

Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

Volume 24, Number 2

February 1999



TCF-99
Saturday and Sunday, May 1 and 2
New Jersey Convention Center
Raritan Center, Edison NJ
1800-631-0062



www.acgnj.org

All Set for TCF

Trenton Computer Festival is well under way, even though opening day is still several months away. The Web pages (www.tcf99.com and www.tcf-nj.org) have been up and running for months, and publicity releases from Ken Gordon Productions have been arriving regularly.

At last report, the speaker program had been filled. There will be plenty of educational opportunities available for festival attendees. Here is a small sample of this year's offerings:

- Caught in the World Wide Web
- Hot Topics in Internet Litigation
- Y2K Survival
- Finding a Job on the Internet
- Using a Wired Classroom
- Home Networks
- Cabling for Voice and Data Networks
- Hot to Succeed as a Consultant
- Computers in Amateur Radio
- Trouble-Shoot Windows Problems
- Genealogy on the Internet
- Having Fun with Paint Programs
- Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence
- Linux Forum
- Avoid Y2K Chaos

That should whet your appetite! And there's more — take a look at <http://www.tcf-nj.org/talks99.html> for a more complete listing and information on the speakers. ☞

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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.

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

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E-Mail Addresses

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The Internet Corner

by Martin Rosenblum (m.rosenblum@ieee.org)

Web News

Item: Yahoo! Business Wire, December 24: Yahoo - Internet Stock News Announces the Availability of Its FREE Internet Stock Newsletter as Well as Free Real-Time Quotes and Information About Internet Investment Opportunities. Try www.yahoo.com/headlines/business.

Item: Ziff-Davis News, December 24: AOL passes local ISPs. According to new figures gathered by ZD Market Intelligence, AOL (NYSE:AOL) serves more home users than all U.S. local Internet service providers combined. The research service found that in August, AOL had more than 14 million members, compared with about 13 million combined for local ISPs, companies that offer access on a regional basis. A later news story has AOL offering a new, even less technical service to snag a whole bunch more.

Item: The New York Times, Cybertimes, December 25: Internet Strikers Protest High Cost of Access. In a move harking back to the sixties, in recent months there have been a number of organized "Internet strikes" in France, Spain, Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland and China, involving thousands of protesters. The cost of access is higher in some of these countries than in the United States, where unlimited access typically costs \$19.95 a month. For instance, in France, Internet users pay roughly \$16 a month for unlimited access, but that does not include anywhere from \$0.70 to \$2.50 an hour in local phone charges. Residents of Germany pay a flat rate of \$22 a month for Internet access, plus local telephone charges of roughly \$3 per hour. Heavy Internet users in Germany can rack up telephone bills of hundreds of dollars each month.

Item: ZD Berst Alert, January 11: MSN Internet Access for Sale? Rumor has it that Microsoft wants to get out of ISP business, but keep MSN as portal and content site.

Item: ZD Berst Alert, January 13: Super-Fast Cable Modems Today? Cable modems are gaining over ASDL and satellite systems in both speed and installed base. Motorola is doing a booming business and Cisco is entering the fray to give them some serious competition. AT&T is buying TCI to be able to offer all their services over one pipe — cable. That includes cable TV, cable Internet, and local and long distance telephone service.

Item: The New York Times, January 15, Cybertimes: Online Publisher Challenges Copyright Law. One of Sonny Bono's last legislative acts was to sponsor a bill extending copyright protection another twenty years to seventy years. In the case of works published before 1978 it's now 95 years.

A fine fellow named Eric Eldred has run a free Web site, Eldritch Press, eldred.ne.mediaone.net since 1995, where he publishes public domain literature. He happens to live down the road from the home of Robert Frost, and was about to publish one of his works which had been originally published in 1923, since the copyright would have run out in 1998, but the new law would prevent that. He was ready to close down his Web site, but got his dander up and decided to fight. A num-

ber of lawyers have joined the suit. Eldred's legal team includes Profs. Lawrence Lessig and Charles Nesson of Harvard Law School, Jonathan Zittrain of Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet & Society, and Geoffrey Stewart and Pamela Jadwin, lawyers with the firm Hale and Dorr, an impressive array.

These laws were created in the first place to protect the author from having his works stolen. The new law was designed to extend these protections to the heirs, but mainly to the corporations like Disney and Sony who buy the copyrights. There is more info on his site. He deserves our support.

Item: The Star-Ledger, January 15: More women among Net newcomers as Middle America moves online. As the Net becomes more generally useful and less nerd heaven, previous imbalances are beginning to disappear. The Pew Research poll indicated that the most popular activity is e-mail, and the most popular surfing destination is weather news. One of the most pleasing conclusions is that use of the Net is breaching the barriers of sex, age, income and education, and reaching to most of the general public.

Item: The New York Times, January 16, Cybertimes: U.S. Officials Try to Sell Encryption Policy in Valley. I'm afraid the security establishment just doesn't get it. You will see some references to the problems introduced into international online banking by national encryption laws in my Letter from Lisbon.

Item: Ziff-Davis Net News (ZDNN), January 16: Bad Bugs. A warning by Molly Wright Steenson of ZDNet about a bug and a virus. April Fool! That's the Microsoft bug that will affect every PC in the United States in 2001. The bug causes some Windows applications to operate as if it were one hour earlier than the system clock. This may affect calendaring software and could cause financial transactions to be recorded at the wrong time.

Speaking of ugly things that happen to PCs, there's a real virus to avoid. No, it's not the Neiman-Marcus cookie recipe or the Good Times hoax — it's the picture.exe virus. There are at least two versions circulating right now, as well as a similar virus called soft.exe. If you open the file, it expands into two files, note.exe and manager.exe. They map your hard drive for every e-mail address on your system, search your Internet cache, and ferret out America Online login information and password. Then it launches dial-up networking on reboot and tries to send the information to an e-mail address in China. Good Times it isn't, so users, beware.

Item: The Sunday Star-Ledger, January 17: "The ultimate e-banking ranking." This article rates the ten biggest New Jersey banks as to their Internet quality. Top rated was Citibank, with Bank of New York last and Chase (my bank) number eight. Also noted were Magyar (pronounced major) Savings Bank, a \$195 million local bank in the New Brunswick area — lots of Hungarians there — which offers Internet banking and a prize-winning Web site, www.magbank.com and Hubco, the third largest New Jersey bank (which I never heard of, either) with no PC or Internet banking and not even

continued

a Web site! (By the way, if you want to locate Web-accessible banks, try www.banksite.com.)

The article was really pretty thorough, although there was some confusion about PC banking and Internet banking. I think they meant browser banking over the Net by the later phrase, since most PC banking is done using software that communicates with banking databases over the Net, even if a browser is not involved. There is an informative discussion of Net banking security. Surprisingly, a number of institutions sounded weak on this point.

Item: Yahoo! News, January 17: "China Orders Airline Bosses To Fly Next Jan. 1." I'm sure Alex would agree to this solution to part of the Y2K problem.

Letter from Lisbon

Preliminaries...

Got our tickets from my ace agent, Arthur, and asked him to get us a little better hotel than our usual sort of gloomy, but inexpensive, room with breakfast, but still close to Maria's mother. He came up with something, but just to be sure, I checked it on our Lisbon Street map. It seemed much farther away than Arthur's map showed. Then, I went to Microsoft's Expedia, www.expedia.com, and found a nifty service: pick a city and ask for locator map. You get a scrollable list of hotels in your price range and a map of the city. You highlight a hotel in the list and a red marker pops up on the map, showing the hotel location. Neat! I used it to find hotels within walking distance of my mother-in-law's apartment. (Cars in Lisbon are a real drag — the city's saturated — but public transportation is fine.)

You may have attended my presentation on my previous trip to Portugal, during which we made a virtual trip to Lisbon from the Rescue Squad. If so, you remember my discovery of an Internet Café in Lisbon, Cyber.bica (www.cyberbica.com). Maria and I visited the café and met the principals, Paula Amador and Hugo Gomes. Just before Christmas I received an e-mail greeting from them which resulted in a brief e-exchange.

Before taking off for Lisbon, I printed out the movie theater schedules from one of their local newspapers, using www.jnoticias.pt/Secdiv/cinema/cartaz.htm which lists the shows scheduled for selected cities throughout the whole country, but, I think, not all towns.

Then, as our departure time approached, I surfed over to www.flycontinental.com, and checked on the departure time of our flight. Very nice! I even knew the number of the incoming flight, so I checked that and found it had come in one hour late, but there was enough of an interval that our flight seemed to remain on schedule.

The Flight...

Boarding was about five minutes late, not a serious problem. However, we didn't leave the gate for a long time, what with all the moving around of humongous pieces of "carry-on" luggage. We took off almost an hour late, but the captain, a cheerful chap, assured us that we would still land on schedule; the headwinds which had delayed the arrival of the incoming flight, would be tailwinds on the outgoing flight,

and help us along. Then began one of the most agonizing ordeals that travelers subject themselves to on an almost regular basis: the infamous "red-eye!" We took off at 9 P.M. EST, dinner an hour or so later, followed by a movie, breakfast and a 3 A.M. EST (8 A.M. local time) landing, with the hustle and bustle of the morning already well underway! We long ago learned to forgo the meal and movie and try to sleep.

Lisboa...

After the pleasant ride from the airport to the hotel, we popped into bed and conked out for about three hours while our abused circadian clocks vainly tried to readjust themselves. Then a sandwich at one of our favorite old haunts and a visit with Maria's mom. We had dinner at another favorite restaurant in Mom's neighborhood and returned to the hotel to sample it's wonders (mainly a compatible modem connection).

As I reported last month about Howard's experience in Lods, AOL worked just fine. (In fact I had verified this before I left with a brief transatlantic connection!) The number I had set up for Compuserve didn't work, so I brought up AOL and connected my Netscape browser to one of the resulting sockets, and Eudora to the other. I used Netscape to check out www.compuserve.com and found they had changed the Lisbon number to the same one used by AOL, apparently a contract local network. Sadly, I was unable to get through the login sequence with Compuserve, nor could I find instructions on their Web site. I remembered having seen something when I checked in the states, but couldn't remember the details.

Eudora was a different problem. There was no difficulty downloading my email from INTAC's POP3 server, but there seems to be no SMTP server available via the AOL connection. I fired off some email to AOL, but the response I received wasn't encouraging, though I'm not sure the fellow on the help desk understood the question. So, I was reduced to reading my mail with Eudora and writing it with AOL, making replies most awkward. After taking care of my mail, I returned to Netscape and checked out the market activity at Schwab, and used Quicken to download the latest prices on my stock and bond holdings.

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C-Net TV Schedule		
Sci-Fi Channel	Saturday	Sunday
CNet Central	9:00 a.m.	12:00 n.
New Edge	9:30 a.m.	12:30 p.m.
The Web	10:00 a.m.	1:00 p.m.
Cool Tech	10:30 a.m.	1:30 p.m.
Same lineup on USA Sundays beginning at 6 a.m.		
For more information visit the C-Net Web Site (www.cnet.com)		

On the Horizon: Caching

by Ron Murawski (the_murs@pipeline.com)

A fundamental technique of Computer Science that realizes high-performance from affordable components is called caching. You've heard the name: There's pipeline-burst caching, disk caching and CPU instruction and data caching. This article is aimed at beginner to intermediate level computer users interested in how caching works to improve the performance of a typical PC.

First off — what's caching? I'll begin with an analogy: Imagine you are in a hospital operating room. You are the surgeon's assistant. It is your job to place in the surgeon's hand the operating instruments he requests. Any slowness on your part will jeopardize the life of the patient. What's your best strategy? A good approach is to attempt to predict the next necessary instrument and have it ready. If you anticipate correctly, you can save time. If you are wrong, you'll first have to find the correct instrument: Time will be wasted while the surgeon waits for you. Another approach is to attempt to have two or more instruments ready in anticipation. Or, maybe you can get an assistant who will hold all the surgeon's most recently used instruments in the hope that the surgeon will soon need one of them again. With each option the chances of the doctor immediately receiving the asked-for instrument increases. This works well until there are too many people trying to help and getting in each other's way.

Translating our medical scene into computer hardware goes something like this: The CPU is the surgeon, the one and only entity that can accomplish the task at hand. All of the peripheral equipment like floppies, CDs, hard drives and memory are assistants. All those anticipated "next instruments" and "most recently used instruments" are the caches. A cache (sometimes called a buffer) is a region of memory holding anticipated or recently used information.

Luckily there is no patient that might die, but time is of the essence. Caching is no more than guessing — the art is in maximizing correct predictions. Correct predictions speed up computer operations and incorrect guesses slow things down. Since a computer has no intelligence and cannot foresee the future, the job seems daunting. Computer Science has developed several forms of caching and each excels at some aspect of prediction. Let's start with the slowest peripherals and work our way into faster and faster components.

Disk Caching

The slowest peripherals are storage devices. CDs, floppies and hard drives are cached similarly. This equipment is notorious for noticeable delays as disks take time to spin up to speed, stepping motors position read heads and cylinders rotate under the reading head. Once a read head is positioned properly, it typically reads information as quickly as the cylinder data presents itself. There is more time wasted seeking *where* the information is located than in the act of physically reading the data. Caching strategy: When a small portion of a file is requested, a much larger portion is actually transferred to a cache — usually an entire cylinder's worth. If the next read request is for the information already in the cache, there is no time wasted looking for the disk data location. A quick

memory access instead of a slow disk access results. This is called a read-ahead cache. A read-ahead cache works very well for most uses. The exception is when files are accessed in a random order.

Why would files be read in out-of-order sequence? Well, imagine a database larger than the amount of memory available. An example would be a phone number database on a CD. There is no telling which phone number you might be seeking. The read-ahead cache will actually slow things down because useless additional information will be transferred to the cache on every read request. In order to hedge the read-ahead bet, no more than one cylinder of data should be cached. Remember that the time to position for the read takes much longer than the reading and caching of an entire cylinder of data. Many different cylinders will be cached and sooner or later a cache "hit" will occur. Sometimes a flurry of accesses in a region will occur and cache hits will happen. Unfortunately, most random access files are impossible to predict. That's the very definition of the word "random".

Good disk caches can recognize random access behavior and turn off caching for that file. Good caches can also recognize sequential reading behavior and read many cylinders ahead of time in anticipation of continued linear behavior. It should also be noted that the most common portion of a disk to read is the directory area. There is usually a filename cache implemented to help speed up file access as well.

Now that our disk information is cached into faster memory, what's left to cache? Memory, of course. And where do you cache fast memory? Into faster memory!

Memory Caching

continued

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The easiest way to cache slower memory is by copying — in its entirety — all data into faster memory. This begs the question: Why bother putting it in slower memory to begin with? Here are two examples of slow memory routinely moved into faster memory: The system BIOS (Basic Input/Output System) and video BIOS. Why are they put into slow memory? Both of these slower memories are read-only memory (ROM). ROM is slow compared to RAM. The wonderful thing about ROM is that, unlike RAM, when you turn it off it still “remembers” its data. After a computer is shut down, a BIOS must continue to “remember” how to interface to all attached devices for the computer to remain functional when once again switched on.

At this point all data is cached into our 32 to 64 megabytes of main memory: You’d think all necessary caching is done. The next step of the caching chain is to the pipeline-burst (PB) cache. The PB cache is also referred to as a Level 2 cache. This cache is typically constructed from fast (and somewhat expensive) static RAM. A Pentium II has a PB cache contained within the cartridge that also houses the microprocessor. Other CPUs get a PB cache mounted on the motherboard. A PB cache can “burst” a chunk of information from main memory very quickly.

What goes into the PB cache? It turns out that anything the CPU requests goes into it. Remember that surgeon? The PB cache is his super-fast personal assistant. If the CPU “surgeon” needs a #11 scalpel, the trusty PB cache gathers all varieties of scalpels nearby in anticipation of more similar requests and then hands over the exact item needed. The PB cache can keep groups of many items nearby. How many? Typically about 512K worth.

When the PB cache is full and another request is received and the asked-for item is not already in the 512K space, something’s got to give. The PB cache will usually overwrite the least recently used (LRU) group of items with the newest request. Due to a phenomenon called “locality of reference”, once a PB cache is full, the odds of a CPU requesting already cached data becomes high. Figures in the range of 95 to 99% are usually mentioned.

So, you would think caching would end with the fast, expensive PB cache. What could be faster? How about the CPU itself? A Pentium contains a 16K data cache and a 16K instruction cache. These caches perform at the same speed as the CPU core frequency and are always the fastest anywhere within a computer. These caches are known as Level 1 caches. The instruction cache holds CPU instructions and, when loops are encountered (which is very frequent), there is no need to get the instructions from the slower PB cache because it is already on-chip. Similarly, the data cache holds data. Any local “hot data” that keeps getting accessed will remain in the CPU cache and get accessed at full speed.

Using Caching Knowledge

We’ve learned that caching makes computers perform faster. Larger caches always seem to outperform smaller caches.

Although there is a point at which increasing the size of the cache yields very small increases in performance, it’s pretty hard to argue that a particular cache is too big for intended use.

Configure Windows to use maximum cache sizes. See the June 1998 “On The Horizon: Windows Tuneup, Part 3” to learn how. If you are shopping for a new CPU and computer, look at the cache sizes. An AMD K6 with 32K data and 32K instruction caches will outperform a Pentium MMX of the same speed containing smaller 16K caches. A motherboard with a 1 MB PB cache will outperform a 512K PB cache, especially when stressed with many concurrent processes. Avoid the new Intel Celeron chips that have no level 2 caches.


An often overlooked cache is mounted onto all hard drives. Although cache size is usually not advertised, it can influence drive performance. If two drives have comparable access and transfer rates, buy the one with the larger cache. Modern drives routinely pause while doing “thermal recalibration”. Large caches can smooth out data starvation caused by these pauses.

Finally, in order to cache everything in sight, we’ll need RAM — plenty of it. Watch out though, some motherboards can cache only 64MB of RAM. Adding more than this will actually slow down the computer. Look for motherboards with larger cacheable RAM limits. No amount is too large until you exceed your machine’s cacheable limit.

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Presto, Window

Need to access the System Properties dialog box — for example, to access the Device Manager? Select Start, Settings, Control Panel, double-click System, and ... hey, wait a minute. There’s a much easier way! From your desktop, hold down Alt as you double-click My Computer. Hel-lo, System Properties.

Thanks to Alex Goldfinger 

Classified

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

Dragon NaturallySpeaking Preferred version 3.1

by Jerry Entin (jerryentin@worldnet.att.net)

For more than a year I was interested in a voice dictation system, because I am not a touch typist — I hunt and peck, mostly with two fingers. My old computer was a 486, not strong enough or powerful enough for voice dictation. I recently acquired a new desktop computer — a Pentium 266 with 64 MB of memory and I realized that I could now install one of the voice recognition programs used for dictating long memos or letters.

Because I am very careful about introducing new software to my computer I took more than an hour to read through all of the literature that came with the program and to double-check that my computer had all the attributes that would be required to install the program. Using the CD for installation was pretty straightforward and within an hour I had it installed. Then I had to go through the training program so that the computer would recognize my voice and to increase the vocabulary that is stored in the various files.

During my working lifetime, I regularly dictated, first to a secretary and later into dictation machines, so the transition to speaking into the microphone headset that came with the program was really pretty easy. I have found, however that the program is more useful for long memos and letters. It's not easy to

use it for short email messages — it's quicker to simply type out an answer or a short paragraph.

I spent some time listening to the Quick Tour so that I could understand both the dictation and corrections procedures. The Quick Tour speech gives a thorough understanding of the ways used to edit while talking, as well as editing after you have completed a document. I went through the Quick Tour several times, alternating between it and experiments with dictation.


I spent considerable time using the Dictation Commands in sample letters. This allowed me to move around in the document, make corrections and learn the specific wording that the dictation commands required for the program to understand items like "New line" or "New paragraph". Dictating numbers and letters was easy. Selecting text to make corrections or to delete text as you were dictating was not as easy.

It was easy to move with the commands to the beginning of a paragraph or to the end of paragraph, but a host of "go to" commands and "move" commands were a little bit more difficult, as were editing and formatting text. It seems to me that I will have to practice for a while before I can remember the commands without looking them up in the booklet or the Quick Reference guide.

The Quick Reference guide really must be kept at your fingertips so that while you are dictating you can immediately refer to it and find the needed command. I have only been using the program for a few weeks now, and there is much more to learn, mostly about good dictation of commands and better editing or correction of mistakes.

I want to install the program on my laptop (a Pentium 133). I increased its memory from 24 MB to 72 MB by pulling out two 8 meg chips and installing two 32 meg chips in their place. A Pentium 133 is the minimum configuration for the program. I will write later about Dragon's performance on the laptop.

A demonstration of Dragon software is planned for the March meeting of PC Symposium. The demonstrator has proclaimed intention of coming bearing "gifts". See SIG News for details.

Jerry Entin is a member of the Concordia Computer Club, a member group of ACGNJ. This program was provided via the ACGNJ Liaison Committee (Bill Farrell) by Dragon Systems, Inc., The Natural Speech Company, 320 Nevada Street, Newton, MA 02460, Attn: Renee L. Blodgett, Manager, Corporate Communications. Telephone 617-796-0348. 

Newbie News

by Laura Katz (HAL-PC) (laurak@hal-pc.org)

Attachments and Viruses: What are attachments? How do they work? If you do e-mail you have seen a little box that says attachments. You might have gotten an attachment such as a Excel spreadsheet or a photo on your e-mail. How did they do that? Would you like to learn? It's real simple to do. (Be real careful if you get an attachment from somebody you don't know. It could contain a nasty virus. You do have a virus checker on your computer don't you?) If you don't, stop reading right now and go buy one. Make sure it checks your floppy drive as well. My computer kept getting a virus because the virus was on the boot up disk and the

virus checker program didn't check the boot up disk.

Netscape and Explorer have similar features for attachments. Look for a paper clip at the top of your message form. If in doubt just put your cursor over the clip; it will say send an attachment. Now to find the attachment, that's the tricky part. First, remember what you have called your attachment and where you stored it. I keep documents in a folder called my documents and photos in a folder called my photos If you can't find your document go to start, find, files or folder, and do a search. Once you have found your file just click at-

tach and your folder is on its way. Bon Voyage!

Empty the (E-Mail)Trash: I love e-mail. There are times though when I need to eliminate the trash. Guess what folks, it doesn't go away until you delete it. It merely goes to a second folder called trash. That feature does come in handy if you goof and eliminate something that you want, but after you are done just go to delete and highlight the trash by holding down the shift key while you press delete and say bye-bye. While you are emptying your trash you might take a look at all your sent mail. Do you still need the mail you sent last year? You can delete that as well.

People Finders

by Walter and Barbara DeGroot (wdegroot@ptdprolog.net, bdegroot@ptdprolog.net)

Have you lost someone? Perhaps it is a relative, or an old school classmate, or someone who owes you money. On the Internet you now have resources available to allow you to be your own private detective. Mr. Kean would have an easy time of tracing lost persons these days. (For you youngsters, Mr. Kean was an old-time radio program, along with The Shadow, and Fibber McGee.)

Let's take a look at "people finders" on the Web. Every search engine includes some kind of people search, and there are some sites that are strictly people search sites. Many are linked or combined with some kind of free e-mail offer. The results vary with the search engines, so if you don't find the person you're looking for with the first one, you should try several others before you give up.

Most people finders search telephone company listings, so if your quarry has an unlisted telephone, you might not get a hit — but don't give up. You can ignore the "people finder" and enter a name directly in your search engine. This will return authors of articles and participants in news groups, etc. You may also find a namesake you never knew you had! For example, Barbara De Groot is a Disney executive in California. She never knew she had a second life, and in California ! When I search for my own name, the people-finders sometimes strike out, but a search for my name without the people-finder hits because of articles posted on the ACGNJ home page.

Only the last name is required for a search, but you can restrict your search by adding a first name or initial, state and city in the appropriate fields. If you're looking for a two-part name like mine, you should search with and without the space "de groot" and "degroot", for example.

When I set out to write this article, I started with the major search engines and looked to see what they had for finding people. Early in my explorations, I came upon the "motherboard" of all people-finder (and search) sites at www.freality.com/. Here I found links to too many search engines to list here,

but Altavista, Excite, Hotbot, Infoseek, Lycos, WebCrawler, Snap and Yahoo! are listed, with a search entry field for each. Each one of these search engines has a people finder attached, but you don't have to go there to get to them. Links down the side of the Freality's page are titled Meta Searches, Find People, Email and Reverse Lookup, Find Companies, etc. Click on "Find People", and up comes a list of them, with search entry fields beside each one. Some allow entry of last name, first name and state. Some have only the name fields. Searchers listed are 411Locate, Anywho, Bigfoot, Database America, Four11, Infospace, Internet Address Finder, People Finder, Switchboard, USWest, WhoWhere, WorldPages and Yahoo. While I was exploring, another was added to the list: PC411, but it didn't respond to my click.

Just for fun, before trying "Find People", I tried a search for "Walter De Groot" (the quotes are necessary) using the first Meta Search engine listed (1Blink). It came up with hundreds of hits, one of which was my response to an inquiry about motherboard jumper settings on a message board. Meta Searches use multiple search engines, and they search the world, so many of the hits were in Dutch or German. They might be useful if you come up blank with the people finders.

Now to the features of the various finders. I tested them by searching for myself, and sometimes tried for "b degroot" as well. Some required the space (de groot), some hit only on degroot.

Altavista (www.altavista.digital.com) has a people finder powered by Switchboard on its main page (listed under Specialty Searches at the top of their page) and there's a yellow pages link. Links provided with hits allow you to look for e-mail addresses, get a map, see what's nearby (theaters, restaurants, stores), or order gifts, flowers, cards or candy. Another link searches for web sites about nearby towns. You can add your own name to their listings,

so you can be found. (I tried this one out before I found freality.)

411Locate found both my telephone lines. When you get a hit, click on the address to see a Mapquest map.

Anywho found both lines. Links are available for map, wish list, more info, AT&T Click2Dial, send cards. A search for b degroot yielded b degroot (Barbara's listing in the telephone directory) as well as Barry, Ben and Bob DeGroot.

Bigfoot returned both listings. No frills, no buttons to push, no links.

Database America: No hits with either spelling of my name.

Four11 searches the entire country, so there were 11 hits, including me. This one returns name and city only, and you click on the name for details. A link is provided to search for an e-mail address.

Infospace found both of my listings. Links are: send a card, send flowers, gift tree, update/remove. This one returns name and city only and you click on the name for full information. If you do that, you get a wealth of links: Map, Directions, Find neighbors, Search for e-mail address, and (would you believe?) Buy a cell phone and call! You can also get a City guide, lists of nearby businesses, hotels, restaurants, local classified ads and much more. I could have spent hours on this site, but I had others to investigate!

Internet Address Finder didn't find me with either form of my name. This makes me wonder what they use for their database — obviously not telephone company listings.

PC411 did not respond. Either too busy or too new.

People Finder, without the space in my name, yielded 6 hits, none of them me. With the space, no hits.

Switchboard With hits you get E-mail search, Maps, What's Nearby, an Update button (more about that one later), Gift shop (cards, candy, flowers, gifts). Click on "What's Nearby" for a local map or a state map and lists of restaurants, museums, entertainment,

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What I Did on My Vacation

Lamentations on a Lost Hard Drive

by Carla S. Cawlfeld, HAL-PC

Well, it finally happened. After about ten computers, I had my first hard drive crash this summer. Yes, we were aware of the horrors of losing fifteen years of data. Yes, we had backup plans. Yes, we were careful to store the backup tapes in a safe and secure environment. But, no, we did not backup everything each time or often enough. Therefore, several months worth of email and other data is gone forever. Please read further for the lessons learned from this tale of woe.

The Problem

When my computer locked up, I noticed that the hard drive was making a funny, ticking noise and I could not correctly step through the Windows 98 shut down sequence. I tried the famous three finger reboot (CTRL/ALT/DEL) and got an error message telling me there was a hard disk error, and the computer could not boot. I was still hearing the funny ticking sound from the hard drive. *Immediately*, I flipped the power off. I knew I was in big trouble.

One of the many benefits of being a HAL-PC member is that you get to know so many people with so many useful talents. One of the longtime members I know is Frank Jagers. He makes his living recovering data from crashed hard drives. Frank told me to leave the power off. That funny ticking noise was the drive head chewing the hard drive surface into aluminum sand. He can't recover data from grains of sand.

About this time, I started pawing through our collection of backup tapes. The last full system backup was several months old. We had done incremental backups since then, but overlooked some critical, albeit obscure, data directories (such as email, which I use as my to do list).

The Analysis

That day, I contracted with Frank's company to do a formal analysis of my old, dead drive. Their charges are similar to the other data recovery businesses I have since learned about. There was an initial, non-refundable, evaluation fee of \$100 plus tax. For this sum, they listened to the drive to detect any obvious, immediate remedies. In my case, it was definitely mechanical failure, and the drive had to be sent to a clean room in Minnesota for further testing. As part of the evaluation, Minnesota produced two ASCII files. The first one contained a list of the files and directories that could be saved, and the second was a list of non-recoverable files and directories. This gave me the opportunity to review the file lists to determine whether or not it is worth it to spend the \$600 to \$2,500 for them to send me the recoverable data on this 2.1GB drive.

If you think this is a lot of money, think about what your time and the value of your business records are worth. I got similar quotes from two other recovery businesses. One quoted me a \$250 non-refundable evaluation fee and \$75 per hour for data recovery, and another, in California, quoted me no evaluation fee, but recovery fees of from \$875 to \$2,700, depending on the speed of service I selected.

After reviewing the ASCII text of good and bad files, I opted to forego any more attempts at recovering data from my bad hard drive. Most of the files that were recoverable were operating system or applications files; I can reload those programs from the original software. Some interesting facts: if I had printed out the list of good files, it would have taken 161 letter-sized sheets, showing 11,385 files containing 270MB; the list of bad files would have taken 117 letter-sized sheets, showing 6,925 files containing 1,362MB. In addition, there were 8,377 files with no name.

The Solution

I contacted another computer pal of mine, explained my problem, and asked if he had any extra hard drives laying around that I could use temporarily, till I figured out what to do. He did have an extra drive, was very gracious in spending a couple of days tweaking my system and reloading my most recent full backup tape and the incremental tapes. This restored about 90% of my data. This fellow is now my friend for life. He restored about ten years worth of financial and business records, as well as digital photos that I could not replace. (Under no circumstances will I reveal his name, or else he would be inundated with requests for free help.)

Ironically, I had been planning to buy a larger hard drive(s) anyway. This crisis just advanced my timetable. My old system was very flaky, with years and years of various operating system migrations and upgrades, application programs additions/deletions (some of which leave litter behind and do not cleanly uninstall) and lots of ?help? from rushed technicians in busy computer repair shops. (About this time, my husband got scared over the less-than-fully-protected nature of his own computers, and rushed out and bought more hard drives to use as backups for his own machines.)

I chose twin 8GB drives. The C:\ drive is now my main drive, and D:\ is solely a backup drive; I also still have the separate tape drive backup system. Once I installed these new drives, I started loading the full install version of the Windows 98 operating system (no patchy upgrade versions), and current versions of my applications software. Because I use about thirty different programs and because I am proceeding very methodically, this process is slow.

How often should I backup my system? This is a frequent question asked by computer users. How heavily do you use your system? How valuable is the data you are creating? Is this a business computer? If your computer is critical to your daily productivity, then you probably should have some type of daily backup plan, including full and/or incremental backups. If you are a very casual computer user, and really don't use the computer for much more than surfing the web, you probably don't need much of a backup plan at all. Once a month is probably enough for you. Most of us fall somewhere in between. It is a good idea to have a plan, a routine, a regular day and time that we schedule our backup.

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Computer Graphics Issues

by Garth Gardner (gardner@ggcinc.com)

As a university educator in computer graphics and animation, I have become increasingly convinced that academic institutions need to provide Computer Graphics students with a better-rounded education. The curriculum of many schools consists of an overabundance of software tutorials.

Although I believe that training in specific software and hardware platforms should continue to be a part of the educational process, no academic program should rely solely on training. A good computer graphics curriculum focuses on the principles and philosophy of art, design, and animation. For example, a beginning student of 3D animation may be better served by taking a course on claymation, and learning how to incorporate the principles of animation, than by training in a 3D package such as Maya.

In the case of character animation, issues such as camera angles, the framing of a shot, and camera continuity must also be emphasized in the curriculum. The best software can create poor art if the person using it is not an artist, and bad software can be made to create great art if the person using it understands aesthetics.

Summarizing the words of John Hughes, president of Rhythm and Hues Studios (Los Angeles), there are three areas in the field of 3D computer graphics: animation, modeling, and lighting. We must educate students in all three

areas. Most universities don't even offer a lighting course, and most of the ones that do teach digital lighting. What use is digital lighting to a student who does not even understand traditional lighting? Why are we choosing to teach on such complex systems what could be better taught using traditional mediums?

In my experience and in that of my students, the computer graphics industry demands animators rather than computer animators, modelers rather than computer modelers, and artists rather than computer artists. Most animation houses today are prepared to train animators to use computer software, but they are not prepared to teach them aesthetics. Software training is mandatory in any case at most companies because they often use proprietary software that the student would not have had the opportunity to learn in college. Jennifer Yu, Director of Training and IT at Pacific Data Images (Palo Alto, CA), says, "People without a computer background can be really successful at PDI, although they need to develop confidence in approaching a computer."

Fueling the impetus toward software training in universities is the way major vendors market their programs by creating accreditation centers. Professors who learn the software on their own are often still required to attend the vendor's courses in order to be certified to train university students. There is without question a need for art students to

understand the science of software programs because the computer graphics field is a mix of art and science. To prepare students for a computer graphics career, the curriculum should help them understand the engineering of various software programs — not to the point of programming, but to where they understand the relationship this art has to science. Computer graphics artists and animators should also be exposed to different kinds of programs so that they are not too attached to any one of them.

As I begin to review schools in preparation for the second edition of my CG school guide, I hope to see a day when institutions cease to assign courses such titles as Photoshop I, II, and III and assign more appropriate names that speak less of the software and more of the content. I believe we must include the technology but not allow the technology to determine the curriculum.

Garth Gardner is the author of Gardner's Guide to Computer Graphics, Animation, and Multimedia Schools, Executive director of Garth Gardner Company, Inc., and a professor at William Paterson University in New Jersey. His presentation on Computer Graphics is scheduled for the March meeting of Symposium. See SIG News for details. This article was reprinted from Computer Graphics World, January 1999 (www.cgw.com).



People Finders, continued from page 8

recreation, hospitals, doctors, and yellow pages.

US West yielded just my two listings. No frills, no links, no buttons.

WhoWhere returned only my voice listing. With the hit: driving directions, AT&T Click2Dial, Map, Send a card, Search for e-mail (which takes you to Lycos, where you can also search for home pages), Search Web, and Search public records. I didn't see public records available on any other site. This should yield real estate transfers and death records.

World Pages: Two hits, both were me. Map is available, but no other frills, buttons or links.

Yahoo hit voice line only. Click on the telephone number to call. Tools available are Email search, Map, Card.

Special Buttons

"Update" Button: Fear not, it is not as easy as it looks. Modifications hold only if confirmation is received when they call the telephone number in question. This seems to be a reasonable guarantee that someone else will be unable to tamper with your listing.

Finding E-Mail? I tried "E-Mail Search" on several sites, with no hits. When I got to WhoWhere, I discovered the button that yields "all matches". I got more than 100 hits, none of which was mine. On World Pages, there were over 500 possibles, but I wasn't in the first 50, so I gave up. I suspect the results would be good on this search only if the e-mail name is the same as the person's real name. Nobody is going to find my e-mail address this way!

Doubtless, there are still more of these people finders out there. I can already think of two, one of which charges a

Next day was taken up with the bureaucracy. We visited the borough hall to get some documents, the Ministry of Justice for others, took some photos and went to the office of identity cards to apply for a new card. I was astounded at how smoothly everything went. When we were married in Lisbon, over forty years ago, the same chores took more than three weeks! One of the differences is certainly the existence of computers and computer networks. We then went for another visit with Maria's mom and later, after a late supper with an old friend and colleague from nursing school and her family, we headed back to the hotel for a well-deserved night's rest.

Early next day we made our daily visit to Maria's mom then took a cab to the identity card office to pick up the card. Being a nosey sort of fellow, I thought we might take the subway downtown to a station which hadn't been finished on our last visit. It's under one of Lisbon's many high hills and it took four escalators to get us to the surface. There we found a Haagen Dazs and stopped in for a quick sundae just before they closed for New Years Eve. Then some brief window shopping at an embroidery shop next door and I asked if they knew how to get to the Internet café I mentioned earlier. They didn't know, but Maria was sure it was just a bit down the hill, and she was right! Just past the São Carlos theater where Don Giovanni was playing, we found Cyber.bica.

Cyber.bica...

Bica is a Portuguese word for a demitasse cup of strong coffee. What better name for an Internet Café but Cyber.bica? In addition to six PCs networked to a 128Kb line to Telepac, Portugal's phone company ISP offering, you can find coffee, drinks, snacks and Paula Amador and Hugo Gomes, the proprietors, and, from time to time, Bruno Mendes, whenever there's a nasty technical problem. Hugo, the entrepreneur, is getting pretty good at fixing the more common problems himself. Just before Christmas we received an email greeting from these folks. We had a brief exchange, but even that didn't prepare us for the warm greeting we received from Paula when we entered the café. We chatted a while and were glad to see them still prospering. Since our last visit they have acquired their own domain: www.cyberbica.com.

A while later, Hugo came in and the talk, between him and me, at least, drifted more to technical and business issues. One annoying story: They did a long interview with a magazine which published only that the Net was socially isolating and a haven for hackers and perverts.

As to the Net being isolating, Hugo offered me this true story. A frequent customer, a technical type who frequented techie chat rooms, found a new friend in one of them. They soon discovered that they had the same last name. Curiosity propelled them to explore the possible relationship further and they discovered they had the same father but different mothers and hadn't known of each other's existence. They arranged to meet in the café, and soon became best of friends, even buying a vacation home together.

One time a 10 year old entered the café and had to be shown the Windows 95 Start button. Hugo had to attend to other customers, but when he returned, the kid had run Netscape and

telnet, and was surfing. The kid was looking for stories about a rock star who had killed himself (according to FBI). He did not agree with that allegation and wrote to FBI just to say "you're wrong!"

At our last visit, Hugo had told me that most of his customers used the Net for Chat. Today, most of his business is foreigners and locals away from home stopping by to take care of their email and do some surfing. Paula helps them configure Eudora, and off they go! Hugo says he likes this crowd better. He thinks that the chat business has moved to peoples' homes as they become more connected. It's estimated that over 14% of Portuguese homes are now on line. Since our last visit the number of Internet cafes in Lisbon grew to nine and then shrank to only two, but Hugo says the shrinkage was probably caused by increased home presence and that there is a renewal of interest in the cafes as a place to meet other Netizens face-to-face.

The stuffy part of Portugal, especially the government, seems still afraid of the Net, while the business community regards it as a public service and advertising expense — e-commerce hasn't captured their imagination yet.

We took some time out from talking to have a bite. Maria had "Pasteis de Bacalhau NetMeeting" and I had a "Telnet Baconburger". For dessert we shared a "Mousse Windows NT", so named, according to Hugo, because it's a big mess and can crash your stomach. (It was delicious!) While we ate, the number of clients grew. Later, as they left for New Year's revels, we started to chat with Hugo and Paula again. I showed them our grandson's pictures (www.intac.com/~rosenblm/eli) and checked my email and the day's market activity (not much.) Hugo and Paula had been planning to spend New Year's with their cats, and we were going to retire early, but they invited us to a hotel near the airport for a toast to the new year! We arrived about 11:30 and were later joined by some friends of theirs — the husband of this new couple had a thriving business setting up computer networks for commercial establishments. Other than the six of us and the staff, the hotel seemed empty. At midnight, we joined the staff in the reception area and toasted the new year with the traditional 12 raisins for good luck (one for each month of the new year), champagne and pastry. A great time was had by all! So much for the isolation of the Internet.

The Dream

Hugo has a dream. He is starting a joint venture with Telepac, the ISP offering of Portugal's telephone company, and Radio Comercial, a Portuguese radio station which can be heard on the Web. There are many Portuguese and Portuguese speaking communities around the world, including a large number here in the States, as well as the ex-colonies. What better medium than the Internet to bring them a bit of Portuguese culture straight from home. The three companies are putting together a series of Webcast programs followed by an open, audience participation chat room at pt.net. The first Webcast was January 18th and featured a twenty year old group called Xutos e Pontapés who performed unplugged. The concert, originating from Cyberbica in Lisbon, was well attended.

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SIG News

Internet

Marty Rosenblum

January 7: Following this month's Home Networking theme of the Main and PC User Group meetings the meeting was taken up mainly with presentations and discussions of Intranetworking. John put together a nifty list of references which he posted off the Home page at www.acgnj.org/firewall.htm. John was supposed to have had elections for SIG officers, but got so enthusiastic about the topic that he forgot. Oh well, we will have them at the February meeting. If you want to run for office, please let us know.

February 4: Elections, Web news, and a continuation of the Club's hot topic, Intranetworking. ☐

VBA

Jim Ditaranto

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.

The meetings start at 7 P.M., at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. We will start a new schedule — every 4th Monday of the month, starting January 25th. The topic for the Monday, January 25th meeting will be "Year 2000 Issues in Visual Basic for Applications".

Jim Ditaranto can be reached at (201) 986-1104, or fryr92a@prodigy.com. ☐

Symposium

John Raff (jr Raff@injersey.com)

February: To be announced.

March: Dr. Garth Gardner on Graphics and Animation training (see his article in this issue) and Connie from Dragon Software (reviewed in this issue) on voice recognition. Connie has told us she will be bearing gifts — if you miss it, you'll miss out! ☐

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. ☐

Investing

Sheldon Koepf (sheldonk@intac.com)

January 14: Because of snowy/icy weather our scheduled speaker was unable to make the meeting. We discussed a new book on the investing horizon, Security Analysis on Wall Street by Jeffery C. Hooke. Published by John Wiley & Sons, ISBN 0471177415. This was the subject of a recent review in Barron's. They mentioned it as a replacement for Benjamin Graham & David Dodd's famous classic Security Analysis. After reading both, I heartily agree. If you want to evaluate a company's stock or wish to know more about how the current market works, I think you will find this book interesting.

Our co-chairman, Dick Boyd, added a few items to his coverage of overseas alternate investing. Dick spoke about Swiss Annuities and their advantages. The small group permitted more interaction than usual.

February 11: This is a *tentative* schedule. Check our SIG web page at <http://www.intac.com/~sheldonk/invsig/> frequently for updates. One of our more successful traders, Norm Wiss will demonstrate the program "Advanced Get" from Trading Techniques. Norm uses end of day data from AIG to feed this program, which is a technical analysis stock/commodity trading program that can use either real-time or end of day data. The program uses templates and is based on Elliot wave analysis. ☐

LUNICS (Linux/Unix)

Peter Fillingham (pete@panix.com)

January 4: Peter Fillingham announced that the LUNICS Web page had been revised and updated. He also talked about Corel's recent release of WordPerfect 8 for Lunux (available at download.com). Andy Meyer gave impromptu demonstrations of the Enlightenment window manager and xscreensaver, and Gimp (GNU Image Manipulation Program). Gimp is a powerful program used to create, enhance and otherwise alter images, much like Adobe Photoshop. Gimp, however, is freely available.

Gimp: <http://www.gimp.org>

Enlightenment: <http://www.enlightenment.org>

LUNICS: <http://www.acgnj.org/groups/lunics.html> ☐

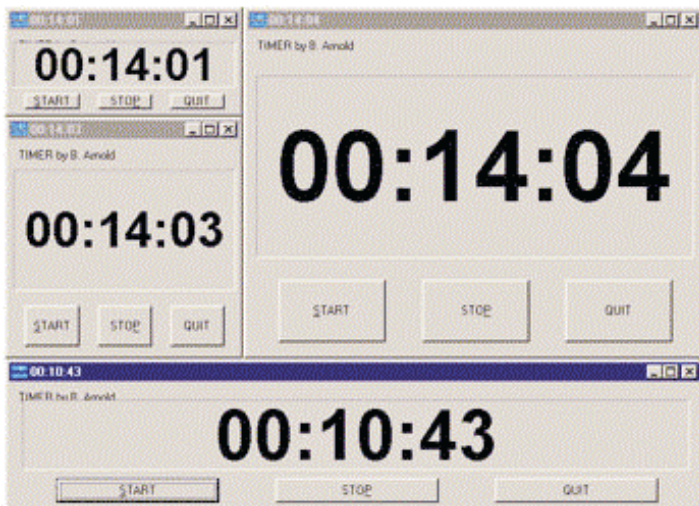
PC User Group

Jo-Anne Head (tinarock@aol.com)

www.intac.com/~tinarock/pcug.html

March 19: We will demonstrate and discuss Winfax Pro version 9.0. Also we will raffle off two full copies of Winfax Pro to MEMBERS ONLY. I will also be handing out special Symantec coupons giving user group members a special price break (expires 4/29/99) on all their software. This version of Winfax lets you send and receive faxes using Windows98,

continued



C/C++

Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net)

Last month I discussed a timer application program which replaces a small kitchen timer I use to test computer programs or installation procedures. For this month, I have added the ability to change the size of the timer window. As shown above, the timer can be adjusted from very tiny to full screen and everywhere in between. In order to accomplish this, extra code has been added to dynamically determine the location of all of the controls (buttons) in the application. The windows and digits are mathematically scaled to obtain the desired size. At the meeting, we will review the original code and discuss the details of the new code.

The timer is based on Microsoft foundation classes (MFC) and is compiled using Microsoft Visual C++ version 5. There is a large display for numbers over an inch high. Several buttons provide start and stop functions. In addition to the new sizing feature, other extra features include the ability to start the timer from the command line such as in the middle of a batch program and to identify the timer so that more than one event can be timed. Just for fun, I wrote a simple batch program that starts 36 timers at once.

Window Search and Destroy Utility

When the "fun.bat" program is used to create 36 timers it leaves them on the screen. The KillTimers program will remove or "kill" them by looping through all of the windows on the screen and checking the title of each window to see if it may be a timer. As it does this, it records the title in a special data file listing for later display. When it finds a timer, it sends a "WM_CLOSE" message to close it. In addition to its mentioned utility, this program uses some unusual system calls in order to find the information.

"Random Access" questions start at 7:30 Tuesday night. See you there. You can get the source code and the executable programs from links on C User Group home page: <http://www.blast.net/barnold/> Look for the current month. The source code and executables will be available directly from the ACGNJ ftp server:

<ftp://ftp.acgnj.org/pub/acgnj/cug/Csig9901.zip>

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.

Lotus Notes

Mike Barlow (mwb@injersey.com)

and Jim Cimino (cominoj@bright-ideas.com)

Meeting Schedule and Location Changes

Due to a relocation of the offices of Corporate Software (our meeting place for 3 years), we have relocated to Rutgers University for our monthly User Group Meetings. Also, because of classroom schedules and stuff our meetings have been moved to the third **Friday** of the month.

Lotus Notes User Group Meetings will be at 112 Hill Center, Busch Campus, Rutgers University, Piscataway NJ. Our meeting will still start at 7 P.M. and I will be there usually around 6 P.M. (although some of us will be meeting in the Busch Campus Student Center Food Court for supper around 5 P.M. —for those people that want to get there really early) For directions be sure to check out our Web Site's updated Meeting and Direction page (<http://www.njlnug.org>).

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.

Main Meeting

February 5, 1999: Frank Warren hosts "Building the Home Network, Part II (Practice)."

The February PC User Group meeting will follow up on the Main Meeting presentation to answer questions from members.

March 5, 1999: Bill Farrell hosts on Graphics and Autocad.

April 2, 1999: Bob Berto will present on "An Amateur's View of SAS"

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.

Internet Corner, *continued from page 11*

One could view the preparations on their Webcam. The Webcast itself was an Internet only event and broadcast in both audio and video using Real Networks technology. I couldn't get a word in at the IRC chat session — I fumbled along with my slow typing in English but couldn't compete. It's a great idea and I wish them luck — an ideal application for the Net!

Euro...

The big financial news here over the New Year was the introduction of the Euro, a new unified currency which is supposed to rival the dollar. The Brits, of course, decided not to join, and the French, surprisingly, joined, perhaps not to leave the field entirely to the Germans. Watching CNN International here, I couldn't help but notice that every time the announcer mentioned the imminent arrival of the official rates, she turned to a browser screen. The first posting was on the Internet at europa.eu.int/eurobirth/rates.html. (Note: this is the first time I have seen this new domain, "int". I can only presume it's the domain for public international organizations. I'll try to find out more and report next time.)

Investing

From ZDTV's Moneywatch, a good recommendation for you mutual fund investors is Money Magazine's Mutual Fund Finder at www.pathfinder.com/money/fundfinder.

An excellent site, new to me, but old hat to Sheldon and his Web site, is Yahoo's financial portal, quote.yahoo.com/?u.

And, of course, for you international traders, the new Euro site, europa.eu.int/eurobirth/rates.html.

There's an incredible amount of news about hot Internet stocks, but while there might be a time down the road when some of them are "worth" their present prices, the frenzy seems like little better than the old tulip mania. Nor can one have a warm, fuzzy feeling about E*trade's recent announcement that they're going into the investment banking business. Are they going to be bankrolling these hot new IPOs? I think I'd best stay away from the subject. ☹

Vacation, *continued from page 9*

There are now many software utilities that can automate the process. Our tape backup is driven by Seagate software. It is very user friendly, and you don't have to be very computer literate to follow its backup wizard. It is easy to choose the options you want, be it full backup, incremental, identifying your backup tapes, assigning dates, etc. The restore sequence is equally as straightforward. It is imperative that you test your backup plan. This involves creating a backup and then attempting to restore your data from it. All your backup efforts are no good if there is a glitch in your plan, and you can't get to your data.

I am now practicing seriously safe computing with my main drive, identical backup hard drive, backup tape system (the tapes are locked in a fireproof safe), and I also am backed up on a network server. Maybe, just maybe, I am covered from data loss in the event of drive failure, fire, or theft of the computers. I did not plan to test my computer safety quite so soon, but during Tropical Storm Frances, part of our house flooded. Our lights and phones still don't work worth spit, but my computer is solid as a rock.

This tale is offered up as a warning to my fellow computer enthusiasts. Be careful and don't put off taking proper backup precautions, for this could also happen to you.

Carla Cawlfelds current position is HAL-PCs VP of Communications. She has been dazzled by computers since the earth was flat, and is still amazed at the magic in a box.. ☹

Newsletter Online

ACGNJ's sister club, Brookdale Users Group, also has a fine newsletter. For those of you on the Web, you can download copies in .PDF format (Adobe Acrobat) and read them at your leisure. The URL is: www.bcug.com. ☹

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

New Member Renewal Address Change

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ E-Mail _____

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@junio.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.		

ACGNJ Hotline

(908) 322-4654

ACGNJ Bulletin Boards

All numbers below will connect to the ACGNJ BBS. Call the **first** number in the list that is local to you.

- (732) 247-2273 New Brunswick
- (732) 297-2211 * Franklin Park
- (732) 752-9285 Dunellen

* Local to Cranbury, Princeton and Plainsboro in 609 (use all ten digits).

Other Bulletin Boards

- (215) 432-5699 Bill Earnest
- (732) 739-3693 Dave Wrobel

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

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 4.

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

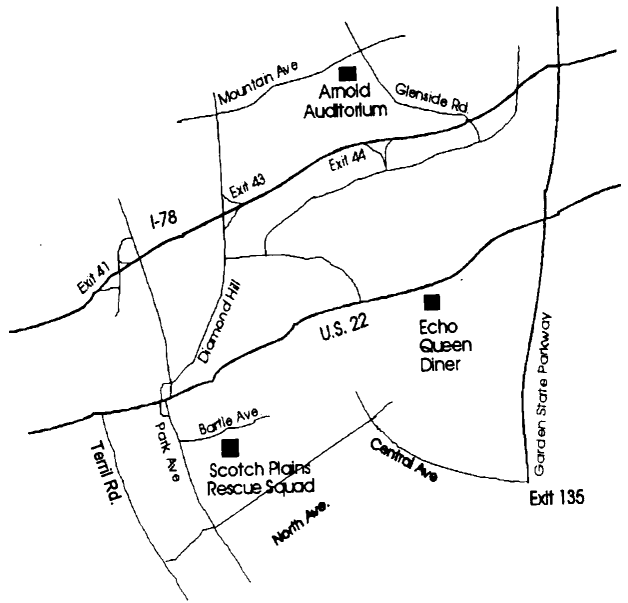
Dell Computer: Sundays 1-4 P.M. (800) 677-0874. Call with your questions.

KGP Computer Shows

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

Feb. 13-14-15: NJ Convention Center, Edison. Sat. & Sunday ticket includes one free return ticket.

Feb. 27-28: South Jersey Expo Center, Pennsauken



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 Rt. 22. Follow 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>)

Monday, February 1, 1999

8 P.M. - Lunics. Peter Fillingham, 973-731-9269.
Newsletter Deadline. See page 2 for instructions.

Tuesday, February 2

7 P.M. - ACGNJ Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 3

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent

Thursday, February 4

8 P.M. -Internet. Marty Rosenblum

Friday, February 5

8 P.M. - Main Meeting: Networking, Part II. See SIG News for details.

Monday, February 8

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

Wednesday, February 10

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent

Thursday, February 11

8 P.M. - Computerized Investing, Sheldon Koepf, 973-740-2489.

Friday, February 12

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

Tuesday, February 16

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

Wednesday, February 17

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent

Friday, February 19

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.

8 P.M. - Lotus Notes. New meeting place. See

SIG News. Call our voice mail line, 908-417-5778 ext 5, for last minute changes in plan/cancellations.

Monday, February 22

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

Thursday, February 25

8 P.M. - Genealogy. Frank Warren, 908-756-1681.

Friday, February 26

7 P.M. - Macintosh Users Group, at Rutgers University, Piscataway NJ. Keith Sproul (ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu), 732-821-4828.

8 P.M. - Random Access, Computer Q&A, Scott Vincent, 973-361-5793.

Monday, March 1

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

Newsletter Deadline. See page 2 for instructions.

Tuesday, March 2

7 P.M. - ACGNJ Board Meeting

Thursday, March 4

8 P.M. -Internet. Marty Rosenblum

Friday, March 5

8 P.M. - Main Meeting.

Monday, March 8

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

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**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.**