GIF, erased what was left of the “From Your President:” part of the letterhead, and then immediately saved my image yet again as BOBCOMP4.GIF (also a 1.8 KB file). Next, I re-opened BOBCOMP4.GIF and cropped it as closely as possible to my first image, thus getting **rid** of all that extra white space. Then, I immediately saved my image once more as BOBCOMP5.GIF (a 0.96 KB file); and that’s it. It’s **not** exactly my original file, but it’s as close as we’re ever likely to get. (Too bad I didn’t discover this last month. Then I could have included it in *Forgotten Secrets From The Ancient Past*; but then again, if I’d used it there, I would have had to come up with something else to use here). So, at last, here’s BOBCOMP5.GIF in all its tiny glory:



Now, I’m **not** claiming that it’s great art. It’s only a piece of low resolution clip art; but it was my **first**. Its horizontal and vertical lines look OK, but its diagonal lines are jagged “stair steps”. If enlarged to half-page column size (3.7 inches wide), those diagonal lines become just **too** glaring; but it was intended to be a small image in the top right hand corner of a letterhead. **There**, it worked. I only made two changes: the letters on the computer screen and the beard on the guy’s face. I didn’t touch his hairline because I thought it already looked like mine (as it was then). To my eye, his expression came out wry and whimsical. As it turned out, I only used this image for a few months. As soon as I got my hand scanner, I scanned in an illustration of my own car, and made a new “From Your President” letterhead featuring that image instead. I didn’t completely abandon my guy, though. I cut off his head and stuck it inside my car. (Cue the eerie violin music from *Psycho*). You can see that image on page 5 of the August 2010 issue.

At this point, I’d recovered my image, but I wasn’t **quite** finished yet. The GIMP still had a trick up its sleeve, and I wanted to try it. Under its “Tools” menu, the GIMP lists a “Transform Tools” sub-menu; and under that, it lists “Scale”. That Scale tool can change the size of an image. Its default settings measure height and width in pixels, and adjust them separately; but it can be reset to measure them in percentages, and to adjust them simultaneously. However, it

*Continued on page 7*

has a limitation. It can only expand into space that **already exists** inside the image. Try to go beyond that, and you get cut off. Earlier, you may have wondered why I left a whole bunch of white space in one step, only to crop it all out at the end. This was why. So I re-opened BOBCOMP4.GIF (the last file with the extra space), and expanded it by 370 percent. That completely filled the available height, and left a tiny bit of unfilled width (which I easily cropped out). When I first cropped my entire image (three paragraphs above), I guessed at 60 % for the width. For a round number, that was pretty much spot on. Any less, and I might have been cut off before I could fill my available height. I saved this image as BOBCOMP6.GIF (a 5.4 KB file). Unfortunately, this didn't help any. Although it's **5.6 times** bigger, BOBCOMP6.GIF looks **exactly** the same as BOBCOMP5.GIF (to my eye, anyway). The lines in BOBCOMP6.GIF may contain a whole lot more dots, but they're no less jagged than the lines in BOBCOMP5.GIF. I guess a low resolution image trumps the Scale tool. I don't like ending on a downer, so we'll close with a classic question/answer joke: How many Psychiatrists does it take to

change a light bulb? Only one, but the light bulb has to really **want** to change.

See you next month. ☹



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## From The DealsGuy for August

*Bob (The Cheapskate) Click (bobclick at bellsouth dot net), Greater Orlando Computer Users Group*

### \*Computer Repair Feedback

Last month I mentioned that one of my computer problems was caused by "Online Armor." I found I wasn't the only one who had problems with that firewall. In my feedback, two people said it interfered with the installation of certain MS updates to their OS. I also remembered having that problem, but at that time, I thought I had accidentally created a firewall rule that caused the problem when installing the MS updates. Some repeatedly failed to install, no matter what I did.

The answer was suggested at our Tech SIG. I eventually got into the habit of shutting down my firewall, and also Spybot (which sometimes caused update installations to fail), so the updates would install correctly, but a few Office updates still failed to install so it was still a problem at times. Thanks for the feedback.

### \*Minor Problem, Though

I've found that since using the Reimage Repair, two of my Office programs need to be reinstalled. I'm not sure what happened, but when I try to start them, they say "installing," but nothing happens. I'll work on that when I get time.

### \*Not Much Work Lately

We worked the Hearth, Patio, and Barbeque show [bvnts.com/event/194492-hpbexpo-hearth-patio-and-barbecue-expo](http://bvnts.com/event/194492-hpbexpo-hearth-patio-and-barbecue-expo) that had plenty of home barbeque products, but also plenty of fireplace displays that looked fascinating. The electric

ones looked like they had beautiful flames and fooled many who thought they used gas. Some of the cooking products were filled with specially treated glass beads that held the heat very well. I didn't see any of those cooking food near my post, but there was food being cooked all over the show and I didn't get away from my post much.

Due to health problems, we have not been working shows lately, and we are missing some good ones. We missed the diabetes show, which is usually an interesting one. Right now, both my wife and I have a serious bacterial infection that the doctor said was highly contagious so we have quarantined ourselves for now. It's a problem getting old for some of us, but the alternative to getting old really sucks.

### \*Even Large User Groups are Feeling the Pinch

I heard from the editor of a user group that used to consistently have many members, and had a very impressive newsletter with its articles written mostly by their members. He asked about my health, and during our messages, he indicated that in spite of being the many-member group it had been for several years, and offering a monthly newsletter that looked like a magazine on a newsstand, their membership is at an all time low, but they are still holding together. They also went to a PDF newsletter several years ago and they still have great authors within their own group. I just can't understand people giving up the kind of help and camaraderie a user group offers.

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### \*No Luck With Vendor Announcements

I received three vendor product announcements for new products with user group member discounts, but none of the contacts replied to my e-mails asking for ordering instructions for my readers. Why bother announcing the products if we can't order them? That problem is quite common any more. I had another item that I've had around for a while and I asked if I could get a special offer for my readers these days. The guy said he would set things up in a couple of days, but so far, I'm still waiting. However, I have not given up on him yet and I liked the product, which is learning courses for software.

Under the circumstances, I looked up some items that I've been saving for future use and hopefully you'll find them interesting. Most of them were found in user group newsletters.

### \*Worried About Your Laptop Getting Stolen?

You always stand the chance of your laptop getting stolen when you're carrying it with you, because the worst can always happen. Of course, all your personal information goes with it if that happens, but if you have the data encrypted, that part won't matter, so you simply purchase a new laptop and use your backup to bring it up to date. However, Prey Project can be a big help if you prepared yourself with it ahead of time <http://www.preyproject.com>. If you decided to get

set up with Prey Project to protect yourself in the event a theft, simply go to their Web site and report the theft. Prey will start attempting to connect your computer to a network so it can start sending back silent reports; and maybe even pictures if your laptop also has a camera. It will also immediately start sending back reports, and the current IP address along with reports on what the user is doing. It's a small program so it won't take much to install it.

The product is free, but they do accept donations. I read about this item in the Jan. 2010 Monitor, an outstanding newsletter of The Rochester Computer Society, put together by the dedicated Editor, Sally Springett <http://www.rcsi.org>. No author was listed for this item. I never fail to read her newsletter from cover to cover.

### \*Another Daily Deal

"GoingToday" has the same "one daily item for sale for 24-hours" policy as other daily sale sites I've given you and you never know what it might be until they offer it, but this site <http://www.goingtoday.com> is said to cater more to musicians and music lovers. I only browse it occasionally and the deals I have mostly seen are for quality sound equipment, although the prices were not bad. In my younger days, I was also a musician, but those days are long gone so it won't work for me when they offer musical instruments, but it's fun to check it occasionally.

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### \*Help Troubleshooting Your Computer Problem

This resource has good recommendations and seems to be a good one. If you prefer to troubleshoot your own computer when a problem arises, sometimes the fix is elusive and you still need help. I'm told this site has helped many with their problems, but it is by e-mail only so you will need to send a good description of your problem. Your help may come from anyplace in the world, but the more help, the better when a solution is needed. <http://www.protonic.com/> is the URL for your help and a little research will tell you that it is well rated by some respected services.

Martin Kessler sent this to me some time ago, but I lost it and ran across it recently, however, the e-mail address I have for Martin is no longer good. I hope he is still active in his user group.

### \*Help With Updates

Many who subscribe to the Windows Secrets newsletter by Brian Livingston may already know about Secunia, because he recommended it some time ago, but it is a good service so I am including it here. I also found this in MUG Monitor (Jan 2010), newsletter of Macon Users Group. Liz Russel writes an excellent monthly article called tech talk [maconusersgroup.org](http://maconusersgroup.org) and included Secunia in that column.

They have a free program you can use to scan your computer for needed updates. It is called Secunia Software Inspector [http://www.secunia.com/vulnerability\\_scanning](http://www.secunia.com/vulnerability_scanning). If you are a home user, you can have your computer scanned

online or you can scan your entire network with the Corporate Software Inspector. If something on your computer needs an update, Secunia will go out and get it for you on its own. Not everyone favors Secunia though, so look it over carefully before you try it.

### \*How Do You Replace Your Favorite Utilities?

Ninite will help you do that by letting you choose from all your favorites and will also install them for you. If there are items you'd rather not have, Ninite will leave them out. Get it at <http://ninite.com>. I read about it in Bits of Bytes, the newsletter of Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, <http://ppcompas.apcug.org> and no author was listed. You can find out more by visiting the Ninite Web site. Bits of Bytes is a very interesting newsletter. It's not lengthy, but every page is fascinating and I'm lucky to receive it.

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>. ☺

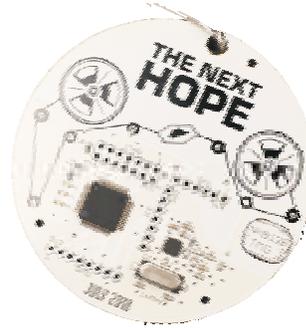
# The Next HOPE Conference 2010

Cass & Ruth Lewart, ACGNJ

HOPE (Hackers On Planet Earth) is a conference series sponsored by the hacker magazine “2600: The Hacker Quarterly” (<http://www.2600.com/>) The term *computer hacker* is a contentious term that means different things to different people, so before we get started, let’s come to grips with several Wiki definitions that seem to be on target: (1) the hacker (or cracker) who accesses a computer system by circumventing its security system; (2) the hacker who shares an anti-authoritarian approach to software development now associated with the free software movement; (3) the hacker (hobbyist) who makes innovative customizations or combinations of retail electronic and computer equipment. We joined the 3,000 or so hackers came from all over the world to participate in this biennial event in NYC on July 16 through 18 at the Pennsylvania Hotel, and as always, we enjoyed our time at HOPE, and tried to fit in as much as we could. Next time, we’ll reserve a room at the Hotel Pennsylvania – provided that plans to raze this beautiful hotel are quashed – so that we can experience all three days and nights of happenings.

We listened to many talks and participated in some activities, but didn’t get to do it all – no lockpicking, no riding on the 2-wheeled Segway, no Social Engineering. But our first story (we had 3<sup>rd</sup> row seats) quickly became national news, and – for the first time – Cass gave a well-attended talk (roughly 300 geeks) on *Hacking Your GPS*, describing

little-known technical aspects of the system. As a participant, he got an electronic badge with a built-in RF transmitter.



Participate Via Audio. We can’t cover everything of interest, so advise you to go to the HOPE website, <http://thenexthope.org>, for a link to the complete schedule and free audio downloads of all the talks. DVDs of the video for most talks can be ordered.

**Wikileaks Story.** As often happens at HOPE, there was an element of high drama this time as well. The key players in this drama were: (1) Julian Assange, founder of Wikileaks, (2) alleged leaker, army intelligence analyst Bradley Manning, and (3) hacker (posing as journalist) Adrian

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Lamo. Wikileaks recently received from Manning and published a video, now referred to as “Collateral Murder,” taken from the cockpit of an army helicopter in Baghdad. A number of civilians, including two Reuters reporters, were killed after being mistaken for insurgents. That would have been the end of the story, as Wikileaks does not divulge its sources, except that Manning made the mistake of telling hacker Adrian Lamo about sending 250,000 thousand classified documents to Wikileaks, and Lamo, for unknown reasons, decided to go public. The result was that Manning was held by the army in Kuwait, and that Wikileaks and Assange are under fire. At the start of the convention on Friday several federal agents showed up and asked to be admitted. As they could not produce a warrant they were asked to pay the admission fee of \$100 per person, which they did! Fast forward a few days...

**Saturday Keynote.** The scheduled keynote speech was to be given by Julian Assange, the main force behind the whistleblower site, [wikileaks.org](http://wikileaks.org). But when it was time for the speech, there was considerable excitement in the room – would Assange be there to deliver the address? We were ready for confrontation. However, instead of Assange, another Wikileaks representative, Jake Applebaum, stepped up to the podium. He removed the concealing hood from his sweatshirt and proceeded to give an impassioned speech.

Applebaum defended the actions of Wikileaks, stating that sources are anonymous, their revelations are uncensorable, and their actions are legal. “The goal is justice, and the method is transparency.” He went on to give several examples of Wiki publications (e.g., disclosure of secret bank deals in Iceland and conditions at Guantanamo) that were instrumental in exposing serious injustices. His speech was followed by the video.

After the video, fearing arrest, Applebaum covered his face, and in the blink of an eye was replaced by his double. Applebaum left unrecognized via a freight elevator while his double, with his face covered, followed by press and federal agents, slowly left the stage.

**Cybercrime.** Several talks given by security experts described the criminal enterprises trying to access credit card and banking information. For example, a group of expert programmers located in Eastern Europe sells a program called ZEUS for around \$500 per copy. The program features a GUI interface, is copy protected, and is licensed for use on a single computer. After purchase, the buyer can instruct the program to install a rootkit (a virus imbedded in your operating system) in each of several hundred computers. A report is generated showing the number of infected computers. People giving the talks stated that these rootkits are not detected by most antivirus programs. Every 30

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minutes, the infected computers send an encoded list of all forms (e.g., banking and credit card transactions) to the program owner. The owner can then use this information or sell it to wholesalers. Advice given: check your bank and credit card statements.

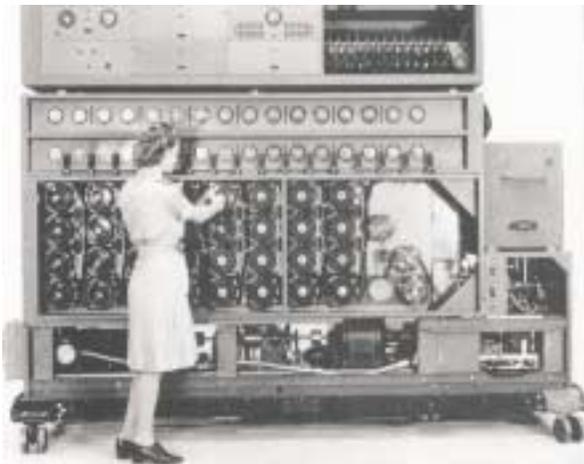
In the same vein, Dr. Thomas J. Holt, assistant professor at Michigan State University, reported about his research on the economics of cybercrime. Cyber criminals have been adopting practices of legitimate businesses by using splashy advertising, money back guarantees (e.g., replacement of invalid credit card numbers with new ones), technical support and relations based on honor and trust. Most of this “business” originates in Eastern Europe, though prices are quoted in US\$. An average price for a valid credit card or for bank account information is \$10, and the cost of sending 1,000,000 spam emails is \$100 with discounts for repeat customers. Considering an average loss of over \$200 for a successful fraud with a compromised credit card, and a “Nigerian” scam loss of over \$1000, there is much money to be made by cyber criminals.

**Geo-Tagging.** Paul V, a grad student from Toronto, introduced the innocents among us to the practice of geo-tagging. Geo-tagging is the process of adding geographical ID metadata, such as GPS coordinates, to various media. If you’re not addicted to social networking, you may be oblivious to the kind of information users willingly share with the World. While individual tweets may be harmless,

once aggregated, they can be used to build a profile of the user. Twitter, for example, allows each tweet to be tagged with the GPS location of the user. So it’s not too much of a stretch to imagine how this information can be used. A tool that aggregates tweets and helps visualize and classify where people are tweeting from was demonstrated, and the implications discussed.

American Bombe. Shalom Silbermintz, a self-proclaimed hacker who earns his living as a computer consultant, though not a historian, gave us a fascinating account of the events leading up to and including the US success in shattering the Enigma Code. The German Enigma, a military machine with an astronomical number of code combinations to encrypt and decrypt secret messages, was patented in 1928. The Poles were the first to crack the Enigma codes, but before the war started, handed the work over to the Brits and the French. You’ve probably heard about mathematician Alan Turing’s work at Bletchley Park designing the British Bombe (The *bombe* – pronounced ‘bomb’ – was an electromechanical device used by British cryptographers to help decrypt German Enigma codes during World War II). But when the Germans enhanced the Enigma machine by adding extra rotors, the Brits turned to the Americans, who went on to design the American Bombe, the first digital computer ever built. The Germans didn’t think their code could be cracked, but the American electronically-enhanced machine cracked the code in May 1943. The history of the

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**The American Bombe**

American effort was immortalized in the book, *The Secret in Building 26*. The talk drew Ruth’s interest because years later she worked in a lab at Whippany with TRADIC, the first *transistorized* digital computer.

**CV Dazzle.** Adam Harvey is a designer and technologist who researches and develops new uses for (and against) technology. Automated face detection/recognition systems are widely used to rapidly identify faces in a crowd, as captured by TV cameras. Harvey, as part of his Master’s thesis last year, studied these efforts, and used this knowledge to

design a system that camouflages face detection – i.e., it’s a face deception device. CV (Computer Vision) Dazzle is based on the original Dazzle camouflage used to protect ships from subs in WWI. Interestingly, Steve Rambam, another HOPE speaker on “Privacy is Dead, Get Over It,” disputed the ability to camouflage face detection.

**Hacking Your GPS.** Cass’ talk was first thing Sunday morning. As Robert Steele, billed as “a recovering spy and first intelligence officer of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” was the last speaker the night before (starting at 11:59 pm!), and spoke for seven hours straight, we were surprised to have anyone in the audience. So we were happy with the estimate of 300. Ruth’s fears about AV problems weren’t realized, thanks to a very competent support staff (all volunteers) – the room had a huge projection screen, a large operator console, microphones, and everything else you might want. As the gremlins seem to have absconded with Cass’ audio and video, we can (for the time being) only provide the slide show on request. Several audience members told Cass how much they enjoyed his talk, which was geared to the technical audience. The particular item that elicited the most interest was Cass’ expensive compass – way overkill for anyone using a compass only for GPS! Our little video of Homer Simpson’s experience with a GPS was appreciated. A happy result, considering how much effort our daughter and Ruth put in to locating the segment, downloading free

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demo software (we could use that because the video was under two minutes), and then saving the streamed video.

Finale. The show didn't end for us when we crossed the street from the Hotel Pennsylvania to Penn Station, as

we've been downloading and enjoying the audio talks ever since. You can do the same, by clicking on [thenexthope.org](http://thenexthope.org). And two years from now, consider participating in person – it's worth the cost! ☺

## **From The DealsGuy For September**

**Bob (The Cheapskate) Click (bobclick at bellsouth dot net), Greater Orlando Computer Users Group**

I finally finished my article about creating trade shows and should have it posted on my Web site about the middle of August. It's lengthy, but you may find it interesting.

I'm not a very ambitious person so I often do things the hard way until I finally give in and see about doing, at least something, easier. One example is with my computer's cursor, which I often lose on the page, and have to find it. I always use a large arrowhead cursor, which works fairly well for me, but a printed page makes the cursor harder to follow because it changes into a thin I-beam. After fumbling for the cursor that way for a few years, I was finally prompted by a newsletter article to check in the Control Panel > Mouse, and the pointer options tab where I found a box to check to show the location of the pointer with a series of concentric circles emanating from the cursor when pressing Ctrl. It was so simple to find and how stupid of me not to have looked into that long ago, and it only took me about a minute to do it. I hope you aren't that lazy. I've mentioned it to a couple of other people and they said they

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then plugging it in, with no success. I even tried different USB plugs on the computer. I had used it the night before as an E drive simply to retrieve a file, but how would it get stuck on being an E drive? I had no idea, but needed help. Maybe I needed to juggle my flash drives somehow, but I was stumped. I looked everywhere I could think of for instructions to try changing the setting of the drive's letter, and the computer's help was a lost cause for me. I knew "changing drive letters" was possible because I used it to establish my DVD drive letter when I originally set up this computer.

I called several friends who didn't have the answer, and finally called a friend in another state who I knew would have the answer if he was home. He thought my request was stupid, but finally humored me with the step-by-step procedure, and it was simple: My OS is XP and he had me go to Control Panel, Administrative Tools, Computer Management, and then Disk Management; and there was the procedure to accomplish the drive letter change. It was simple, but not to me until I was shown where to do it. My problem was solved. Thank God for my user group friends! My limited computer knowledge has come from my user group friends, and I have learned very little from "Help" (F1). On the other hand, I've seen gurus do well with Help.

### **\*Good Help To Organize Your Desktop**

A while back Hewie Poplock <<http://www.hewie.net>>, who heads the Windows SIG for Central Florida Computer

were unaware that you could set up something like that. I knew it, but a newsletter article finally pushed me to do it.

Sometimes a confusing experience needs a fix that can't be put off. One night I had a problem with a flash drive that I keep my DealsGuy files on. If I'm working on a DealsGuy column, I normally plug that flash drive in first and it becomes my D drive. Each evening when I'm shutting down my machine, I plug in a larger flash drive for my backup, which becomes my E drive since the DealsGuy flash drive is D. That larger flash drive "has" to be my E drive when I use it because that's where the backup is set to backup my data files.

However, one evening when beginning my session, I plugged in my DealsGuy flash drive and it became my E drive, in spite of the fact that there was no D drive. I wondered why it did that, but all my tries, including rebooting the computer, failed to give it the drive letter I needed. I rebooted with that flash drive plugged in, and without it,

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Society, and also writes a monthly column called "Hewie's Favorites," demonstrated something called "Fences" and several in the group liked it. I can't adequately describe this product except to say that it offers a unique way to organize your desktop. With Fences, you can create categories that include only certain icons, making it easier to find whatever you might be looking for. You can also hide certain icons, leaving fewer choices when you are picking the icon you want to work with. The Web site says "simplify your desktop by creating shaded areas which become movable and sizable containers for your icons. Double click blank spaces on your desktop and all your fences will fade out, or come back. You can create an unlimited number of fence areas on your desktop."

Fences can be found at <<http://www.stardock.com/>> and there are videos that describe what it does. "Fences" is free for home use. A Pro version is available for \$9.99 at this writing and the advantages of the Pro version are listed. I didn't pay much attention to Fences at first, but soon even the gurus started using it, so I'm passing it on to my readers.

When even the consultants like a product, I think the rest of us should pay attention. There are certainly other ways to accomplish the task, but Fences may do it better. There are other products available there.

### **\*Is That Web Site Safe To Visit?**

The above-mentioned users group has some interesting gurus who never fail to impress me at a monthly meeting or at

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a SIG meeting. At a monthly meeting, Mike Ungerman advised me that Reimage, the company I tried for improving the performance of my computer, had only a fair rating on “Web of Trust”, but I had no idea what Web of Trust was. He advised me it would be a good idea to always use Web Of Trust when looking at products and services. It seems Web of Trust has a browser add-on you can download for Internet Explorer or Firefox that will give you a rating on the worthiness of many sites and their products when you access the URL.

You can also offer your own comment for a Web site or product on Web of Trust and it will be used in the rating. Their ratings are done by a jury of your peers. If you download and install their browser add-on, your browser will show a small circle with a color in it that rates the site you are visiting. The Web site is [www.mywot.com/](http://www.mywot.com/). There are a couple of sites nearly the same that are not good, so be sure you get that right.

I installed it and noticed that when I did a Google search for batteries, all of the URLs found had the WOT colored circles beside them. When I clicked on a URL with a red one, a window came up telling that the site did not have a very good reputation so I would enter at my own risk. Some URLs had the circle, but with a question mark, telling you it was not rated. I assume the rating depends on feedback about a site, but not necessarily for malicious code. It looks

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like Web Of Trust rates a site according to people’s comments. Take a look and see what you think.

Hewie Poplock <<http://www.hewie.net>>, was answering a few of my questions on the use of Web of Trust and, during our conversation, he mentioned another URL of interest that will simply check the safety of a URL for you. That one is <<http://browsingprotection.f-secure.com/swp/>>, which comes from F-Secure, who most of you are familiar with. To check the quality of a certain URL, type it in to the box where indicated and click for it to rate your requested site.

You are probably familiar with McAfee’s free Site Advisor <<http://www.siteadvisor.com/>>, and Link Scanner, free from AVG <<http://linkscanner.explabs.com/linkscanner/avg/>>, which I have previously written about to warn on the safety of a URL. The F-Secure product checks a URL free, but except for the 30-day trial versions of their products, the pricing is on their site. According to their Web site, their Internet Security offers many great features so if you don’t mind the price, it may offer you peace of mind.

That’s it for this month. I’ll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn’t offer discounts. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Visit my Web site: [dealsguy.com](http://dealsguy.com). ☞

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## **Internet Shopping – A View of One of the Best (Part 1 of 2)**

*Ron Hirsch, Boca Raton Computer Society*

It’s probable that everyone who uses the Internet has purchased online at one time or another. Of course there are many sites where one can shop. Some are well known, such as Amazon. But there are also many sites, possibly numbering into the millions, where one can purchase items of every description. And, it is difficult to know what is really behind the web pages that one can view while on an unknown site.

Remember, anyone can design (or have designed for them) a very elaborate and impressive site, even when there is very little behind the front that is displayed. So, sometimes it is hard to evaluate with whom you are dealing. There are various services where one can get “ratings” of many of these sites, but not all sites are listed or rated. So, what is one to do?

Usually, getting recommendations from friends, or reviews from known sources will aid in this activity. And, your own personal experiences should serve you well here.

The purpose of this article is to give you my recommendation for a particular company with whom I’ve dealt for

many years. While I have always had a high regard for them, my recent experiences totally solidify and enhance my feelings about them. This company is NEWEGG.

### **NewEgg — An Extraordinary Company**

This is the first time I’ve ever written an article about a supplier that I use. But this company, Newegg, is indeed a one in a million, and I feel that my experiences with them do rate the praise that I will be bestowing upon them. Even though I have been dealing with them for years, recent experiences have given me an added new perspective on their operation, and dedication to customer service, and customer satisfaction.

### **Who is NewEgg??**

If you never heard of Newegg, then you probably have not bought many computer parts in the past. And, if you have bought one or more computers or computer components since you got interested in computers, then they were either bought at local retailers such as Costco, or large online sellers such as Amazon, or Buy.com.

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## What Do They Sell??

The company probably started out selling parts mainly to home computer builders, but has since expanded to cover far more than that. Their offerings now include just about every computer part that one can conceive, in addition to complete computers. Plus they offer TV's, digital photography items of all kinds, and also many electronics devices currently in the marketplace.

Newegg is a company that only sells online, and only via placing an order on their site. They do not have any retail stores, nor can you place an order verbally by speaking with a representative. But they do have staff with whom you can talk to on all appropriate matters. And, they do have a web site which is actually a great experience. And below I will explain why this is so.

## Why is Their Site So Great?

When you first log onto their site, their home page will be presented, and you can use their search box to start your activities there. You can type in a product's model number, a manufacturer's name, a product's type, such as "monitors", or a general area such as "cables".

When the search results come up, you can then refine them via a variety of sorting choices, such as "lowest price", "highest price", "most popular", "manufacturer", etc..

Up to this point, other sites do have similar features, but here's where it gets much better.

**Reviews** - on every product page, on the right, there will be an area where you can bring up product reviews, and there will also be a display indicating the average review score of all the reviews listed. And, each reviewer rates the product in question, on a scale of 1 to 5. At the top of this section is a summary of the scores from all the reviewers, and you can also read the complete review. This can assist potential buyers in deciding about the item they are interested in buying.

**Images** - For most products, there is a small display of thumbnail photo images of the product. These images display the product in various views, and the other items included in the product package. Clicking on the small thumbnails provides a larger image to view.

**Specifications** - Clicking here will bring up a list of the specifications for the product involved. This is usually quite complete.

**Manufacturer** - But if added info is wanted, there are tabs to click on, which will take you to that product page on the manufacturer's site, or to the home page there. Also included are phone numbers for the manufacturer in question. Very often, when I am having difficulty locating a phone number for a manufacturer, I go to Newegg's site, and bring up that manufacturer, and then note the phone number.

**Product Availability** - If the product you bring up is not available because it is either out of stock, or discontinued, there will be an "Unavailable" notation alongside the prod-

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uct. Newegg will not accept orders for a product which is not currently available in their stock. But, you can request an email notification when it does become available, at which time you can then place your order. Often, the product is not available because it has been discontinued. Ultimately, it will then be removed from their site.

**Shipping & Delivery** - Newegg does of course have many products that include "Free Shipping". Those that do not will note the shipping charges during the course of placing an order. Their charges are always reasonable. And the shipping time is usually only a couple of days. And if you are ordering several items, the shipping charges will usually be less the total of the individual charges.

Next month, part 2 will offer you the more details on the cream of dealing with Newegg. There is no question that other companies may share some of the great positive features that Newegg offers. But to find a single company that does all of them, is extremely rare.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our site [brcs.org/hirsch.php](http://brcs.org/hirsch.php). This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a looseleaf notebook for future reference. Remember, the PDF version offers full color, which could not be used in the Boca Bits hard copy. So, if there are color elements in the original, the PDF copy will display them that way. ☐

### 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Newsletter CD Now On Sale



Beta .09 Release

\$8.00, includes postage

\$7.00 if you pick it up at a meeting

Get yours today!

#### Back Issues Still Needed

Our collection remains incomplete. Below is a list of missing newsletters. Anyone who lends us one of these (or supplies a good clear copy) will receive the next CD as our thanks.

- 1975: #2 and #3 (dates uncertain)
- 1976: January
- 1984: August
- 1985: June, July, August, September. ☐

# Customizing Word 2007

## Creating Your Own “Normal” Template

*Nancy DeMarte, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc. (<http://www.spcug.org/>)*

If you want to create documents with new and colorful formats, Word 2007 offers some interesting options with the Quick Styles gallery, a new feature located on the Home tab. This gallery contains sixteen templates, each available in Live Preview and able to be selected with a click. Each style template includes certain fonts and font effects, such as color, size, bold or italic, and line spacing. The first two styles, Normal and No Spacing, apply to the body text in documents; the rest apply to parts of documents, such as headings or subheadings. The default style, or the one you get if you open a new document, is Normal (normal.dotm). In 2007 the normal template contains several variations from the Word 2003 normal template, some of which started to bother me the first time I typed with Word 2007. For one thing, it uses two new fonts, Calibri for the body text and Cambria for headings. At an 11 point size, these fonts seem too small for my older eyes. The space between lines in a paragraph (1.15) is a bit larger than single space, and the space after paragraphs at 10 points seems wastefully large. The margins in the new normal template are 1" on each side. I prefer smaller margins for most documents. This new Normal style is modern and gives a sleek, open

look to a document, but it's possible that many users moving from Word 2003 to 2007 are finding its quirks irritating.

I decided to try to change the Normal Style in Word 2007 to be more like the one I was used to in 2003. I found several possible approaches to this task, but finally settled on a process which worked for me. Below are the steps I used to change Word 2007's normal style to one that I preferred.

First I set myself a plan. I decided that I wanted to change only the font, the font size, the space between lines in a paragraph, the space allowed before and after paragraphs, and the margins. I thought it wise to alter only the basics, knowing I could always make changes manually for special documents or rework the normal template if I wasn't happy with it. To change any of these things, I found I needed to work in a dialog box that had a Default button which would save my changes for use in future documents. I began by opening Word 2007. On the Home tab in the Font group I clicked the dialog box launcher, a tiny arrow in the lower right corner of that group. This opened a familiar dialog box from Word 2003 containing all sorts of font-related op-

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tions. I changed the font to Times New Roman, which, along with Arial, was one of the standards for Word 2003. I set the font size to 12 points. I would have set it to 10 if I had chosen Arial. These are typical sizes for average documents. Then I clicked the Default button and selected Yes when asked if I wanted this change to affect all future documents.

Then I clicked the dialog box launcher arrow in the Paragraph group and set the line spacing to Single Space and the Space before and Space after paragraphs to .6. Again, I clicked Default and answered Yes.

Next, I clicked the Page Layout Tab, and, in the Page Setup group, clicked the Margins button, which gave me a list of margin schemes, including diagrams of each. Even though I wanted the Narrow margin scheme, I knew just clicking it would not make it hold for future documents, so I clicked Custom Margins at the bottom of the list. Sure enough, up came a dialog box with a Default button. I made sure .5" replaced 1" in all four boxes, then clicked Default and Yes.

My last step was to go back to the Home tab and right click the Normal style icon, then Modify. In the Modify Style dialog box, I clicked the radio button next to "New documents based on this template." This dialog box is a good place to see a preview of what your next document

will look like and to confirm that the changes you've made are listed beneath the preview window. You might be puzzled by the "widow/orphan" item in the list, but don't eliminate it unless you have a specific reason to. The widow/orphan control keeps the last line of a paragraph (a widow) from appearing alone at the top of a page and the first line of a paragraph (orphan) from appearing alone at the bottom of a page.

When my modifications were complete, I clicked OK to close the Modify Style dialog box, pretty confident that my changes had taken effect. I decided, however, to create a new document at this point to see for myself if it would conform to my specifications. I knew if something were incorrect, I could always go back through the steps to fix it. But all was well. I now have my new Normal style and am liking Word 2007 better and better. :

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# Broadsides

*Ron Broadhurst (shiron (at) cfl.rr.com), Space Coast PC Users Group (www.sepcug.com)*

Dear friends, These ideas are compiled from years of accumulations from various magazines, books, on-line sites and my own personal experience. I claim neither originality nor ownership to any of its contents. My only intent is to share the various “tips,” “tricks” & “hints” in hopes of helping & maybe enhancing your computing experiences. They are all intended for anyone who uses a PC. It is for beginners as well as advanced users. Enjoy and use as you will.

## Set Windows So They All Have the Same View

If you like to see lists of your files in a certain way — as large icons, for example, or with detailed information — Windows XP lets you set your view options for all your folders at once the way you want them. On the Tools menu in Windows Explorer, click — Folder Options. Click the View tab. Set the view for this folder the way you want it to be for all folders. Click Like Current Folder, then click Yes to confirm, and click OK.

## Search from the Address Bar in Internet

You can quickly search for information on the Web using the AutoSearch feature in Internet Explorer 6 in Windows XP: In the Address bar, simply type “go” or “find” or “?” followed by a keyword or phrase, and then press ENTER. Your search results will soon appear.

Note Internet Explorer searches for your word or topic using only one search service. If you don’t find what you need, click the Search button on the toolbar and try using different search services.

## Display the Animated Screen Character in Search

Click Start, and then click Search. In the Search Companion dialog box, click Change Preferences. Click With an animated screen character in the How do you want to use Search Companion box. The screen character is displayed in Search Companion.

## Changing Clock 24 hours, 12 hours or Reverse

The desire to change the time format in the system tray clock is a fairly common one and finding the setting can be challenging. Click Start | Control Panel. If you’re in XP native view, click “Date, Time, Language and Regional Options.” If you’re in Classic view, click Regional and Language Options. Click the Customize button, then click the Time tab. In the drop down box for Time Format, choose h:mm:ss tt or hh:mm:ss tt. The “tt” stands for A.M./P.M. The selections that begin with capital H cause the clock to display military (24 hour) time.

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## Restore Icons Removed from Desktop in XP

How to restore the My Computer, My Documents, and My Network Places icons after they have been removed from the desktop. In Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition and Professional, the new Start menu is enabled by default. When the new Start menu is enabled, the My Computer, My Documents, and My Network Places icons are removed from the desktop.

- Right-click the Desktop and click Properties.
- Click the Desktop tab.
- Click Customize Desktop.
- Click the General tab, and then click the icons that you want to place on the desktop.
- Click OK.

## Fix Virtual Memory

You receive the following error message. . . . Your system is low on virtual memory. To ensure that Windows runs properly, increase the size of your virtual memory paging file.

- Click Start, right-click My Computer, and then click Properties.
- In the System Properties dialog box, click the Advanced tab.
- In the Performance pane, click Settings.
- In the Performance Options dialog box, click the Advanced tab.

- In the Virtual memory pane, click Change.
- Change the Initial size value and the Maximum size value to a higher value, click Set, and then click OK.
- Click OK to close the Performance Options dialog box, and then click OK to close the System Properties dialog box

## Can’t Use the XP Theme

The most probable reason for this is that the Themes service isn’t running. If it’s not running, XP reverts to the classic style. Do this:

- Click Start | Run and type services.msc to open the Services console.
- In the right pane, find the Themes service and Click the Start Service button.

If that doesn’t work, try this:

- Right click My Computer | Properties.
- In the System Properties dialog box, click the Advanced tab.
- Under Performance, click Settings.
- Click the Visual Effects tab.
- Select “Use Visual Styles on Windows and Buttons” in the Custom box.

*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).* ☐

# 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](mailto:Firefox@acgnj.org)

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for **all** Firefox and Mozilla techniques and technologies, to encourage study and development of web sites of all kinds. All 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, Sep 20.* ☐

## NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy ([greggmajestic@gmail.com](mailto:greggmajestic@gmail.com))

<http://www.NJGamers.com>

[www.lanparty.com](http://www.lanparty.com)

**The next Friday Night Frag will be September 10, 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](mailto: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, Sep 6.* ☐

## Window Pains

John Raff ([jraff@comcast.net](mailto: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.

*Sep 17:* Subject to be announced. ☐

## Main Meeting

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

*Mike Redlich* ([mike@redlich.net](mailto:mike@redlich.net))

*Sep 3:* Meeting canceled due to holiday weekend. ☐

## Web Dev

Evan Williams ([ewilliams@collaboron.com](mailto: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 meeting Sep 8.* ☐

## Java

Mike Redlich ([mike@redlich.net](mailto:mike@redlich.net))

<http://www.javasig.org>

*June:* Tinkering with Android .

*September:* To be announced. ☐

## Hardware Activity

Mike Reagan ([hardware@acgnj.org](mailto: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 Sep 23.* ☐

## Investment Software

Jim Cooper ([jim@thecoopers.org](mailto:jim@thecoopers.org))

[http://www.acgnj.org/groups/sig\\_investment.html](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: Sep 9.* ☐

## **C/C++ Programming**

Bruce Arnold ([barnold@blast.net](mailto:barnold@blast.net))

<http://www.blast.net/barnold>

This is a forum for discussion of programming in general, beginning and intermediate level C, C++, C-Win programming, hardware, algorithms, and operating systems. We demonstrate real programming in a non-intimidating way, presenting complete code for working programs in 3-5 sheets of paper. Sample code is posted on our Web page after each demonstration.

**June:** DigClock2010 - A Large Digital Clock Screen Saver: For this month I have tried to create a useful screen saver based on very simple C++ Dot Net Programming. Previously (see Dec 2009) the Analog Clock screen saver was based on special mathematically formulas that created the geometry of the graphics. In the program for this

month, there are no calculations at all. In fact, there is almost no code at all. The complete screen saver is designed within the IDE design panel. As such, the number of design permutations are enormous. During the design, you may easily change Fonts, Size, Color, Layout, and Features without changing the code.

Here's how it works: Within the design form there are a number of text boxes. A timer generates a program interrupt and reads the system clock. The clock data is parsed and sent to each of the text boxes. The result is shown in the picture above. All of the different fonts are determined by the properties of the text boxes.

For details and sample code, visit our Website

Our next meeting Sep 21. ☞

## **Microsoft Security Essentials**

*Lynn Page (newsletter (at) crug.com), Crystal River User Group, Florida (www.crug.org)*

I have been using Windows Live OneCare for a couple of years on my laptop and have been very happy with it. OneCare is being discontinued next year and will not support Windows 7.

Microsoft Security Essentials is a real time security anti-malware application. The main difference between Microsoft Security Essentials and OneCare is that Security

Essentials only provides malware protection while OneCare contains additional applications including a firewall, backup, tune up, multi pc management, simple Wi-Fi security configuration and simplified printer sharing.

With the upcoming discontinuation of OneCare, I loaded Microsoft Security Essentials to try it out. I still run a personal firewall and left one other anti-malware application

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on the computer. Security Essentials is designed to provide anti-malware protection from threats including viruses, spyware, rootkits, Trojans, and other emerging threats in a single application.

Download of is free and installation simple. It is easy to use, as it does everything in the background. Automatic updates assure that your computer is protected by the latest available technology. Like OneCare, it makes it easy to see if the computer is secure. The green icon means it's secure.

The Installation Wizard walks you through installation which only took a few minutes. Its first step requires validation of your copy of Windows. Then you are instructed to remove any other antivirus or antispyware applications installed on the computer, with a link to tell you how to do this. I had already uninstalled my antivirus application. Since the anti-malware program I have installed does not run in the background I left it on the computer.

Microsoft Security Essentials runs efficiently in the background so you can use your computer without interruptions or long wait times. During installation with The Wizard you can request a scan of your computer. When finished it automatically checks for updates before running the requested scan. Since it is new application you will have to instruct your firewall to allow it to connect to the internet.

Until the updates and initial scan are completed, Security Essentials shows the red warning that your computer is at

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risk. Once the scan is complete and any problems addressed the computer status will be green or Protected.

The Security Essentials interface is tab based. The Home tab displays the application's status. Note that Real-time protection is on and definitions are up to date. Security Essentials performs scheduled scans but you can select and run a manual scan from the Home tab. When running a System Scan, select from Quick, Full, or Custom. I ran both a quick scan and then a full scan. If a threat is detected Security Essentials changes to show the computer is at risk and that a threat has been detected. To remove a threat click the Clean computer button displayed on the Home tab.

The Settings tab provides control over the application. I saw no reason to make any changes from the default settings. The one thing you might want to change is the scan schedule. You can schedule a scan by clicking the Change My Scan Schedule link on the Home window or on the Settings tab.

The History tab displays all Detected Items, Quarantined Items, and Allowed Items. Remove the history by clicking the Delete History button.

I haven't been running Microsoft Security Essentials long but my experience with OneCare tells me it will work well and protect my computer from threats. I have already noticed that the computer runs faster during scans than with my previous software.

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

## 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](mailto: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.

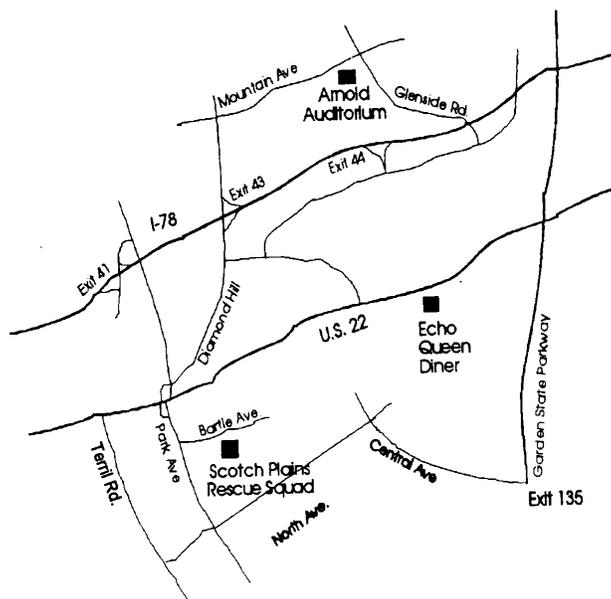
### Radio and TV Programs

**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>.



<http://www.apcug.net>

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

#### From New York City or Northern New Jersey

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

#### From Southern New Jersey

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

#### From I-78 (either direction)

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

#### 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. ☺

# What are RSS Feeds?

*Constance Brown (constance (at) mystepco.com), Canton Alliance Massillon UG, (<http://camug.apcug.org>)*

What are RSS Feeds? According to Wikipedia, “RSS (most commonly translated as ‘Really Simple Syndication’ but sometimes ‘Rich Site Summary’) is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video in a standardized format.”

Let’s see whether we can translate that into everyday language. Most of us have favorite sites or blogs we visit regularly - news, genealogy, weather, or other sites that are updated regularly. Instead of having to click on bookmarks to navigate between sites, or typing the URL, it is much faster to have one location that posts links to the latest updated information. That is done by subscribing to an RSS Reader. Both Yahoo & Google offer readers, and there are other choices as well.

I subscribed to Google Reader by visiting [google.com/reader](http://google.com/reader). Because I already had a Gmail account, I was able to login immediately and add subscriptions. That is done in one of two ways: clicking on an icon or copying code by clicking on the URL of the feed and pasting it in Add Subscription on your Google Reader home page.

Let’s walk through two examples. We’ll start by clicking on Add Subscription. A search bar opens that allows us to search for an RSS Feed. I will type The Repository and click Add. Links pop up on the right side of the screen, one of them titled The Repository. Next I will click the + sign by Subscribe. I am then given the option of adding the link to a folder. I want to create a new folder titled News, so I

will click Add to a Folder and select New Folder. A screen pops up that allows me to name the folder. Super simple!

Let’s look at a different example. In this case we want to add a link to The Christian Law Association at [christianlaw.org/cla/](http://christianlaw.org/cla/). While browsing their web site, we find an orange broadcast symbol that stands for link to an RSS Feed. When we click on it, a page of code pops up! No need to panic! We will click on the URL and copy it (Ctl + C), open Google Reader, click on Add Subscription, paste the URL in the search box, and click Add.

Some sites let us add a subscription by simply checking an icon that says Google Reader. We click the link and a window pops up that allows us to login to our account and add the link.

In the future it is simple to go to [www.google.com/reader](http://www.google.com/reader), login, and view updates. We can indicate that we want all messages older than one day to be marked as Read. Now only today’s unread links are bold. We can organize links into folders. Yes, we can unsubscribe and we can add new subscriptions, change the folders in which they are stored, view the links as lists, share, search within links, and more.

Why not try it using this technology. You will get the latest information in one easily accessible place, thus maximizing precious time.

*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).* ☐

## ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

### **Tuesday, August 31**

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

### **Friday, September 3**

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

Cancelled, Have a Great Holiday

### **Monday, September 6**

8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer ([lunics@acgnj.org](mailto:lunics@acgnj.org))

### **Wednesday, September 8**

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

### **Thursday, September 9**

8 P.M. - Investing, Jim Cooper ([jim@thecoopers.org](mailto:jim@thecoopers.org)).

### **Friday, September 10**

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

### **Monday, September 13**

8 P.M. - Layman’s Forum, Matt Skoda ([som359@aol.com](mailto:som359@aol.com)), 908-359-8842.

### **Tuesday, September 14**

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

### **Friday, September 17**

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

### **Monday, September 20**

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

### **Tuesday, September 21**

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

### **Thursday, September 23**

8 P.M. - Hardware, Mike Reagan ([hardware@acgnj.org](mailto:hardware@acgnj.org))

### **Tuesday, September 28**

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting. ☐

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