

Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

Volume 24, Number 10

December 1999




Elections

The ACGNJ Election of Officers and Board Members takes place at the December Main Meeting. Officers are elected annually and are limited to terms of two years, so those who have served for two years must be replaced. Directors are elected every other year and are not limited as to term.

The candidates are listed below. Nominations will be accepted from the floor before the voting takes place, or may be submitted to Bill Farrell, Chairman of the Nominating Committee. Email to wfarr1812@aol.com or telephone (732)572-3481 to place a nomination.

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Treasurer	John Sheetz
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	Art Downer
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	Arnold Milstein
	Martin Rosenblum
	John Raff

Your vote is important! 

ACGNJ Elections
Friday, December 3, 8 P.M.
Scotch Plains Rescue Squad



www.acgnj.org

Founded 1975

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Tips for reviewers: Why does anyone need it? Why did you like it or hate it? Ease (or difficulty) of installation, learning and use. Would you pay for it? If you include graphics, they should be separate files.

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

Publication Exchange: Other computer user groups are invited to send a their newsletters to Editor at the ACGNJ address above. We will respond in kind.

Address Changes should be directed to David Lampe (david.lampe@entex.com) and/or to his attention at the ACGNJ address above.

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

Typographic Note: The ACGNJ News is produced using Corel Ventura 8. Font families used are Times New Roman (TT) for body text, Ariel (TT) for headlines.

The Internet Corner

by Martin Rosenblum

Web News

Item: Business Week, November 15, Up Front, "Think-Tank Town." Announcing the formation of the Internet Policy Institute, a new Washington think tank, supposed to be the "Brookings Institute of the Internet." Chaired by ex-Netscaper Jim Barksdale, it will "issue non-partisan studies on the Web's societal impact."

Item: Same column, Business Speak: "Death to e-words everywhere." The most common letter in the English language is "e." I believe that holds for French, too. Responding to the implied challenge, a French wag once wrote a novel, "La Disparition" that doesn't contain a single "e." Responding to the current flood of e-hype, the author recommends we drop the "e-" from the likes of "e-commerce," etc.

Item: Same column, I-Way Patrol: "Silencing chat-room boors." Michael Thompson, moderator of the "Rock & Roll Machine" board has come up with a program called Arrow, which lets him designate a pest as: "Twit." This results in only the twit seeing his/her own postings. How does that grab you? The twit doesn't even know!

Item: Same issue: "Battle of the E-Brands." Name recognition in the world of dot com and the cost of getting it.

Item: Same issue: "Throwing Bricks at the Clicks." (Don't you wish you could write headlines like this? There's real creativity!) Some of the big retailers are starting to throw negative ads at the Net!

Item: Same issue: "I am Cyber — Woman. Hear me Roar." The distaff side is catching up and expected to pass the male contingent online in about two years. This is producing a growing number of women-oriented Web sites such as www.ivillage.com — unfortunately, the piece doesn't give us a representative sample.

Item: ZDNet News, November 22: "A Net record: 1 billion page views per day." "The Internet reached an important milestone during October, when an average of 1 billion hits per day were recorded in the United States." All right!

Item: Business Week, November 22, Media: "Dot.com Glossy." BW rates five magazines as hot in the e-business community: *Business 2.0*, *The Industry Standard*, *Red Herring*, *Upside* and, of course, *Wired*. International Data Group, or IDG, publishes *The Industry Standard*, and while it has the lowest circulation of the five, more than the others it aims at the business community. So confident are they of their supremacy in this niche that they're planning an IPO spinoff.

Item: Same issue, Washington Outlook: "The E-Tax Debate is About to Turn Into a Brawl." A brief discussion of the squabbling between the folks who want to ban taxes on Net commerce and those who are afraid to pay for the revenue loss by hikes in income taxes. It'll probably be bloody.

Item: Same issue, Information Technology: "Insurers Step Gingerly Into Cyberspace" or "How to work the Web without alienating agents." Like the e-bond discussion below, the middle man can really get hurt here. The top five comparison sites that article cites are

www.ebix.com

www.ecoverage.com

www.insweb.com

www.insuremarket.com

www.quotesmith.com

You can read the whole article at

www.businessweek.com/1999/99_47/b3656120.htm.

Item: Same issue, Cover Story: "Microsoft — Does a Breakup Make Sense?" Not about the Net — or is it????

Item: The Star-Ledger, November 23: "Look for him at www.federalprison.com." Eric Burns, a.k.a. Zyklon, was sentenced to 15 months in prison, fined \$36,240, and won't be allowed to touch a computer for three years after he gets out. All this for hacking the White House and U.S.I.A. Web sites and at least a dozen others. Once again we must ask why so little blame is placed on the folks who configure these systems that are so open to attack?

Item: ZDNet News, November 23: "You can design your own Nike sneaks." "For an extra \$10, a new Nike site will allow users to design their own sneakers." Pick your style, colors and logo and they'll make it just for you! Visit them at www.nike.com/idstart, but don't use Netscape 4.7. Gives Java error! Worked OK for me with IE4.0.

Item: PC Magazine, December 1, editorial: "Performance Does Matter." A Net problem? I thought all the problems were in the pipe and manifolds! Nope! As Bill Machrone claimed at our November main meeting, even surfing the Web can be affected dramatically by machine performance. Much of the problem is due to the way people write Web pages. For example, if I download an order status page from Charles Schwab, it has about 50 open limit orders. The data that I'm looking for comprises about 50 bytes per order, or 2,500 bytes total. What does Schwab's server deliver to me? About 200,000 bytes, a mixture of Java code, repeated formatting instructions (50 times) and my data. Overhead? Transmission bandwidth, a factor of 80. Processing bandwidth? I couldn't begin to guess, but if what Miller and Machrone say is true, I'm taking a hit there, as well.

Item: Same Issue, Pipeline: "Instant Know-It-All." This product sounds intriguing. It's a small utility that you download and then when you come across a word that you'd like more information about — definition, synonyms, stock info, etc., you press the Alt key and click on the word. A browser-like window appears with some info and some navigation ability. (You must be connected to the Web, of course.) You can download the free beta version from www.gurunet.com.

Item: Same column: "Fly the Web." British Telecommunications Aeronautical and Excite UK will be offering a skyphone at your plane seat with an IP connection via satellite at 64-Kbps.

Item: Same column: "Self-Destructing E-Mail." Qvtech has a product, Interosa, which will:

continued

Expire messages so they are unreadable after a certain date and time.

Keep internal mail internal, by preventing decryption outside the sender's company.

Password protect messages.

Prevent email contents from being copied, pasted or printed.

Ensure messages are always encrypted and can only be viewed when the sender's policies allow.

See them at www.qvtech.com.

Item: Same issue, Trends: "You Only *Think* You Understand the Internet Age." Jake Kirchner reminds us that the Net is not just about browsing and Web sites. He was inspired by reading *Mastering the Digital Marketplace*, by Douglas Aldrich and interviewing the author. Want to update your McAfee anti-virus files? Hit the button and it calls SecureCast which in turn calls up a browser — frequently the wrong one — which helps you download and run the update program. Nonsense! Intuit does a good job by having Quicken update itself whenever it connects to the Net and finds a new update waiting. They have also done a nice job in using the Net to download info from your broker and bank. They worked with CheckFree and Microsoft to develop a standard Net protocol for the exchange of financial information. I can use my choice of financial programs (Money or Quicken) to access accounts at a number of different financial institutions. You only bring up a browser when that's what you want! (All this is me, not Kirchner.) Check out the book at John Wiley's site: catalog.wiley.com/title.cgi?isbn=0471345466.

Item: Same column: "The Hand-Held Shopping Mall." I'm not sure what shopping has to do with it, but the article discusses the race between PDAs and new generation wireless phones. They're expecting 80 million Net-enabled, wireless phones and about 12 million Net-enabled PDAs by 2003. I guess they'll all have e-commerce capability and that's where the shopping comes in.

Item: Same column: "The Web as Personal Shopper." This has been around for some time: shopbots, etc., but this one may fly sooner. It's a shopping advisor and looks pretty neat, especially for newbies. A good example is Ask Ida, a spinoff from Ask Jeeves, (see etown.com/sales_bot). Also mentioned are the pricing services, like www.dealpilot.com, which we met some time ago as www.acses.com. Also see mySimon, (www.mysimon.com) and RUSure, at www.rusure.com. BTW, when checking out Modem Wizard, above, I noticed that while loading, it picked up stuff from Ask Jeeves and Flycast. Alliances are forming out there!

Item: Same issue, Inside PC Labs: "Test the Net with i-Bench." Following up on Machrone's talk at the Main Meeting, here's the tool they used to explore the details of Net responses. If you want to check your own browsers, etc., you can download from www.i-bench.com.

Miscellany

Twas the season to bring my snow bird mom down to Florida. One of her sisters died this past year and Maria and I decided

to buy her condo from my cousin. I hired a lawyer for the paper work and asked if she had an e-mail address. Yes! So did my cousin and so did her lawyer. A four-way electronic negotiation ensued. Only the condo association itself was computer illiterate....well, so was my lawyer's dad, the senior partner in the firm.) On the day of the closing Maria and I walked into my lawyer's office. She was beaming! She was so proud that she had saved some precious time by finding the outstanding tax bill online at the county's Web site: www.bcpa.net.

While we were in Florida, my daughter, the psychologist, came down from Cambridge to attend a conference in Miami and visit her grandmother. She needed a place to relax. I used Yahoo to surf to Hollywood, FL, clicked on Travel & Transportation/Lodging/Motels and came up with a list of 23 candidates. We then got in the car and started up Surf Road, checking out the ones we found there — right on the beach. Found a delightful place, just the thing, and the price was right. It wasn't listed under motels, but I did find it later under hotels. It's run by a Cuban-Polish couple and the concierge is French-Canadian. Maybe I shouldn't reveal my discoveries, but you can check it out at www.greenbriarbc.com.

Instant Messaging: The November 17 issue of ZDNet News has a piece: "Microsoft gives ground in IM wars." After both Microsoft and AOL agreed to abide by Internet Engineering Task Force standards, Microsoft tried to integrate its MSN Messenger Service with AOL's Instant Messenger, so they could talk to each other. AOL promptly accused Microsoft of hacking into their network. (Netscape, long before their acquisition by AOL, had supplied AOL's Instant Messenger along with its Communicator.)

Science

The American Museum of Natural History publishes a great monthly magazine called *Natural History*. In October they published a supplement with some help from their friends at Pfizer titled *Natural History for Kids*. It offers samples from all the great natural science venues in the New York area. There are articles on elephants, bees, hawks, rainforests, gorillas, open heart surgery and bonzai. There's even a brief note on the Internet.

- www.amnh.org - American Museum of Natural History
- www.bbg.org - Brooklyn Botanic Garden
- www.wcs.org - Bronx Zoo/Wildlife Conservation Society
- www.lsc.org - Liberty Science Center
- www.nybg.org - New York Botanical Garden
- www.nyhallsci.org - New York Hall of Science.

And from the sponsor, Pfizer, there's a glitzy Web site, www.pfizerfunzone.com, with a neat, if self-serving, visit to their plants, people and work. There's also a fine page of links to other good science-for-kids Web sites.

Finance

The November 15 issue of Business Week has a piece that merits highlighting here: "The E-Bond Revolution." "At precisely 11:30 a.m. on Nov. 9, Pittsburgh Mayor Tom J.

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DLL Conflict Troubleshooting Tutorial

by Rod Ream (Pasadena IBM Users Group)

STOP! Don't wipe that hard drive, there's a better way!

What's a DLL and what does it do? DLLs (Dynamic Link Library) are best thought of as programmer's toolkits. They contain programming code that is often re-used from one application to another. Some DLLs have one or two routines, while others may have a hundred or more. Rather than re-invent the wheel, a programmer will use a DLL containing optimized code for the task at hand. Dialing your modem, selecting fonts and colors or quickly sorting lists of information are examples of the types of work they perform.

Why do they cause problems? There are two types of DLL's: Shared or common (used by many programs) and Proprietary (used by one program or by one software publisher). With the earliest versions of Windows, Microsoft established the windows\system folder as the designated storage place for DLLs that are common. The proprietary DLLs were supposed to be installed in the program's own folder. As new and improved versions of DLLs were released it was intended that the updated version would replace the earlier version and that the DLL would be backwards compatible. In a perfect world you'd have just one copy of a shared DLL on your system and it would be available to any application that needed it. The Windows operating system (any flavor) allows only one copy of a DLL to be in memory at any one time. The DLL will remain in memory until it's no longer needed.

When things go wrong —

Let's start by looking at the following common scenario: A program is launched from your Startup group or folder when you boot your system. That program was distributed with an early version DLL, which is stored in the program's local directory. The DLL has 20 internal functions and is loaded into memory.

A few minutes later you load a recently released program. That program needs the same DLL (by name), but is supposed to utilize the newer version that has 80 internal functions.

Since the early version DLL is already in memory, Windows uses that version. Everything may seem to be okay when the program is first launched. However, as soon as the more recent program asks for one of the 60 missing functions you're in trouble. You may get a complete crash, a lockup or a message blaming something that's completely unrelated.

How did this mess happen?

The most common DLL's are those that are part of a programming language such as C++, Visual Basic, etc. These DLL's provide the same "run time" environment as the developer's own system, but don't allow you to edit the program. Software publishers must include these critical DLLs with their programs because they can't assume you already have the right one on your system.

Software publishers often seem to be careless or unable to follow the rules. In some cases, they just don't know better. Both small and large publishers are guilty of not keeping their

programming utilities up to date, this results in distributing DLLs that are several years old. Distributing a new program with old DLL's has the same effect as loading an old program on your system.

Microsoft has incorporated several features into the Windows 98 operating system that help to resolve the problem of an old DLL being installed into a shared directory; however it doesn't always work. The worst offenders are installation routines that don't do any version checking and simply unzip files directly into the shared directory, overwriting whatever is there. In many cases W98's System File Checker can recover the correct version. Having a current backup is still the best protection!

One of the most common mistakes made by a program's installation routine is to place a common DLL in the program's own folder, rather than put it in the system folder where it belongs. That's the easiest thing to fix, *if* you're careful and follow some simple guidelines. Programs bearing the MS Windows 9x logo on the box generally don't cause problems as they have to meet some very strict and recently revised compliance standards. I'm guessing that the right to wear the logo doesn't come cheaply either.

Searching the system

The following process is intended to let a user check their own system for DLL version conflicts. Before doing so, I strongly recommend that any patches and updates available from MS be installed. Installing these updates will put the newest versions of the most problematic DLLs on your system and give you a valid reference point for what's really old on your system. The most critical DLLs are available in 3 updates: "Windows Library Update", "Windows 95 Service Pack 1", and "OLE 32 Update to Service Pack 1". If you are running Windows 95, you'll find these updates at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows95/downloads/>. If you are running Windows 98, click on Windows Update in the Start menu and you'll be taken to Microsoft's semi-automated update site. If you're not sure whether the update is installed on your system or not, install it anyway! It doesn't hurt to be sure.

Step-by-step

Open "My Computer" by Right clicking on the icon and selecting "Explore". Change your view to "Details"

Open the \windows\system folder and check that you can see files with a DLL extension. If not, you have to turn on the "view all files" option in Explorer.

Tap your F3 key to bring up the search window

In the "Named" field enter *.DLL

In the "Look in:" field open the drop down and select "My Computer" or "Local Hard Drives" if you are on a network.

Make sure the "Include subfolders" box is checked.

Click the "Find Now" button. Be patient, this may take a few minutes on a large or slower system.

continued

When the search is completed, click on the "Name" button (at the top of the "Name" column) to sort the list alphabetically, by name.

Don't be surprised by the number of DLLs on your system. In a new system, with little more than Windows98 installed you'll probably have three or four hundred of them, but on a large system like mine, there's nearly five thousand!

Taking control

Look through the list for duplicates. The ones that cause software conflicts are those with copies in the \windows\system folder and one or more copies somewhere else on your system. The most critical DLLs have a backup copy in \windows\sysbckup – that's a new safety feature introduced with Windows9x and these files are usually the same version. Check the search listing for files beginning with: BWCC, CO, CTL, MFC, MSV, OLE.

Caution!!

The following is intended for experienced users only. Some people may wish to contact a consultant or system specialist who is experienced in dealing with software conflicts. Don't get carried away in the process. We are only concerned with duplicates that meet *all* of the following criteria:

- A copy in \windows\system
- A possible copy in \windows\sysbckup
- A copy that is anywhere else

Example: (using mfc42.dll)

- c:\someprogram\mfc42.dll — v4.25 — old version (rename)
- c:\windows\system\mfc42.dll — v6.00.8267.0 — higher version, shared directory
- c:\windows\sysbckup\mfc42.dll — v6.00.8267.0 — Safety copy, don't touch

Right click on each of the duplicate files, beginning with the copy in the system folder, and select "Properties". In most systems you can speed this up by holding down the ALT key while you double click.

Click on the Version tab and make a note of the version number, it will be highlighted.

Repeat this for each of the duplicate files having the same name. Double check your work, some file names are very similar.

You only need to keep the DLL with the highest version number and that copy should be in the \windows\system folder.

Do not delete any files!! Renaming (using the F2 key) is much safer.

If any of the duplicates is in a program's own local folder and has an equal or lower version number than the copy in the \windows\system folder, change the file extension from DLL to D_L. This will stop the older version from loading and force it to look in the \windows\system folder for the file.

If you are a neat freak, you can consider deleting the renamed duplicate file when you are sure that everything is working

properly. Because of the close similarity of some of the file names it's very easy to tag the wrong file!

Do only a few files at a time, until you are comfortable with the process. Reboot your system and run the programs where you may have disabled a DLL in a program's own local folder. If you are sure that everything is working, you can then delete the renamed DLL.

Some files that are currently active, in memory, may not permit renaming. In most cases, you can temporarily disable programs that are in your Startup folder to complete the operation. In other cases you may have to reboot and perform the rename after starting the system at the DOS command prompt.

This troubleshooting process is not intended to solve all conflict situations. It does however, eliminate the most common problems. Duplicate DLLs, where no copy is in the common \windows\system directory, are a completely different situation and beyond the scope of this article. For those situations a thorough understanding of the operating system and a backup plan are required. I strongly advise the reader to leave these files as-is. In most cases they will not cause system problems, unless both programs are being run at the same time.

Last minute information —

Following the initial release of this article, my good friend David Jung (author of many thick Visual Basic and Access programming books) released his DLL Checker, which automates much of the search and renaming process. This shareware program can be found at www.vb2java.com. The help and information files that are part of the program are very good, even if I do have to say so myself. (grin)

Rod Ream is a full time, independent, PC Consultant and is also the Director of Technical Services for the Pasadena IBM Users Group (PIBMUG). His base is in Alhambra CA and he can be reached at . Permission to reprint is granted to APCUG affiliated user groups. A printed copy of any publication using this article must be provided to the author. No other use is authorized. ☐

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Upgrade Woes

by Cass Lewart

For about two years I had lived happily with my Pentium 120 system. Although slow by modern standards, it did its work admirably. Recently I replaced my small hard drive with a 6.8 GB drive and installed Windows 98. That meant I could install all the software I needed. My son, Dan, however, suggested that I needed more. A Linux advocate, he could not see how I could survive with the abominable Windows 98 alone — Linux is a must. On a recent visit Dan offered to replace my Pentium 120 with a 200 MHz WinChip that my wife Ruth had picked up free at a show last year. Dan could install the Linux package from Red Hat, so he said, while he was performing the transplant surgery. I innocently agreed.

The first step was relatively easy. We replaced the Pentium 120 MHz with the 200 MHz WinChip, spread some silicon thermal grease on top of it, attached a fan, changed mother board jumpers and started the computer. It crashed after the initial boot and never got into Windows. We checked everything and found that although the WinChip literature called for 3.3 Volts, 3.5 Volts was written on the chip itself. Dan changed the appropriate jumpers and restarted the computer. It got into Windows and everything looked right.

After Ruth left for a meeting that evening, we proceeded with the second step, installation of Linux. With Partition Magic we repartitioned the disk, leaving intact my 2.2 GB logical drives C and D, where I keep all my programs and data. Then we shrank the unused drive E to 1.6 GB and removed drive F, leaving about 800 MB free for Linux installation.

Red Hat's disk managing utility, Disk Druid, prepared and formatted (we thought) the free space for Linux installation. The actual installation from the CD went smoothly and in about one hour Red Hat Linux 5.2 was ready to run. Dan also configured the Linux boot manager to be able to start in Windows or in Linux. We restarted the computer, trying to open Windows. The computer could not find Windows! In fact, it could not find drive D. Drive D was gone — swallowed by the insatiable Linux. It turned out that Disk Druid, which was provided by Red Hat to make the Linux installation easy and user-friendly, had reformatted all but my drive C, wiping all other drives clean!

When Dan and I realized what happened, we tried to reinstall Windows. The installation would go smoothly for a few minutes, but then it would give a "fatal exception" error and crash. We both got quite upset by this turn of events and went to bed. When Ruth came home at 10 she found the house dark and both of us asleep.

The next morning we decided that the constant crashes were caused by the WinChip. As Dan removed the fan he noticed that the thermal grease did not spread from the heat sink to the chip itself and that there was an air gap between the chip and the fan. Before going back to my slow Pentium we decided to give it one more try by putting an extra glob of thermal grease on the chip. It worked, and the computer did not crash any more! Then we removed Linux,

Undocumented Tips

ZDNet

PROBLEM: Is there a way to keep the Windows 95/98 startup screen from appearing?

ANSWER: If you prefer to see what's happening during startup, open the text file msdos.sys in the root folder of C: drive. Find the line that says Logo=1 and change it to Logo=0. Save the file, then reboot your computer.

PROBLEM: Why is it that sometimes when you download an Adobe Acrobat file you can't select the text and copy it to another document?

SOLUTION: When an Acrobat file is created, its publisher has various options to limit a viewer's control over the file. These include having a password and making it possible to change text, select sections, or annotate the document. You can see what's permitted in the Acrobat reader menu at File, Document Info, Security.

PROBLEM: How can you silence the annoying music that plays over and over on some Web sites.

SOLUTION: A click on the Stop button in the browser toolbar should do the trick. But if you want to eliminate all sounds in Internet Explorer, choose Tools, Internet Options, Advanced, then uncheck the Play Sounds box under the Multimedia heading.

PROBLEM: You have a question about Windows, but no one at Microsoft will give you an answer. Where do you turn next?

SOLUTION: Your best source of information about Windows (and any other Microsoft product) is the Microsoft Knowledge Base at <http://cgi.zdnet.com/slink?11281:2139974>. The tech support folks on the phones at Microsoft refer to the Knowledge Base all the time, though their version contains information that isn't released to the public.

PROBLEM: You received an e-mail with an attached file called happy99.exe from a friend. You ran the file and saw fireworks. Your friend, however, says he never sent the file. What's up?

SOLUTION: The Happy99 virus (more properly known as the SKA worm) seems to be making a resurgence. If you've run the Happy99 program or if friends say you've sent them a file called Happy99, you're infected. You can check out <http://cgi.zdnet.com/slink?11283:2139974> to obtain more information and software to extract the beast.

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Upgrade Woes, continued

repartitioned Drive D and E with FDISK, formatted them, reinstalled Windows and spent an entire day rebuilding programs on Drive D from backups and downloads. The computer works again, runs faster than ever before and as soon as Red Hat fixes the problem with their Disk Druid, we will reinstall Linux. A search on the Web revealed that many people had similar problems with Red Hat Linux installation over Windows. There are two morals to this story: If it works don't touch it, and keep good backups! ☐

Vote.com

ZDNet

Former Clinton campaign strategist Dick Morris wants to put you in closer contact with your representatives than ever before — provided they have time to wade through thousands of e-mails. Morris and wife Eileen McGann recently launched a new site, *Vote.com*, that holds electronic ballots on such hot-button issues as gun control, air safety and gay rights. Once voters cast their ballots and enter their ZIP codes, the site automatically sends e-mails to their senators and representatives.

The site also features “Fifth Estate,” a regular column written by Morris, who resigned as President Clinton’s advisor over allegations he discussed White House affairs with a prostitute. Morris’ debut column is on First Lady Hillary Clinton’s “flip-flop” run for the New York Senate seat. Morris also plans to sell his new book, “Vote.com” — a look at how the Internet is changing politics — on the site. Morris said he paid \$250,000 for the *Vote.com* domain. “We really see this fundamentally as a major shift in the whole democratic process,” Morris said in an interview. “The idea is to force a referendum form of government through the Internet.”

At the end of each poll, lawmakers receive a tally of their constituents’ votes on that particular issue. Of course, the concept of using ZIP codes to contact Congress is not new. Many sites, including the NRA, let people search for and e-mail their representatives by entering a ZIP code. Before an election, constituents who’ve used *Vote.com* will get e-mail detailing how their lawmakers voted on a wide variety of issues. And if merely casting a “yes” or “no” vote isn’t enough, the site also has a chat room where people can discuss the issues with each other. In the future, Morris expects to hold votes on more than 40 issues at one time. Morris expects the net result of this to be more than 4,000 daily e-mails for each representative and exponentially more for the senators.

“If the congressmen ignore you, it will be at their peril,” Morris said. “This elevates the level of dialogue between congressmen and their constituents.” Maybe, but only if the representatives have time to wade through the e-mails sent via *Vote.com*. One congressional staffer said her office already receives hundreds of e-mails per day on a regular basis — a number bumped up to the thousands during the impeachment process. The staffer said every e-mail to her boss’ office receives a response. But the Morris site could make such responses impossible. “There would have to be a mechanism for handling them,” the staffer said. Morris denies that he’s creating spam, saying voters deserve contact with the people they’ve elected.

Right now, the site makes its money from banner ads, but in the future, said Morris, he also might do research for clients and data mining. But he won’t sell information on people’s voting habits, he said — data that many a campaign strategist would be eager to receive. Instead, he said he may forward information from groups such as gun-control advocates onto people who’ve submitted votes on the issue to his site.

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Top Tips to Squash Spam

by Leslie Ayers

1. Stay anonymous. Spammers use email robots called mailbots to collect addresses from newsgroups and the Web. You can outwit them: Never add your address to Internet email directories. When you’re on the Web, leave the email address field in generic Web forms blank, or supply a decoy address. (There are now thousands of websites— including ZDNet— that offer free email accounts.)

2. Confuse spammers by using two email accounts. Make one your primary account that you give out to friends, family, and colleagues. Use the other account for mailing lists, newsgroups, or Web forms. If your ISP doesn’t provide a second address at no charge, get a free Web-based email account.

3. Scramble your address. If you post public messages to newsgroups or Web discussion boards, you can limit the amount of junk sent to you by practicing address munging (also called spoofing). Adding extra characters or words to your outgoing address confuses mailbots (you can make the change in your email application’s preferences). For example, if your real address is `joe@isp.com`, a scrambled version would be `joe_spambait@removethis.isp.com`. Be sure to add instructions in your signature file that explain how to decode your address so you can receive legitimate replies. But don’t include your actual email address because mailbots scan the contents of all posts.

4. Screen the spam. Your email software’s filtering tools can block unwanted messages automatically. Here are some things you can set your email filters to look for: If a message doesn’t include your correct email address in the To: or Cc: field, trash it. Take note of the domains that frequently send you junk mail and block messages coming from them. Delete messages with subject lines in all caps (tell your friends to avoid leaving Caps Lock on!) and messages with a lot of dollar signs or exclamation points. You should also filter out messages that include spammer lingo like “unsubscribe,” “X-priority,” “adv” (for advertisements), “bulk email,” “authenticated sender,” or “make money fast.” You can add much stronger antispam powers to your email application with a spam filter. Our favorite spam buster is Novasoft SpamKiller. It comes with 3,000 preset filters that you can edit as needed. It also filters all parts of incoming messages, and it costs just \$30.

5. Never respond directly to junk mail. A reply verifies to the spammer that your email address is active. If you’re riled up enough about it, complain to the ISP that hosts the spammer. Figuring out where junk mail originated can be tricky, however. Open the message and look for IP addresses or domains within parentheses in the header’s Received lines (information outside the parentheses could be faked), then verify them using Acme Address Digger. Once you’ve identified the most likely culprit, visit the Network Abuse Clearinghouse for the appropriate contacts, and send a message requesting that they help stop spam coming from the offending domains.

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Complete Hard Disk Backup to CD-R Disks

by John G Hatsios, Tampa PC Users Group

Merle Nicholson's fine article on backing up a hard disk by using a removable hard disk appeared in January's "Bits of Blue" newsletter (and May 1999 Orange Bytes). After reading it, I was reminded I must backup my hard disk and better do it sooner than later.

In my case, I wanted to use a CD-R/RW to back up my hard disk on CD-R media. Although many software companies advertise the capability of backing up the hard disk to a CD-R, they hide the fact that they mean "only if all the data can fit in a single CD-R." One of the reasons I bought the CD-R/RW was for backing up my hard disk, but now it looked as if I had to do a little more investigating. After asking Adaptec, the foremost company with CD-R supporting software, and inquiring on the subject in a couple related forums on the Internet, I was told the software for backing up to multiple CD-R's is not available yet, but that it is under development.

The reason I am writing this article is that I did back up my hard disk in multiple CD-R's, and I will take you through it so you can use the information if you need to do something similar. But, before I tell you how, let me tell you why. Yes, I know, why should anyone bother? To buy the hardware, then the software, then to go through the learning process on how to do it and finally back up the hard disk. Bottom line: Spend \$200-\$300 and 10-20 hours. Then wait for the hard disk to crash, and nothing happens to the hard disk for years. Is it a waste of money and time? I think not.

From my personal experience I have been on both sides of the fence. First, from my first IBM PC to 286, 386, portables, etc. never backed up anything and never had a problem. But, with my first Gateway 2000 Pentium I thought it was time to backup. I bought a Colorado 1400 MB tape and I made a point to regularly backup my disk. I never had a problem and consequently never needed to use the backup.

Now I come to my present system, a fast IBM Aptiva with plenty of resources, all kinds of system tools (Config Safe, PC Doctor, Norton Anti-virus, etc.), Windows 98, and an array of fine software. Did I need to back up such a solid system? Why should I, since I never had any problem before. Well, I found out the hard way that I should have backed up my hard disk. After having my system set up the way I wanted it, which took many, many hours spread over many weeks, it crashed. It really crashed. No Config Safe, PC Doctor, Windows 98 Startup Disk, or DOS could revive it.

The first indication was a message during booting up, "Cannot find VMM.VXD." But that was only the tip of the iceberg. The complete registry was all messed up and the Windows\System directory had only a small number of files left; all others were an indistinguishable rubble, a complete mess. There was no hope of restoring my hard disk. I had to start from scratch, formatting, reloading the software and then rebuilding my configuration. Luckily, most of my data were backed up in diskettes.

A couple of weeks later I found an entry in the "known problems" area of the IBM Aptiva Tech Support web page. It said the problem is due to the incompatibility of a particular scanner with the operating system software. I assume they meant the Windows 98 OEM software. I did not ask whose fault it was. I have a scanner but not from the same manufacturer. The fix recommended was to format the hard disk and reload Windows and all the software, literally start from scratch. Little consolation! Also, now there was a downloadable BIOS update to correct the problem. However, the cautious language used in the instructions left the door open for possible future problems. It said, in essence, that even after the BIOS update "if problem is repeated, please repeat procedure," and that left me kind of wary.

Finding The Right Software-Well, it just happens that I listened to the PowerQuest people saying their Drive Image software can backup a hard disk to multiple CD-R's. There were three conditions:

1. There had to be more than one partition, so as to be able to use one for a backup file.
2. The partition with the backup file could not be backed up.
3. The backup file, or image, had to be split into a number of sections, 650-Mb maximum each, in order to fit in each CD-R.

My hard disk was a single partition. I could create a partition using Drive Image but because of some additional features I was sold on a second product for this from PowerQuest. Partition Magic creates additional partitions on the fly without destroying the data, as long as there is adequate free space on the disk. More information can be found in their web site <http://www.powerquest.com>.

It sounded good, and the price was right, \$30 each plus shipping, around \$65 total, less than half the regular price. So I ordered the two programs.

In the meantime, while examining other alternatives, Merle informed me through the Internet TPCUG Discussion Group that he knew someone who had backed up his hard disk on CD-Rs using PowerQuest software and also using a Seagate backup program. I knew Seagate made the Windows 98 native backup program, but I had already written it off since it was not supporting CD-R/WR. What about an update?

Yes, I found an update in the Seagate web site, <http://www.seagate.com>. For \$49 for Windows 98 owners, \$99 for others, plus shipping, I could get a backup program that would support removable media, including CD-R/WR. It sounded perfect, and, since there were no conditions, I could back up directly on the CR-R and then use my CD-ROM to restore. I ordered it. All along I've been concerned about restoring. A regular backup program works in the DOS environment. To restore, DOS has to recognize the device containing the backup file(s). The startup, or rescue, diskette contains the DOS program, but it also needed to contain the DOS driver for the device to be used to restore. The PowerQuest documentation says to back up directly from

continued

Windows, using the Windows version of Drive Image and then, for restoring, using the DOS version of the same program. The instructions ask you to contact your device manufacturer for a DOS driver. In my case it was an OEM CD-ROM. However, as you might know, the Windows 98 Start-up diskette already has a generic CD-ROM driver and you can choose to have it loaded during boot-up. Seagate did not say much about restoring in their documentation, which is only available in their backup program's "help" file, but I assumed I would find more information as I proceeded, so I chose to try Seagate first, since it seemed to be a straightforward backup program. Trying To Back Up Using Seagate Backup - The Seagate upgrade, called Backup Exec, came on a single CD-ROM without any documentation, except basic installation instructions. I felt these instructions were not adequate because they did not say anything on system requirements, what changes will be made in my system, will it update the existing backup program or install an entirely new one. Right from the start I did not get the impression of a good and well-documented program. The Backup Exec was loaded by default to its own directory, different from the original Windows 98 Seagate Backup directory, so it is a complete stand-alone program. The instructions for backing up to CD-Rs contained two steps:

1. Backup to a file on the hard disk.
2. Copy the backup file to CD-R. Both backup and restore are executed within the Windows environment. That caused two concerns:
 1. How Windows 98 will back itself up completely. Or will it?
 2. I will need to load Windows 98 before restore. In my case, Windows 98 OEM is part of a number of compressed files on a single CD along with all the other OEM programs, and they are automatically installed if you install Windows from this CD. So I needed another extra step installing all the original programs and then uninstalling the ones I did not want. This was not a pleasant task to look forward to. A lot of junk is loaded "free" in today's computers.

OK, I backed up to a file on the hard disk, in the same partition. I formatted three CD-Rs to ensure I had enough space for 2.2 GB of uncompressed files. I needed a little over 1.3 GB with compression. Looking at the size of the backup file I could tell it did backup Windows 98; however, during compare it generated an error report of a few Windows files it could not back up. This, however, was no longer important, since reinstalling Windows 98 will be required before restore. I assume they back up Windows 98 to include any updates, up-grades, and customization, but files in use could not be backed up.

The copying to the CD-R started normally. The CD-R/RW was recognized and started burning the backup files to CD-R at the normal 2X speed. But while I was waiting for the "Insert CD-R number 2" message, I got an unpleasant surprise: "Error-The end of CD-R media has been reached unexpectedly. Copying has been terminated." The first CD-R stopped after copying 637 MB, and there was no recovery path.

Seagate Tech Support next morning told me that not all CD-R/RW are supported. I was told the supported list did not include my Acer CRW6206A. I thanked them for the news and asked for an RMA number. The damage was \$15 for shipment and registered return and two weeks wasted.

Backing Up Using PowerQuest Software - The PowerQuest packages came with very good documentation. Both Partition Magic 4.0 and Drive Image 2.0 came each on a single CD-ROM and each with a good printed manual. I also received BootMagic for use with multiple operating systems to enable switching among them. It sells separately for \$15-\$30, but it is included with Partition Magic in its CD-ROM and a separate smaller printed manual. I had never used any PowerQuest software before, but I had heard good comments about them. I expected everything to go very smoothly, at least this time. However, it did not quite happen that way. I installed both programs, following the usual installation instructions, and generated a "Rescue Disk," actually a two floppy startup pair for each program. For obvious reasons, this is recommended before attempting to partition a hard disk to run Scandisk and Defrag. I did both. Also, there was a bold caution note to backup the hard disk before attempting to partition. I had no way of doing that. As a matter of fact this was to be the end result of the process I had just started. A little ironic, but I would not blame them for being extra careful.

Here I had another minor distraction. The documentation said if I had more than one CD-ROM installed, Windows 98 might not automatically assign the proper new drive letters to the CD-ROM(s), so I might not be able to copy to CD-R. I followed the recommended procedure and when I pretested, the assignment was incorrect. I disregarded the above and returned to my previous setting. This was probably my error, since I assumed CD included CD-ROM and CD-R/W.

I started Partition Magic and got the initial screen. But as soon as I tried the first pull down menu everything froze. This was the kind of freeze no Ctrl-Alt-Del or Power-Off buttons could fix. It was a solid hang-up. I had to pull the plug out of the wall. Tried again, after making sure all other programs were turned off. The result was the same. I performed Scandisk and Defrag on the hard disk again and reloaded the program. There was still no solution.

Next morning the PowerQuest Tech Support, after examining the procedure, tried several times without success, then told me to use the "Rescue Diskette(s)" to start and open the program in DOS. That helped a little. We got to three steps before freezing. Then I was told I might not have enough conventional memory. We inserted a line in the Autoexec.bat of the Rescue diskette to load the program "high." By that time I was on the phone for 45 minutes and I told the tech to study the problem and either call me back or e-mail me with any suggestions. I am sure this experience is not out of the ordinary. As a matter of fact, it happens so often that some of us have developed certain "defensive" or should I say "offensive" mechanisms. One of them is that we call again, hoping to get a different tech who will have a new idea. It worked. The other tech said I had to lock my hard disk, which is sup-

continued

posedly done by the program automatically. After that the program worked, although only in the DOS mode.

I have a 6 GB disk with 2.2 GB used. It is FAT 32. My cluster size is minimal, 4K, so there was no need for multiple small partitions. I decided to leave another 1 GB to the primary C: partition and make a new D: partition 2.8 GB to be used for backups, etc. You see, if I had a backup file of my C: disk in the D: partition when my computer crashed, I could have recovered just from that file alone, easily. So the strategy now was to leave the backup file in D: even after copying it to CD-Rs. This will give me additional insurance and facilitates making interim backups, since backing up to HD is very fast. I will need my removable media, CD-Rs, only to recover from a major HD damage.


The creation of the extended logical partition went smoothly, and the graphical representation of the disk partition sizes and status was excellent.

Ready to backup? Well, not quite yet-The last PowerQuest tech I talked to cautioned me to ensure I have the Version 2.02 update for Drive Image, especially if I am to backup using a CD-R/W. He assumed the version I received a week ago was 2.0, so I had to do a two step update., first to Version 2.01 and then to 2.02. Checking the version in the Windows 98 program showed 2.0 but in DOS showed 2.01. The updates were downloadable from the PowerQuest web site. Each update was compressed and large, a few MB and a few hundred KB, respectively. They were not self-extracting. The instructions called for downloading to a Temp directory, copying to the Drive Image directory, and expanding by using PKZIP or a compatible utility.

Checking the Windows program, it showed version 2.0 while the DOS showed version 2.01. Besides the question of what version I already had, I also found out there were three directories using the words, Drive Image. Anyway, the directory I chose was the one containing the application, exec file. The update 2.0 to 2.01 did not do anything to either Windows or DOS programs. The update from 2.01 to 2.02 changed a couple of important files. It was now obvious I had version 2.01 for both programs. In any case, however, I was interested in the DOS program, since that's the one I would use for both backup and restore.

This is the end of the suspense. The rest worked just fine. I backed up the entire drive C: in a three part split backup file in D: using the high compression setting. Then I copied the backup file from D: to F:, my CD-R/RW drive, one CD-R each file part. The C: to D: backup took, approximately, half an hour and the D: to F: copying another 75 minutes. There were no errors and no more problems.

I do not expect problems with restore. The Windows 98 Startup Disk loads the DOS CD-ROM driver and the Drive Image Rescue Disk contains the DOS version of the program. Although I have not done the restore, I am confident the complete drive C: is restorable. I did check it as much as it is possible with a dry run.

Reprinted from Bits of Blue, Tampa PC Users Group - May 20, 1999 

E-Commerce Surging

by Ken Fermoye

If I owned a lot of shopping mall stock I'd be getting a little nervous right now. Commerce on the Web is taking off, and the afterburners will really be lit in the years ahead. A recent study by ActivMedia Research (first ever to quantitatively study Internet commerce, beginning in 1994) projects \$95 billion in electronic commerce for 1999 and a total of more than \$1.3 trillion in 2003!

The 6th Annual "Real Numbers behind Net Profits" study anticipates a revenue growth rate of 150% for 1999, more than double the original forecast of 72%, and a growth rate of 138% for 2000. ActivMedia reports Web revenues continue to flourish across all industry sectors as online buyers rely on the Net for a wider range of goods and services.

Here is how the growth pattern has been and is projected (in billions of dollars), according to the "Real Numbers" study: 1996, \$2.7; 1997, \$22; 1998, \$38; 1999, \$95; 2000, \$226; 2001, \$459; 2002, \$826; 2003, \$1324.

ActivMedia's VP of Market Research Harry Wolhandler offers some good reasons. "Expanding cross-language capabilities create increasingly permeable global boundaries. Speedy digital information flow facilitates free trade and business worldwide. Political improvements coupled with faster, more efficient cross-cultural communications are fueling global e-commerce."


A look inside "Real Numbers" reveals many interesting bits of data.

72% of websites are still based in the US

92% of e-commerce is generated through US-based websites

Exports are becoming increasingly critical to US e-commerce growth

9 in 10 revenue dollars are product and service sales, not advertising

The "Real Numbers behind Net Profits" annual study is based on a random sample drawn from 550,000 English-language publicly listed URLs and "presents the most detailed information about online marketers available anywhere," claims ActivMedia Research, whose clients include Andersen Consulting, Cisco, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Visa, and Yahoo. 

C-Net TV Schedule		
Sci-Fi Channel	Saturday	Sunday
CNet Central	6:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.
New Edge	6:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.
USA Network		
Cnet Central		6:00 a.m.
The New Edge		6:30 p.m.
For more information visit the C-Net Web Site (www.cnet.com)		

SIG News

PC Users Group

Jo-Anne Head (tinarock@aol.com)

<http://www.intac.com/~tinarock/pcug.html>

December 17: We will hold our annual SIG election. If you think you can run this SIG better than I do, you are welcome to come out and run against me. For our meeting topic, if you came to the November Main Meeting, you heard Bill Machrone speak to us about AtGuard, a firewall that can be used on the PC. I have purchased and downloaded AtGuard, and for the December meeting I plan to install it on the club computer and configure it live for the SIG meeting and discuss the use of the firewall. Come, learn, contribute (I'm not an expert at this yet). ☐

November: Meeting Update: Here is a list of the software raffle winners at the Windows 2000 road show:

- Joy Martin won Encarta2000
- Ryan Sproul won Encarta2000
- Yupeng Fan won Encarta 2000
- Dan Burstiner won a Compaq Aero handheld device
- Norman Briskman won Office2000 ☐

Main Meeting

Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)

December: Business Meeting and Elections. The topic is Software for Kids, hosted by Peter Fillingham.

January: Host: Sol Libes. Topic: Windows2000. Speaker: Alan Goldberg, Senior Software Support Specialist at Princeton University and Windows2000 beta tester. ☐

Random Access

Scott Vincent (svincent@ix.netcom.com)

Those of us who have been involved in computer user groups for a long time remember when the Random Access Session was the only source of information about your particular computer. Even though PCs and the software that runs on them are pretty much standardized now, users occasionally have problems or want more information.

Random Access is for *everyone*. There is no such thing as a dumb question. Everyone usually benefits from the discussed topics regardless of their level of expertise. Many of the regulars can help solve your problem or at least get you started in the right direction.

This is an official "Newbies too" group. ☐

MCP

(Preparing for MS Certification Exams)

Scott Vincent (svincent@ix.netcom.com)

Wednesdays from 7:00PM to 10:00PM except for the 4th Wed of each month. We review typical exam questions. Those who attend are expected to bring a PC properly configured with: NT, 10BaseT network card, and NetMeeting 2.1. Most of us have the 4-volume set of Exam Cram books. We do not teach NT but help prepare for the exam. Meetings are hands on and everyone is expected to participate. ☐

C/C++ Users Group

Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net)

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

October: Presentation was on a C++ Desktop Launch Utility - Win32 API. A common operation working with computers is to return to the desktop. Your desktop often contains recent information, new icons, new programs and other features that you want to get access. Microsoft recognized this need by providing a MINIMIZE-ALL option on your taskbar. Windows 98 actually has an option on the taskbar for bring up a list of desktop utilities. Sometimes this is not enough. At work some of the programs that I use are so unfriendly that they will not allow themselves to be minimized.

The desktop is simply another folder on your hard drive. You can open it with Microsoft Explorer. Unfortunately the path is fairly long and not consistent between operating systems. I have written a desktop utility which displays a small icon on the taskbar. When you double-click on the icon the program launches Windows Explorer with the proper path to bring up the information that's normally contained on the desktop.

The program uses the standard Windows 32-bit API, application programming language interface. Although I have tried it with Microsoft Visual C++ version 5 it will probably compile using any compiler. An additional feature will resize in the window to scale it to the available video space.

The biggest challenge for this program was to create an application program window which was non-obtrusive. There is no window. The only evidence of the program is a small icon which is typically near the clock on the lower right hand corner of the screen. As usual, the code is available at <http://www.blast.net/barnold/Csig9910.htm> ☐

Investing

Sheldon Koepf (sheldonk@intac.com)

<http://www.intac.com/~sheldonk/invsig>

November: We discussed Where is the Market is going? Primarily I used the new MetaStock Professional, Version 7.0 to show how to use market information in the form of charts. There was much interest and much discussion about the short and long term direction of the market. My impression is that most share my opinion of the possibility of a weak market in the near future, but are very optimistic for the long term.

We took an in-depth look at the new revision of MetaStock, which seems both faster and easier to use. We use MetaStock at every meeting, but it had been some time since we did a complete review of all its features with several examples of how I used the program demonstrating its impressive capabilities. ☐

continued

Lunics (Linux/Unix)

Peter Fillingham (pete@panix.com)

<http://www.acgnj.org/groups/lunics.htm>

This is a group for those who share an interest in the Linux operating system and its relatives (UN*X, BSD, Coherent, AIX, etc.). Currently there is a strong interest in Linux as an alternative to other operating systems, especially since there is no charge for the system. It and its source code are freely distributable. Meetings the first Monday of the month. ☐

Multimedia & Mobile

Steven Rodriguez

(cybertech72@bigfoot.com)

The MultiMedia and Mobile Computing Activity meets at 7 P.M. the same night as PC Users Group, and will introduce the topic being discussed at PCUG. ☐

Layman's Forum

Matt Skoda

(matthew.skoda@acgnj.org)

We discuss issues of interest to novice users or persons who are just interested in getting started. Watch the ACGNJ Web page for updates. ☐

VBA

Jim Ditaranto (fryr92a@prodigy.com)

VBA = Visual Basic for Applications

VBA is currently implemented in Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Project and Microsoft Access. In the future, Microsoft will implement VBA in Microsoft Word and in Microsoft PowerPoint. Anyone interested in using any one of the Microsoft Office products and VBA is urged to attend.

Meetings start at 7 P.M. on the fourth Monday of the month. ☐

Genealogy

Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)

<http://www.webwarren.com/kb4cyc/gensig.html>

The Genealogy SIG is a group for genealogists who have an interest in computers and for computer users who have an interest in genealogy. We provide a forum to assist members in furtherance of both computing and genealogical endeavors. Meetings generally focus on genealogy more than on computers. We meet at 8:00 PM on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad

In addition to our Web page the SIG also has an electronic mailing list. Messages to be sent to the list should be addressed to gensig@webwarren.com. Subscription requests should be addressed to gensig@webwarren.com and include the line "subscribe gensig" in the body of the message. ☐

Macintosh Users Group

Keith Sproul (ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu)

The Macintosh group generally meets on the fourth Friday of the month in Hill Center, Room 114, Busch Campus, Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ. In June, November, and December, the meeting is usually pushed to the third Friday. The meeting starts at 7 pm. We meet in the Busch Campus Student Center Food Court for supper around 5 pm for those people that come to the meeting straight from work. ☐

Lotus Notes

Mike Barlow (mwb@injersey.com)

<http://www.njlnug.org>

December: Main topic will be "More Web-Based Tricks and Treats for Domino".

Meetings are held at the offices of Bright Ideas Software in Edison. You'll find directions on our Web page. ☐

Symposium

John Raff (jraff@injersey.com)

December: Oscar Granison of Granison Video Productions will speak and demo linear and nonlinear video editing using PC software. Granison productions produces videos for fortune 500 Companies as well as the state of NJ Division of Public Safety. Oscar Granison and his son have made their Video Production a very successful business.

January: (Tentative) Phil Gaunt of Technicadd Corp, an AutoCadd Expert and instructor at the prestigious Pratt Institute in NYC. He is also involved with the North Jersey Auto-Cadd Group. ☐

Internet

Martin Rosenblum (m.rosenblum@ieee.org)

November 4: Once again Harrison didn't make the meeting. I suspect the problem is that he uses the café as a teaching venue, and if he's got a student there, he's reluctant to leave. (Pure speculation on my part.) I did get an e-mail expressing regrets. In the Web news section I reported on the arrival of Eudora 4.2.2 that afternoon. I noted that a recent visit to my home town (Stamford, CT) library revealed that their Net station population had grown to 8 for general use and in the reference room, for research only—no chat or e-mail, there were now 18 Net stations. We discussed the November 2 *PC Magazine* article "Throw out your Software." This was in keeping with the Larry Ellison keynote at Fall Internet World. (But, then there's John Dvorak's piece in the the December 1 issue: "Web Computing Stinks.") We spent some time reviewing the access statistics for www.acgnj.org. Visits were up almost 50% over September and the audio file of Steve Schlesinger's September 17 PC User Group presentation on Troubleshooting Windows95/Windows98 resulted in 82 downloads. We talked a bit about the ICANN wars, but didn't get to talk about e-commerce technology once again.

December 3: I invested a few bucks in CDROM copies of Netscape 4.7. I was annoyed to find that it was the 56-bit version (I hadn't read the fine print!) But, then I upgraded it to 128-bit on line and found that the whole process took only a couple of minutes, so it was really a good investment. I got five for \$14.95 (S&H) and I'll bring them along. If you want to buy one, bring \$3.00—first come, first served. At our October 7 meeting I gave away a copy of Modem Wizard by Kissco (www.kissco.com.) to Vilis Ozolins. He mentioned that some of its features were very nice and quite useful in speeding up even cable connections. If he can get his note ready, he'll tell us a bit about his discoveries. Then, we'll try to get back to the omitted e-commerce technology discussion. Once again, if you're a newbie or want to bring one along, we'll do newbie stuff at 7:30. ☐

BubbleBoy Protection

by Sol Libes

Murphy aims to make bond market history. With the click of a computer mouse, Murphy will auction \$55 million worth of municipal bonds directly to institutional investors over the Internet. The deal would be the first of its kind in the bond market. By cutting out Wall Street's middlemen and appealing directly to buyers, Murphy hopes to eliminate steep underwriting fees and cut the city's cost of issuing bonds by paying a lower yield."

What makes this so interesting is the size of the market, some \$13.7 trillion, the huge chunks it comes in and the probable dizzying speed at which this market is going to migrate to the Net. The effects will not simply be one of making a large segment of the economy much more efficient, but, perhaps, the elimination of the middleman, a previously very lucrative business because it involves humongous sums but little effort. We're talking here about U.S. Government bonds, municipal bonds, and corporate bonds. Already in 1998 some 5% of corporate bonds and 6.5% of U.S. Government bonds were traded on the Net, and these figures are expected to jump to over 50% in the next two years.

You can read and mull over the entire report at www.businessweek.com/1999/99_46/b3655190.htm.

The November 22 issue has a short piece, "It's Time To Shine a Light On Brokers." It tells what's behind the scenes as far as price and execution time at the online brokers, and while it doesn't score them like www.gomez.com, it does give you a feel for what's going on at the various houses. ☞

The media is talking about a new virus called Bubbleboy. It is sent in e-mail and can affect Win95/98/NT systems without even opening the e-mail or an attached file. I have gleaned the following from news on the web.

1. It does exist. It was discovered by an anti-virus developer and so far it, or anything using this technology, has not appeared on the internet.
2. It exploits a defect in the Win95/98/NT Scripting Host.
3. Microsoft has already released a patch against it. If you are using Win98 choose Start|Windows Update. It will automatically load Internet Explorer and take you to the Windows Update web site. Select Product Updates. Your system will be automatically tested and it will determine the updates needed. Check the box for Update for Security Vulnerabilities in "Scriptlet.typlib". You may also see some other patches listed which the test has not found on your system. You may also wish to install these as well. Check all the patches you want, then click the Download button. They will be automatically downloaded and installed.

Windows 3.1, Win95, and NT do not have the automatic update function. For them use Internet Explorer 4 or 5, choose Tools|Windows Update (slightly different name in IE4) and proceed as above. If you use Netscape, go to www.microsoft.com/msdownload/iebuild/scriptlet/en/scriptlet.htm After checking your system, select "Critical Updates" and proceed as described above. ☞

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

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

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First Name _____ Last Name _____ Phone _____

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Town _____ State _____ Zip _____ URL _____

Do not list me in the Membership Directory. (Street addresses are not listed in the directory.)

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

Other Local Computer Groups

Princeton Macintosh User Group: 7:15 pm 2nd Tuesday, Jadwin Hall, Princeton U. (609) 252-1163	NY/NJ/CT Relational Database User Group: Corporate and independent users. (212) 839-0125	New York Personal Computer Club: For information call hotline, (212) 533-NYPC
Computer Education Society of Philadelphia: 7:30 pm, 2nd Wednesday, St. Asaph's Episcopal Church. Lee Le'mon, (717)786-2260	Brookdale Computer Users Group: 7 pm, 3rd Friday, Forums 103 at Brookdale Community College, Lincroft NJ. Andrea Tarr (732) 229-2959.	Macintosh User Group: Third Tuesday, Mallory Hall, Montclair State University, Montclair NJ. (201) 893-5274 or (201) 659-1017.
WordPerfect SIG of PCUG of So. Jersey: 2nd Tue., Queen of Heaven School, Cherry Hill; 4th Wed., Cherry Hill Library. (609) 354-1159.	Hunterdon Computer Club: 8:30 am to noon 3rd Saturday, Hunterdon Medical Center, Rt 31, Flemington. (908) 995-4042	PC Club of South Jersey: 7 pm, 2nd Tuesday, Holy Cross HS, Route 130, Delran NJ. Pat Murphy, (609) 428-8759
Philadelphia Area Computer Society: 3rd Sat., 9 am Main Meeting, groups follow. Drexel U., Philadelphia. Pat Murphy, (609) 428-8759	Central Jersey Computer Club: 8 pm, 4th Friday, Rm 74, Armstrong Hall, Trenton St. College. Rich Williams, (609) 466-0909.	NJ PC Users Group: Bergen County Community College, Paramus NJ. Maureen Shannon, (201) 853-7432
Morris Micro Computer Club: Bill Traywick, (973) 635-5393.	Fairlawn Computer Club: Last Monday, Fairlawn Senior Citizen Center. Joe Mathias (fair.lawn.computer.club@juno.com)	Princeton PC Users Group: 2nd Monday, Lawrence Library, Rt 1 & Darrah Ln, Lawrenceville, Paul Kurivchack (908) 281-3107, http://www.ppcug-nj.org
Workshop, Hands-On: 2 P.M. to Midnight on last Saturday of the month. First United Methodist Church, Church and Atlantic Streets (one mile from GSP exit 117A), Aberdeen NJ. Bring your project, computer and extension cord. For information call Burke Mawby, (908) 566-7445.		

Radio and TV Programs

ACGNJ's Bill Farrell: METV 12 (Metuchen), Thurs. & Sat., 8:30 p.m.

Computer Radio Show, WBAI 99.5 FM, New York, Wednesday 8-9 p.m.

Software Review TLC Sat. 10 p.m.

CNet, Schedule on page 11.

On Computers, WCTC 1450 AM, New Brunswick, Sunday 1-4 p.m. To ask questions call (800) 227-7770.

Computer Talk, WPHT 1210 AM, Saturdays 11 a.m-1 p.m.

Free Help Line

Dell Computer: Sundays 1-4 P.M. (800) 677-0874. Call with your questions.

KGP Computer Shows

(More at <http://www.pcshow.com>)

Dec. 18-19: NJ Convention Center, Raritan Center, Edison

ACGNJ Hotline

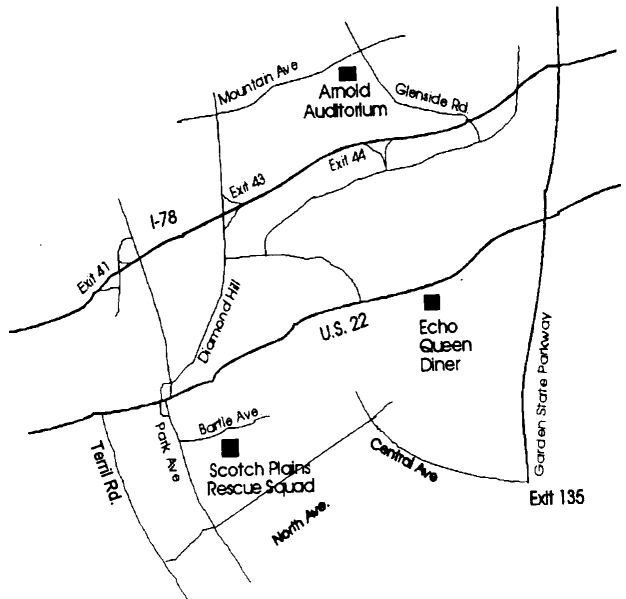
(908) 322-4654

ACGNJ Bulletin Boards

The ACGNJ Bulletin boards were shut down in April due to lack of interest. Of the all the other bulletin boards previously listed in this spot, only one is still in operation.

(732) 739-3693 Dave Wrobel

For a comprehensive listing of NJ bulletin boards, look for and download GSBBS???.ZIP (Garden State BBS List).



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

From New York City or Northern New Jersey

Take either 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 and follow circle under Parkway. Bear right onto Central Avenue; follow to Westfield and under RR overpass. Left at light onto North Avenue; follow to light in Fanwood. Right onto Martine (which turns into Park Ave.). Right onto Bartle Avenue in middle of shopping district. The Scotch Plains Rescue Squad is located on the right. It is a two-story brick building. Please do not park in the row next to the building.

From I-78 (either direction)

Take exit for Scotch Plains (Exit 41) and follow signs to US 22. Turn right at light at bottom of hill and use overpass to cross over low US 22 Westbound directions.

From US 22 Westbound

Exit at Park Avenue, Scotch Plains. The exit is after a McDonalds Restaurant on the right, diagonally opposite the Scotchwood Diner on the left, and immediately before the overpass. After exiting, turn left at the light and use the 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). The Scotch Plains Rescue Squad is located on the right. It is a two-story brick building. Please do not park in the row next to the building. We normally meet upstairs, 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.

ACGNJ NEWS

AMATEUR COMPUTER GROUP OF NEW JERSEY, INC.
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ACGNJ MEETINGS

For the very latest news on ACGNJ meetings, including weather cancellations, call our Hotline (908) 322-4654
or visit the ACGNJ Web Page (<http://www.acgnj.org>)

Wednesday, December 1

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, 973-361-5793

Thursday, December 2

8 P.M. - Internet. Marty Rosenblum, 973-376-8965.

Friday, December 3

8 P.M. - Main Meeting. Frank Warren, 908-756-1681

Monday, December 6

8 P.M. - Lunics, Peter Fillingham, 973-731-9269

Wednesday, December 8

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, 973-361-5793

Thursday, December 9

8 P.M. - Computerized Investing. Sheldon Koepf, 201-740-2489.

Friday, December 10

8 P.M. - PC Symposium. John Raff, 973-533-0664

Monday, December 13

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

Wednesday, December 15

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, 973-361-5793

Friday, December 17

7 P.M. - Multimedia & Mobile Computing. Steve Rodriguez.

8 P.M. - PC Users (<http://www.intac.com/~tinarock/pcug.html>).
Jo-Anne Head, 908-769-7385.

Tuesday, December 21

7:30 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold, 908-735-7898.

8 P.M. - Lotus Notes, Mike Barlow. Meeting at the offices of Bright Ideas Software, Edison NJ. Info Line: (732) 417-5778 ext 5 .

Thursday, December 23

8 P.M. - (No meeting) Genealogy. Frank Warren, 908-756-1681.

Friday, December 24

7 P.M. - (No meeting) Macintosh Users Group, meeting at Rutgers University, Piscataway. Keith Sproul (ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu), 732-821-4828.

8 P.M. - (No meeting) Random Access, Computer Q&A, Scott Vincent, 973-361-5793

Monday, December 27

7 P.M. - VBA (Visual Basic, Excel). James Ditaranto, 973-772-7171.

Wednesday, December 29

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, 973-361-5793

Monday, January 3, 2000

8 P.M. - Lunics, Peter Fillingham, 973-731-9269

Tuesday, January 4

8 P.M. - ACGNJ Board Meeting.

Wednesday, January 5

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, 973-361-5793

Thursday, January 6

8 P.M. - Internet. Marty Rosenblum, 973-376-8965.

Friday, January 7

8 P.M. - Main Meeting. Frank Warren, 908-756-1681

Monday, January 10

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

Wednesday, January 12

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, 973-361-5793

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