

Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

Volume 24, Number 7

September 1999



ACGNJ News a Winner at 1999 Intergalactic

ACGNJ came up a winner in the 1999 User Group Newsletter Contest sponsored by the New York PC Users Group and Adobe Systems Inc. Winners were announced at the 1999 Intergalactic Conference of User Group officers. A complete list of awards can be found at <http://www.catalog.com/nypc/news99.htm>.

In our classification (small to medium publications), we took first place for User Group Coverage, tied for first for Features, and made runner-up for Columns. Thanks and congratulations to those SIG leaders and writers who made it possible!



www.acgnj.org

Founded 1975

Main Meeting Schedule

by Jo-Anne Head, Vice President, ACGNJ

At the planning meeting on Tuesday August 3, we planned our Main Meeting schedule from September 1999 through June 2000. The schedule we came up with is summarized below. We already have speaker commitments for some of the dates.

September - System Maintenance and Performance Optimizing. Host: Scott Vincent. Speaker: Scott Vincent

October - Office2000. Host: Frank Warren.

November - Bill Machrone on any topic. Host: Marty Rosenblum. (Bill Machrone has already agreed to speak to our group on this date. Thanks Marty!)

December - Business Meeting and Elections; Speaking Topic: Software for Kids. Host: Pete Fillingham.

January - Windows2000. Host: Sol Libes.

February - Home Networking. Host and Speaker: Frank Warren and Scott Vincent.

March - Home Automation. Host: Frank Warren. Speaker: Frank Warren, Alex Goldfinger, and a possible X-10 speaker.

April - Computer Privacy and Security. Host: John Raff.

May - Main Meeting Canceled due to TCF

June - Computers & Cardiology. Host: Malthi Masurekar. ☞

In This Issue

Internet Corner, <i>Marty Rosenblum</i>	3	Horizon: Shareware Favorites Part 1, <i>Ron Murawski</i> . . .	5
Partition Magic, <i>Bruce Arnold</i>	6	Ventura Publisher 8, <i>Barbara DeGroot</i>	6
Rolling Upgrades, <i>Ken Fermoye</i>	7	Norton Utilities 4.0, <i>Sol Libes</i>	8
How the Cookie Crumbles, <i>Vic Laurie</i>	9	SIG News	12

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Submissions: Articles, reviews, cartoons, illustrations. Most word processors or ASCII text are acceptable. Fax or mail hard copy and/or disk to Editor; OR e-mail to Editor. **Always confirm by voice.** Date your review and include name of word processor used, your name, address and phone *and* name, address and phone of the product manufacturer, if available.

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

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The Internet Corner

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

Web News

Item: Star-Ledger, Business edge, July 5: "Yahoo stumbles on legal language." Yahoo bought out Geocities in January. They asked all their Geocities customers to agree to the usual legal mumbo jumbo they used on their search site. Problem: it gave Yahoo exclusive rights to all of their personal home page stuff. Needless to say, there was a revolution. Needless to say Yahoo (eventually) backed down.

Item: Same issue: "Chat room features real voices, but so far they're not saying much." This is a look askance at the addition of audio to the omnipresent chat room. The author seems to have gotten into some voice chat rooms where nothing was going on—surprise! That's not to say there aren't intelligent chats that are audio enabled.

Item: Sunday NY Times Travel Section, July 11: "Plugging in Far From Home." CompuServe, according to Peter Lewis, has the most extensive overseas network of POPs.

Item: The Star-Ledger Today Section, July 12: "The Net Comes to Newark." Rodney Harrison has opened *Alexis' Place* at 260 Washington St., Newark, the city's first Cyber Café! We wish him luck!

Item: The Star-Ledger July 22: "Young Web masters explore State's Wildlife." At tqjunior.advanced.org/5736, a small group of Cedar Grove students have created the "Endangered New Jersey" Website which was recently recognized as one of the best in the fourth-sixth grade class, winning them prizes of \$750 each. It is definitely worth a visit!

Item: Sunday NY Times Real Estate Section, August 1: "E-Mail, E-Commerce and Now E-Buildings." Expensive residential properties in the TriBeCa section of Manhattan can't make it without a T1 line for tenants." (Many in that area are equity traders.)

Miscellany

While digging up stuff for this issue, I found that CNET's www.news.com is a very useful site. For most news items there is a "See Story in Context" link that leads you back through the development. Another useful starting point is the NY Times Navigator at www.nyt.com/navigator, (an alias for a complicated URL), a list of starting links that have been fruitfully used by the Times' staff in researching on the Web.

You may recall that I was first encouraged to try surfing by Karen Schneider, librarian and Internet proponent, and one of the things I always liked about Yahoo is that it is run by people who think like librarians, but they seem to be selling out to commercialism by giving disproportionate space to sites which are trying to sell something at the expense of those sites you are interested in finding. (These practices are making this and similar sites less useful. In addition, the exponential growth of the Web has caught many of them unable to keep up, a growing problem.) For this reason, the pure reference librarian paradigm becomes more and more attractive. That leads me to recommend the University of Michigan's www.ipl.org. The "ipl" stands for Internet Public Library, and they have a great list of jumping-off links which

they call Pathfinders. See www.ipl.org/ref/QUE/PF. Also check sunsite.berkeley.edu/InternetIndex, UC Berkeley's "Librarian's Index to the Internet"

By the way, Karen Schneider has been very much involved in getting the upstate NY Brunswick Community Library online — cable, no less — and in advising libraries on Internet Filtering. She's now Director of technology for the Shenendehowa Public Library in Clifton Park, New York, and writes *Internet Librarian*, a monthly column for *American Libraries*, the magazine of the American Library Association. Check it out at www.ala.org/alonline. Of course she can always be found at www.bluehighways.com.

E-Commerce

What good is the Net if you can't make a buck from it? As far back as February 1996, CNET reported: "Visa International and MasterCard International today announced a technical standard to secure credit card purchases via the Internet.

"Dubbed Secure Electronic Transactions (SET), the software encrypts credit card information for consumers to ensure that their transactions are protected until they reach the bank, according to MasterCard officials. Merchants will be given a code to ensure that the customer is the authorized user. To discourage credit card scams, Visa and MasterCard will verify that merchants are authorized to conduct business."

May, 1996, CNET (www.news.com) published a piece: "Navigator will Carry Digital Wallet." Some time ago I demo'ed "e-wallet" at our SIG meeting. There has been a continuous stream of attempts to develop a standardized approach and protocols for handling money transactions over the Net, countered by equally vigorous efforts to grab the tariffs by proprietary products. There are several areas of interest here: How do you guard your key to your pocketbook with maximum convenience *and* maximum security. What is the (one?) language of transactions and who maintains it? What are the objects described by this language?

Nothing stays the same in this world and e-wallet (www.ewallet.com) has merged with PointCast (remember "push"?) to form Entrypoint (www.entripoint.com). Both products used the device of a modest-sized launch/ticker bar and with the price of desktop real estate being what it is, thought they'd have a better chance of holding onto some by combining forces. But e-wallet wasn't the only such venture.

Other players in this field are Microsoft, Visa, MasterCard, Netscape, IBM, CyberCash, American Express, Wells Fargo, RSA, W3C, VeriFone, Atalla (owned by Tandem), Hewlett Packard, Oracle, Mellon Bank, U. S. Treasury Dept., Wal-Mart, E*Trade, etc., etc. The jockeying makes one's head spin. A bit of news surrounding VeriFone, one of the more active players: "SEC charges three in VeriFone insider trading case." Doesn't give one a warm and fuzzy feeling! However the trouble involved some VeriFone execs taking advantage of their knowledge about the 1998 takeover by Hewlett-Packard.

continued

Another recent development is the newly formed Electronic Commerce Modeling Language, ECML (see www.ecml.org), which uses a set of uniform field names to streamline the process by which merchants collect electronic data for shipping, billing, and payment. This is the result of collaboration by American Express, AOL, Brodia (formerly Transactor Networks), Compaq, CyberCash, Discover, FSTC, IBM, MasterCard, Microsoft, Novell, SETCo, Sun Microsystems, Trintech, and Visa to develop a universal format for wallets and merchant web sites.

E-wallet is a fat client — the software resides on the user's computer along with the user's encrypted credit card data. The latest trend has been to develop "thin" client versions where the data will rest at the financial institution's server, with a password being sent to trigger a transaction.

The Black Mountain

Back when I was newly married, we lived across the street from a branch library in Hamden, CT. One of the librarians was, like myself, a lover of mysteries, and she would steer me to the best ones. One of the authors, Rex Stout, sometime president of the Mystery Writers of America, had a favorite detective, Nero Wolfe, who, with Archie Goodwin, his number one leg man and the narrator of the stories, solved the most puzzling of crimes. Wolfe was of enormous girth and would leave his desk chair only to eat, sleep and tend his beloved orchids on the roof garden of his New York brownstone, which he reached by elevator, of course.

One of the novels, however, was unusual in that Wolfe not only left his armchair, but actually traveled to Yugoslavia where in the roughest of circumstances he resolved a crime which had been committed in New York against a childhood friend. The black mountain was, of course, Montenegro, and as that region had been appearing in the press so often this past spring, I was reminded of the mystery and decided to re-read it, to see if I could get some additional understanding of the events in the Balkans. I went to my collection of paperbacks, but could not find it. Next time I went to Barnes and Noble, I looked for it, but could not find it. My local library didn't have it either. So... on to the Net shopping resources.

My first stop was priceline.com, which sounded likely, but has only travel, cars, and money. Then, shopping.com, which produced 31 hits. One was a republished hardcover for \$25.95 +S&H, two were for the audio cassette, and the rest were unrelated. I was looking for a paperback, so I continued. Next stop, buy.com. Same results, same prices. I remembered seeing that Yahoo! had added a shopping channel, so I tried shopping.yahoo.com and came up with a larger selection, but only one was the book in question — same edition, same price. Saving the most likely for last, I went on to amazon.com where I discovered more offerings and additional information: the hard cover book was a large print edition and the paperback was listed but out of print.

(Note: I am not getting lazy by dropping the "www."s from these URLs. All the sites in the previous paragraph have registered the same IP addresses with both forms. The public may no longer hear about the World Wide Web of Tim Berners-Lee. They'll just use it without knowing the name or creator.)

My last stop among the online stores was the friendly, neighborhood barnesandnoble.com, a.k.a. bn.com, www.bn.com, etc., where I retrieved a list of 10 tomes with the same results, but an announcement that there were also 84 out-of-print titles found. Most were back issues of magazines of unspecified relationship to my search, but I did find four first editions of the hardcover at prices from \$30 to \$162, as well as offerings from second-hand bookdealers of the paperback version from \$10 to \$21.75. There were quite a few at the \$10 price, leading me to suspect B&N of setting a floor.

I found three book/media shopbots where I made my next effort. The first was aces.com, an excellent media shopping site. They search a number of sites for your items and then sort the results in ascending order of price, including shipping and handling. It only picked up new items, though, so on to the remaining two sites, Advanced Book Exchange at www.abebooks.com and bibliofind.com. I finally purchased from Books Galore, somewhere in Missouri, for \$4.75, including postage and handling.

Shortly after this success I found myself in New York City, walking along 35th Street toward the Javitts Center and PCExpo. I happened to look up and saw a plaque on brownstone at about number 452 on the south side, just east of Tenth Avenue:

On this site
stood the elegant brownstone of
the corpulent fictional private detective,
Nero Wolfe,
with his able assistant, Archie Goodwin,
Mr. Wolfe raised orchids and dined well,
while solving over 70 perplexing cases
as recorded by novelist,
Rex Stout,
from 1934 to 1975.
Plaque placed by the Wolfe pack
Summer 1996

PCExpo

Just east of the pretended brownstone of Nero Wolfe, we find the Javitts Center, where preparations were underway for opening to the public. I went in to register at the press area, but found they weren't quite ready. I skillfully conned them out of admission to the tutorials, already under way, and headed down to them. I dropped in at the Linux tutorial first. It was given by Bryan Andregg of Red Hat Systems, and was an intermediate presentation of Linux systems administration. I was very impressed by the professionalism with which Linux system administration has developed. It is complete, sound and secure. If it's not as simple as my old Unix shop, neither is Windows NT. Visit RedHat at www.redhat.com.

After a quick lunch I attended an Intermediate level tutorial on Web Site Development by Tim Ash, president and CEO of Future Focus, Inc. When I entered he was talking about source code control and a lot of stuff that was more than peripheral to the subject, but he soon moved onto some nice hot stuff. He talked about "Bobby" certification for the visually and hearing impaired surfer. Some of the interesting data:

continued on page 11

On The Horizon

Shareware Favorites, Part 1

by Ron Murawski (*the_murs@pipeline.com*)

This month's column presents the first part of my basic tools for everyday computer use. They include utilities and applications. Only a few are mainstream commercial products — most are shareware. Here they are, in alphabetical order.

ACDSee 32 - Graphic Image Viewer

Shareware from <http://www.acdsystems.com/> ACD Systems. ACDSee 32 is the best graphic viewer I have found. Because it is small, it loads quickly and displays images very quickly. Browse directories for graphic images which appear as thumbnails. Double-click the thumbnail to view the fully expanded image. View collections of images as a slideshow with a configurable delay or maintain full control over when the next image is displayed. The installation software lets you make ACDSee the default choice for viewing the many graphic formats it supports. Program choices allow you to set graphic images as wallpaper, convert bitmaps to jpegs, send graphics files to your printer and set Windows file associations. The program is rich in features and configurability. The unregistered version occasionally nags you to register, but allows you to click the "remind me later" button.

DiskDupe - Floppy Disk Duplicator

DiskDupe Trial for Windows, Version 5.1 is available from <ftp://ftp.simtel.net/pub/simtelnet/win95/diskutl/> as file `ddwt5124.zip`. It is a test/trial shareware package. For 60 days you get full functionality, after which it becomes DiskDupe Lite. The Lite version copies only 4 disks at a time, forces you to wait for 10 seconds before starting, and reminds you the program is unregistered. If you routinely copy many floppy disks, this is a must-have product. DiskDupe copies a floppy to a file, then churns out copies from this image. My original reason for using DiskDupe was to backup my original set of Windows 95 floppy disks — all lucky 13 of them. The first disk, a 1.44, was easy. The rest had been problematic because of Microsoft's proprietary 1.68 format. DiskDupe was one of the few products that supported this then-new DMF format. It copied them easily. DiskDupe routinely verifies that any copy it makes is a perfect duplicate of the original. Here's my highest praise for this product: I've never had a problem with a DiskDupe-verified disk ever! See <http://www.msdl.com>

Eudora - E-Mail Client

Eudora Light (<http://eudora.qualcomm.com/eudoralight/>) from Qualcomm Software is available as a free download. This functional little package is appropriate for light e-mail usage. You can transfer messages into separate folders and put friend's addresses into an address book. It handles attachments too. Eudora is the most popular e-mail client in the world — Qualcomm claims 18 million users. If you get lots of email and need filtering ability, it would be wise to try out the Eudora Pro trial instead of the Light package. The full purchase price for Pro is \$40.

Qualcomm also offers a service called WebMail (<http://www.eudoramail.com/>). The ad says it all: "FREE access to your email wherever you are!" The best feature of a Eudora Web-Mail account is as a convenient "one stop" location to access all of your POP mail accounts.

Jar - Compression and Backup

Compression programs get a very mixed reception. Some people hate them and others love them. Many argue that with new, large hard drives compression is no longer necessary. They are right, but they are confusing disk compression with compression programs. All disk compression I've ever had experience with has eventually led to disastrous loss of data. (As a computer consultant, I'm called in after these problems occur.) My advice is: Never, ever use disk compression. Buy a large-enough hard drive for your purpose or buy removable media to archive onto.

With this said, why would I want to use compression software? Believe it or not, I do a backup every night onto floppy disks. Why? Because I trust the data integrity of Disk-Dupe-certified floppy disks. I don't backup my entire system — an exercise in futility because Windows will eventually become corrupt and I'll have to reinstall everything anyway. What do I backup? My "On The Horizon" columns, e-mail correspondence and other text files.

Since I'm backing up to 1.44 disks, I want something that will fit on as few floppy disks as possible. Jar, from ARJsoft, fits the bill. Its ability to compress text is amazing. The more text files you throw at it the better the compression gets. My compressed archive is typically about 25% of the uncompressed size. Jar supports spanning several disks with one archive. It supports Win 95 long file names. Best of all, there is a version for Windows 95 and one for DOS. Both use the same format so you can backup with the 32-bit version and restore using the 16-bit version. There are still an amazing amount of Windows 3.1 computers out there that cannot run Win 95 32-bit software. For safety I always specify that Jar use recovery records. This allows repair of damaged archives. Jar can recover up to 28K bytes of damaged data from a 1.44 disk. Once you understand Jar's "chapters" concept, you can store multiple backups inside the same archive compressing only incremental changes. I use Jar daily and it hasn't failed me yet. This is a text-mode program whether it runs in Windows or DOS. See: <http://www.arjsoft.com/>

MediaWorks 98 - Audio/video player and editor

Midisoft has a page devoted to MediaWorks 98 at www.midisoft.com/html/catalog/mw98/default.htm, where you can download a 30 day free-trial version. If you like it, the cost is \$20. This is what Windows Media Player should have been. It automatically scans your hard drive for music, video and sound files, finds any new additions and adds them to its master list of media files. It supports continuous, shuffled or random playing of selected files. There is an audio mixer, a

Continued on page 14

PartitionMagic 4.01

by Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net)

PartitionMagic is a program to change the partition structure of your hard drive. Suppose you format your hard drive; install Windows, install your applications, then want to change the basic drive structure. If you ask Microsoft how to do it, “they” will say “erase the hard drive and start over”. If you have hundreds or even thousands of hours invested in installing applications, this is not a good alternative!

PartitionMagic allows you to make changes after all the applications have been installed on the computer. For example suppose you started out with equal-size drives C: and D: on a single hard drive. Since most of your applications probably installed themselves on the C: drive, you find that C: becomes full while D: may be mostly empty. With PartitionMagic it becomes a very simple change to make the D: drive smaller and the C: drive larger, making room for more applications.

I have used PartitionMagic for several years, starting with version 2. I am now using the current version (4.01), with many new features which make it an even more powerful program. You may create, resize, and move partitions of various types: FAT, FAT32, NTFS, HPFS, Linux, and Linux Swap.

Since I use Windows NT, I like the ability to easily bypass the 4 GB (GigaByte) size limitation on Drive C: (yes, I know it’s only a limitation of the install program and not of Windows NT itself). However, PartitionMagic makes it easy. You just take a large hard drive; install NT in a 4 GB partition; and then stretch the partition to 8 or 10 GB. (Or more).

PartitionMagic allows you to change other things. For example you can change a FAT partition to a FAT32 partition or vice-versa. You can change FAT into NTFS, and there are other combinations. If you’re working with FAT partitions, you can change the FAT cluster size. With FAT partitions, it is often possible to recover hundreds of MegaBytes of wasted disk space by changing the cluster size and/or repartitioning the hard drive.

I recommend that those of you who have an older version of PartitionMagic upgrade because PartitionMagic has kept pace with subtle changes in the operating systems and in file and disk structures. In addition, there are many user-friendly enhancements that PowerQuest has made to the product. They have a GUI (Graphical User Interface) that works under Windows 95 or 98 and makes the system even easier to use.

I have used PartitionMagic at home and at work and do not hesitate to recommend it. It is a well documented (154 pages), professional program that is essential for any software tool kit.

PS. This latest version also comes with a boot loader called “Boot Magic”. This allows you to have several different operating systems on a single hard drive or in a single computer. For example, after creating a 8 GB NT system and using it for several months, I was able to shrink it to 7 GB, add a 1 GB DOS 6.2 system, and boot from either one. This is not possible using any Microsoft utility. ☺

Corel Ventura 8

by Barbara DeGroot

Those who read the small print on page 2 of this publication know that from my beginning as Editor, it has been set using Corel Ventura 5. Most of my experience before that had been desktop publishing with WordPerfect — a painful way to do anything but a small publication — and later I used Microsoft Publisher (still do for the newsletter I set for my Alumnae Association). The June issue of ACGNJ News was the first done with Ventura 8, and the jump from version 5 has been a very pleasant experience.

Ventura 5 was adequate for the job, but had some very annoying quirks. For some unknown reason, Princeton PC Users Group and Brookdale Users Group on the inside back page kept losing their boldfacing. The table of contents on page one accumulated multiple (sometimes as many as twenty) extra carriage returns at the end of the text. Extra spaces appeared without reason in some text. Neither Corel nor other users were able to explain or offer suggestions. I don’t even want to think about how many times it crashed. Ventura 8 has eliminated these “little” problems as well as others I didn’t know existed until they vanished.

I love the new “modeless cursor” — no longer must I return to the tool bar to switch from the text cursor to the pointer. Now the cursor changes shape depending on what I’m pointing at. Click inside a frame and it’s a text cursor; click on the border of a frame and it’s a pointer. Right-clicking almost eliminates visits to the pull-down menus, meaning lots less mousing around. Nice!

The package comes with a very nice manual which has, so far, answered all my questions. (I’ve had a lot of questions because many of the functions have been relocated since version 5.) Each time I used the manual, I also checked the help file, and everything was there too. Great documentation, and it is needed — you don’t learn the ins and outs of a package like this by just playing around with it. There’s a second book about the same size as the user’s manual which contains thumbnails of all the graphics included in the package.

Using MS Publisher had caused me to wish for a “nudge” feature in Corel for a long time. Nudging an object is moving it in small increments until it is exactly where you want it. Corel now has nudge, and they’ve added bells — it’s adjustable — I hadn’t even thought to dream of that.

MS Publisher and Corel 5 differed in one other major way: the way they structured the publication. In MS Pub, articles and graphics are embedded in the publication file, resulting in one large file. In Corel 5, the text files and graphics were linked to the publication file, which never got very big. There are advantages and disadvantages to both.

With embedding, the publication file can get to be very large, and therefore not easily transportable. With linking, the linked files (publication file and text/graphic files) must stay where they were when you linked them, which means the publication may be scattered throughout your computer unless you take pains to organize. If one linked file was damaged, you had a problem.

continued on page 14

Ken's Korner

Why I Like "Rolling Upgrades"

by Ken Fermoye, TUGNET

I've written before about "Upgrades that Make Sense." Now I will explain my approach to upgrades and how I revamped the Fermoye office system over a 15-month period.

First, I believe in lagging various distances behind the cutting edge. Let early adopters and corporate users pay big bucks to buy (and find bugs in) the latest and greatest. Prices will drop as production and competition increase.

Second, I believe in what Roger Radcliffe, one of TUGNET's most knowledgeable gurus, aptly describes as "rolling upgrades." This means upgrading in increments, as needed, instead of wholesale makeovers or buying entirely new systems. Need more speed? Add RAM. Hard disk getting full? Install a second hard drive. The trick is to try to buy components that will be compatible with the next enhancements you expect to make. This requires research and may not always be possible, but make it your goal.

We started our 15-month upgrade with three computers in January, 1998. No. 1 was a 14-month-old, 166MHz Pentium Micron ClientPro, with 32MB of RAM, 28.8 modem and 2.1GB IDE hard drive. No. 2 was a 133MHz Pentium in full tower case, with 32MB RAM, 33.3 modem and 2.3GB IDE drive. No. 3 was a 100MHz Pentium, mid-tower case, 32MB RAM, 14.4 modem and 1.2GB IDE drive.

No. 2 had previously gone through rolling upgrades from a hot 386 in 1989 to 486, then to 133 Pentium. No. 3 started life as a 386 in 1991 and had been upgraded with a new motherboard about 1995. No. 1 and No. 2 were directly connected (coax cable) in a peer-to-peer network. All had CD-ROM drives and 32MB of RAM.

Our peripherals included: two scanners (Relisys Taurus SCSI flatbed acquired late in '97 and older HP sheetfed, grayscale ScanJet 4.2 with parallel port interface), two printers (HP LaserJet III and HP InkJet 855Cse), SyQuest 135MB removable cartridge drive and Casio QV100 digital camera (Christmas present, 1996) and a couple sets of inexpensive speakers. Now we have all the above, plus one new machine, in a peer-to-peer network, using a LinkSys 5-port hub and Category 5 UTP (unshielded twisted pair) cables.

The Micron got a 6.4GB Seagate UDMA hard drive. It worked so well and was so easy to install that I later (when prices dropped 10-15%) added a similar drive to No. 2. Then came a Super Woofer speaker system and 56.6Kbps fax/modem for the Micron; about midsummer I upped the RAM to 64MB and slipped in a 200MHz WinChip cpu.

Then came a windfall in the form of several freelance assignments, including one for PC World. At the same time, Ken's Korner was growing rapidly and I needed more resources to do research, check products and technologies and store and keep track of data. So I decided to accelerate an upgrade of our entire system, compressing it into six months instead of spread over the year originally planned.

No. 2 computer, the one my wife Liz uses for graphics and financial work, got a major upgrade: New Socket 7 ATX motherboard, 225MHz WinChip, 56Kbps fax/modem, 32X

CD-ROM drive replacing the 8X unit, 64MB RAM. The motherboard needed a new case, so we scrapped the full tower for a midtower with new power supply.

Next I added a totally new machine as a combination server and workstation: 300MHz Pentium II with ball-bearing fan, BX motherboard, 64MB SDRAM, 6.4GB Samsung hard drive, AGP (advanced graphics port) Trident 4MB graphics card, 36X CD-ROM drive, 1.44MB floppy drive and ATX midtower case.

I use a KVM (keyboard, video display, mouse) switch (covered in another article: "KVM Switch: Secret Weapon for Small Offices") to control the server and my No. 1 Micron machine. We use the server mainly to store files, for backup and for Windows Office 97 Professional Edition, which can be run via the network from any of the other machines.

The spare No. 3 computer got major upgrades, too. It now has a new motherboard, 300MHz AMD K6-2 cpu, 64MB RAM, 24X CD-ROM drive, 56K fax/modem, the 2.3GB IDE drive taken from the No. 2 computer (for a total of 3.5GB), new keyboard and mouse. I added a suitcase handle to the top of the midtower case so I can take it to meetings to show Power Point presentations or do demos. It retains both 3.5" and 5.25" floppy drives so I can copy files archived on older disks to newer media. I added a Quicknet PhoneJack card and digital video camera so we can use it as a Net Telephony/video conferencing workstation. (Watch for a future article on this.)

Computers 1, 2 and 3 each have an attached printer: No. 1, LaserJet III; No. 2, HP InkJet 722C; No. 3, InkJet 855Cse. Any of our four computers can print to any of the printers via the network. We have speaker systems for all three of these machines, plus two microphones and a headset which are plugged in as needed.

The networked system works great for our needs. While fairly extensive - more elaborate than many home offices, perhaps on a par with small businesses, whether run from home or a small office — it is not cutting edge by current standards. No Pentium III CPUs, no gigantic 12- to 18GB UDMA drives and no T1 or cable modem access to the Internet (we are hoping for an ADSL connection later this year). Liz doesn't do 3D graphics, we don't yet do any video editing or manipulate huge spreadsheets and we don't play performance-hungry games, so the system serves our needs more than adequately.

Future plans: I intend to upgrade Liz' No. 2 computer to a 300MHz CPU, maximum for the motherboard, and will replace her CD-ROM drive with either a CD-R or DVD drive. The No. 3 machine will get a 15" SVGA monitor (to replace the current 14" VGA model) and an 8.4GB UDMA drive (to replace the two smaller IDE drives). My No. 1 Micron computer likely will get a new motherboard and CPU within the next six to eight months

The wish list include a new higher-resolution digital still camera. Beyond that, who knows? Depends on budget, growing needs and price trends. We'll keep you posted! ☺

Norton Utilities Version 4.0

by Sol Libes (sol@libes.com)

I have been using Norton Utilities (NU) since Version 1.0 for DOS. It has always been one of essential tools for maintaining my hard disk and resolving problems with MS-DOS and then with MS Windows.

It is unfortunate that personal computers are not that highly reliable and one needs tools to resolve the problems that crop up. A hard disk drive is basically a mechanism and therefore subject to the frailties of mechanical devices. Further, MS Windows has problems and inefficiencies. NU has been the product I have relied upon to fix drive and operating system problems and also to make my system run as efficiently as possible. I have had extensive experience with NU.

When Symantec offered to send me a copy of the new version 4.0 to review I jumped at the chance. They are also offering a special deal to computer user groups making the upgrade even more worthwhile (more about this later).

NU continually monitors the system for problems. When it detects a problem developing, a window rises from the bottom of the screen warning me and describing the nature of the problem. I can then click on a button for a more detailed explanation and I can choose to have NU correct the problem. For example, it might point out that my drive is getting too fragmented, or that there is a registry problem, or there are problems with the integrity of the program, or missing files, just to mention a few.

NU has more features than I can enumerate here. All I can do here is briefly list most of them by category.

- Finding and Fixing Problems – A complete system check and fix of problems.
- System Improvement – Make your system run faster and recover disk space by better defrag than Microsoft provides, optimizing the swap file, finding, and deleting duplicate files to recover wasted space.
- Preventive Maintenance – By continually monitoring system operation as described above.
- Trouble shooting – The first thing NU does when you install it is create disaster recovery files on either a Zip drive or three floppy disks.

What is new in Version 4.0? NU has been improved in the following ways.

- If you have a Zip drive it will find missing and corrupt systems files and replace them with copies from the Zip drive.
- The registry is now monitored continuously for corruption problems and repair is done automatically.
- A complete system checkup program is now included that checks for disk and Windows problems and improves performance.
- A program is provided that can also remove all traces of selected files or folders from your hard drive if you are concerned about system security and maximizing free hard disk space.
- A program is included that protects on-screen documents in the event of a system crash making recovery possible.

- If your system crashes while visiting a web site it returns you there when you reboot.
- Many of the troubleshooting programs can be run directly from the CD.
- A program to troubleshoot and tune your modem in the event of problems.
- A two-floppy-disk set of emergency recovery tools to use in the case of a complete disaster where you cannot boot from the Win95/98 startup floppy, or the NU CD.
- A 100+ page manual that is well written and has an incredible amount of hard disk recovery information.

In other words Symantec took a terrific product and has made it even better.

In shopping for Norton Utilities I have seen it in the stores for \$39.9+tax and the lowest price I have seen on the web is \$31.95+shipping and handling. Symantec is offering a special deal to members of computer user groups that are members of APCUG (Association of Personal Computer User Groups) and our club qualifies. They will ship NU directly to you. To purchase NU 4.0 at a special User Group price of \$29.95 including all shipping, handling, and tax's, call 1-800-554-4403 between June 1st and August 15th. You "must" tell the operator you are referring to "promo code U1215". ☺

Looking for a Good Home

Two Roctec Slim 3.5-inch external floppy drives for Amiga computer. Capacity 880KB formatted. Contact A. Goldfinger, (908)889-8481

UCITA and Cyberspace Security

The latest flaps in cyberworld revolve around proposed new legislation, some of the provisions of which are really scary.

UCITA (the Uniform Computer Information Transactions Act), is a proposed law for applying consistent rules to computer software licenses across all 50 states. It would allow vendors to repossess software by disabling it remotely, allow them to disclaim warranties, and much more. The URL for the articles is too long to publish here. Go to www.infoworld.com and/or www.zdnet.com and search for "UCITA" to read all about it.

The Cyberspace Electronic Security Act would give the government the right to break into homes and offices and disable the security precautions on the computers, and extend the use of hidden listening devices to computers. Search for "Electronic Security" to recover the pertinent articles.

Thanks to Bill Farrell and John Raff ☺

Windows 9X Tips: How the Cookie Crumbles

by Vic Laurie, Princeton PC Users Group (hampsi@bigfoot.com)

Anyone who has used the Web is likely to have encountered what are called "cookies." (The name was put into usage by Netscape who took it from some Unix terminology.) Your computer even has a special place set aside for them. Frequently reviled and often misunderstood, these small snippets of information are downloaded and placed on your computer during visits to many Web sites. Although in principle they can be totally rejected, they are becoming more and more a facet of life on the Web that has to be accepted. It is becoming increasingly inconvenient to simply block them from your computer so intelligent methods of management and of removal are called for. Fortunately, some simple techniques are available and will be discussed here.

What and Where Are They?

Generally, each cookie is stored by Microsoft Internet Explorer (and AOL 4 but not AOL 3) as a separate small text file in the `\windows\cookies\` folder. (According to an arcane scheme, IE 4 and 5 also put pointers to them into the Internet cache folders.) Netscape Navigator uses a single text file `cookie.txt` with the cookies as individual entries in this file. The location of this file depends on your version of Navigator. In versions 4.x it is usually in `\Program Files\Netscape\Users\[YourName]\`. Cookie files are readable by Notepad or other text editors but the contents may not necessarily seem to make a lot of sense. There is a little free utility, WinMag Cookie Viewer, from Windows Magazine that will read the cookies in `\windows\cookies\` and provide some information. It can be downloaded at <http://www.winmag.com/Karen>.

Incidentally, if you use Windows Explorer (with Show All Files enabled) you may see the files `Index.dat`, `Mm2048.dat` and/or `Mm256.dat` in the `\windows\cookies\` folder. These are not cookies but index files used by the Windows system. You should not try to delete or edit them from within Windows.

What Do They Do?

Briefly, cookies are either tracking devices which allow links that you open to do things like check if you have been there before and what parts of the site you visit or little data bases which store things like passwords or other information which identifies you or your account. In principle, only the site that places a cookie has future access to that cookie and cookies are not supposed to enable access to other parts of your computer. (Nonetheless, you should be aware that things like information about your operating system, for example, are readily ascertained.)

Are cookies safe? Probably, but there is no space here to go over the debate on the pros and cons of possible misuses of cookies. For some general information, try these sites:

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

<http://www.netassoc.net/techstuff/cookies.htm>

<http://205.181.113.18/pcmag/pctech/content/16/08/ir1608.001.html>

A very interesting discussion about all facets of cookies is in the paper, "Commercialization of the World Wide Web: The Role of Cookies," at

<http://ecommerce.vanderbilt.edu/cb3/mgt565a/group5/paper.group5.paper2.htm>

They Shall Not Pass

If you are concerned about privacy or simply averse to the notion of strangers meddling with your system, all cookies can be refused by appropriate browser settings. But you will then face long delays on many sites while repeated attempts are made to download cookies before letting you on. Other sites will simply refuse to let you on, period. Sites which require passwords will make you go through the sign-in procedure every time. Customized sites like My Yahoo may forget all about your customized settings. If you are nonetheless bound and determined that no cookie shall touch your computer, here are settings for some of the browsers.

In Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0, go to the View menu and choose Internet Options. Click on the Advanced tab and scroll down to the Security category. Under Cookies, select either Disable All Cookie Use or Prompt Before Accepting Cookies.

In Netscape 4.x go to Edit|Preferences|Advanced. You will have a choice of accepting, accepting only if sent to originator, disabling, and/or warn before accepting cookies.

There are also any number of software programs for filtering and managing cookies in various ways. Examples can be found at:

http://www.zdnet.com/anchordesk/story/story_3604.html

<http://www.winfiles.com/apps/98/webtools-cache.html>

http://www.pcworld.com/current_issue/article/0,1212,7548+1+3,00.html

<http://www.cookiecentral.com/files.htm>

<http://www.billp.com/winpatrol/>

<http://www.zdnet.com/products/stories/reviews/0,4161,2311289,00.html>

Another approach is to use a proxy so that your identity is hidden when you surf. This is a subject in itself. See, for example, <http://www.anonymizer.com/30/index.shtml>.

Trust But Verify

While some may be willing to endure the delays and inconveniences of cookie blocking/filtering, I suspect many will feel like King Canute and the sea if they fight the flood of cookies that is characteristic of so many Web sites. In my opinion, cookies are sometimes useful, are at worst a nuisance but are not evil; so I think the answer lies in their management rather than in their outright prohibition. What follows is for single-user machines only; multi-user environments have their own set of security issues not discussed here.

Instead of refusing cookies, let them in and then selectively delete them after each internet session. The trick is to keep desirable cookies and remove the rest. Decide which sites you regularly visit and which of their cookies you are willing to keep. For example, if you are a regular reader of the on-line

continued

New York Times, save your password. Or if you go to the Microsoft site on a frequent basis, save your sign-in. If you use a personalized portal like My Yahoo or My Excite, their cookie can be kept. How do you tell which cookie is whose? Reading a cookie with a text editor will almost always make its origin clear if the name has not. Internet Explorer cookies usually contain the site in their name, e.g., on my computer the NY Times cookie is called "*VL@nytimes.txt*". The Netscape all-inclusive cookie file *cookies.txt* will have one or more lines beginning with the name of a site. My computer has 4 lines each starting with *.nytimes.com*.

The straightforward (but initially tedious) way to manage cookies begins by deleting them all. For Internet Explorer (and AOL 4) users the cleanest procedure is to go to Command Prompt at boot-up and enter (without the quotes) "*deltree/y C:\Windows\cookies*". Note that this cannot be done from a DOS box within Windows. Another, not quite as clean, procedure is to open the folder *\Window\cookies* and delete everything except any of the three *.dat* files mentioned above. (In most systems the *.dat* files will refuse to let you delete them. In some Windows 95 systems, trying to delete them may cause a system crash.) Because of the peculiar mirroring done by Internet Explorer, this latter procedure leaves some detritus in the folder *\Windows\Temporary Internet Files*. Netscape Navigator users can simply delete the one file *cookies.txt*. It will be regenerated as a clean version.

Next, set your browser to give a prompt before accepting a cookie, then visit all the sites that you use regularly which require log-in procedures, passwords, or other information you are willing to have stored on your computer. Go through whatever procedures are required, accept appropriate cookies, and refuse all others. This may require several iterations to make sure you have only "good" cookies.

Now, having collected only desirable cookies, your system can be set up to keep those while flushing out any others at the end of each internet session. This is done by making use of the Read-only attribute for files. Internet Explorer (and AOL 4) users should set the attribute of all cookie files in *windows\cookies* that they wish to keep to Read-only. Open the *windows\cookies* folder in Windows Explorer, select all the *.txt* files, right-click and in the properties sheet check Read-only. Alternatively, open a DOS box (it should show "*C:\Windows*" in the prompt) and enter (omitting the quotes) "*attrib +r cookies*.txt*". Then, after exiting any following internet sessions, open a DOS box, and enter (omitting the quotes) "*del cookies*.txt*". The files with the Read-only attribute will be the only survivors. Life is simpler for Netscape users. All they have to do is mark as Read-only the one file, *cookies.txt*. Cookies will go into RAM during an internet session but will not be saved when you close up your Netscape browser. (Incidentally, if you ever wish to edit out individual cookie entries in this file, open it in a text editor and carefully delete the entire line(s) containing a "bad" cookie. You will, however, see an ominous warning at the beginning of the file telling you not to edit. I have ignored this warning many times with no problem but obviously you want to do editing in an intelligent and discriminate fashion. Also, always make a backup copy beforehand.)

Internet Explorer 5 allows for cookie management in a different way. The cookie settings are found on the Internet Options | Security tab. Here you can arrange to accept cookies from certain sites only. Add any site from which you want to accept cookies to the Trusted sites zone, click the Custom level button, and click Enable under the Cookies setting. For the Internet zone, which will by default include all other sites, you can click Disable or Prompt under the Cookies setting. However, as stated already, refusing cookies can cause slow browsing.

As mentioned above, there are many varieties of software specifically for cookie management. Also utility programs like CleanSweep allow you to view and delete both Internet Explorer cookie files and individual cookie entries from the Netscape *cookies.txt* file. Even if you are not concerned about privacy issues you will want to keep control of the number of cookies that will accumulate over time. Even a rather modest week's surfing may collect several hundred cookies. Depending on your FAT and partition size, Internet Explorer cookie files may quickly occupy several Mbytes or more of disk space. One advantage of Netscape's single *cookies.txt* file is the absence of this space hogging.

For Windows 98 users (or Windows 95 with Windows Script Host installed) PC Magazine has a small VBScript file, *cookies.vbs*, that provides handy management of Internet Explorer cookie files. Go to

<http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/pctech/content/solutions/in1801c.htm>

Finally, if you wish to check in real time to find what is in a site's cookies while you are there, type and enter the following JavaScript command in the address bar of your browser (with JavaScript enabled):

```
javascript:alert("Cookie is: " + document.cookie)
```

A pop-up window will show what information that the site you are currently visiting is putting in its cookie. Add a shortcut to this command to your Links or Personal toolbar to make it easy to use.

Disclaimer: Everything mentioned here works on my and other computers but Windows systems can be highly idiosyncratic so always be prepared with backups. ☐

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)		

90% of the hacker attacks are on NT systems. His company develops sites for major corporations and uses Unix servers where stability and future scalability is a requirement, and NT where windows-based server applications are required. Their clients include American Express, Sony and CompUSA. Check them out at www.future-focus.com.

Next day, I got my press registration, and went to the first keynote: Marc Andreessen. The most stiking revelation in an otherwise unexciting presentation: Instant Messaging has really taken off, growing from 0 to 50 million users in just two years. ICQ, a similar product, logs about seven million user hours a day. Since these are relationship-driven, he expects them to find a natural home in the workplace and that usage will grow accordingly. There was some mumbo-jumbo about the Net vs. TV, but I'll omit that. Note: Instant Messaging has taken off to such an extent that last week Microsoft tried to get into the IM protocol act in a fight with AOL and others who are its current guardians.

Back at the press area I ran into Rich Brill, who very generously invited me to come along with him not only to the J. P. Davis press show, but (knowing that I am a Yali) also to join him at the 14th Annual Computer Press Awards dinner at the Yale Club. Also saw Jerry Pournelle with a group of people carrying placards "Byte is Back on the Web only." That's fine for us, but will it bring in enough revenue to keep the nerdy magazine alive? Let's hope so! CMP Media is sponsoring their existence for the moment. Visit www.byte.com and www.cmpmedia.com to see what they're about. (You'll see some familiar logos!)

On the floor I visited the Bell Atlantic booth where they were showing off their wireless Net appliance that plugs into your laptop. It gives you wireless access for \$39.95 a month at 19.2kb. Not great, but it does the job if you're a road warrior. Not much else on the floor really new or exciting. Guess we'll have to wait for Internet World!

Around 6 PM Rich and I headed for J. P. Davis' PCxPRESS at the Manhattan Center. Our old friends from Partition Magic were there as well as reps from WITI (Women in Technology International), a group devoted to help women to network with others who want to help them succeed. (See www.witi.com.) For a complete list of exhibitors see www.jpddavis.com/events/pcxpress/pcx_sponsors_99.html.

We then headed for the Yale Club for the Computer Press Awards. The meal was great! (Perhaps I shouldn't tell, but I can't resist praising my Yale collegians.) The awards were all well deserved. Those of interest to us were: Best Columnist, Robin Raskin for her DoubleClick in FamilyPC. Best online features, New York Times (Cybertimes) and CNET. The best online computer site, hands down, was ZDNet (www.zdnet.com). You can view all the awards online at www.computerpress.org. (Don't try the .com site — it's a speculator's trap.)

Science

Before we go to the journals, there are a couple MORE items to note. First, the total solar eclipse on August 11. Although the path of totality did not include our area, I wouldn't be surprised if there weren't one or two eclipse chasers among you

who went to see it. An old friend from Paris called to announce that he was taking his family on a drive about 100 km away, right into the path of totality. We had to be content with views published online by NASA and CNN (live webcam) at sunearth.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse/TSE1999/TSE1999.html and www.cnn.com/TECH/space/9908/11/eclipse.040. There are many interesting links at both sites, if you want to review this last eclipse of the twentieth century.

The following two nights brought an unrelated astronomical event, the peaking of the Perseid meteor shower, and NASA meant to cover it with a live webcast from a balloon at an altitude of over 100,000 feet, but the balloon ruptured on its way aloft, (could it have been punctured by a meteorite???) (they got some good pictures, anyway). Check out their great, educational site by Science@NASA at www.perseidslive.com. (There's another for the Leonids at — you guessed it — www.leonidslive.com brought to you by the folks at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center.

Speaking of Marshall, they host science.nasa.gov, which does a bangup popular presentation of what's going on out there. A great resource! You can easily jump to a video of the eclipse on this site!

From Science Magazine's Netwatch column (Aug 20): Interested in some great microphotography? Biophysicist Michael W. Davidson of the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory at Florida State University in Tallahassee, offers for your delight his "Molecular Expressions Gallery." Start at micro.magnet.fsu.edu/micro/gallery.html and check out the DNA collection!

It's that season again. Visit the National Hurricane Center at www.nhc.noaa.gov.

For everthing you wanted to know about magnetic resonance imaging, try www.cis.rit.edu/htbooks/mri/inside.htm.

Nature, the British science journal, has a new section called Web Matters where they publish articles relating to the use of the Web as a medium for scientific communication. The latest is "Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations" by Edward A. Fox from Virginia Tech. This and other interesting articles on the subject can be found at helix.nature.com/webmatters.

The Scientific American has an interesting article in this month's Cyberview column which relates to the general question of open access and hostile forces "out there." In a piece entitled "When Publishing Could Mean Perishing" they discuss a proposal to publish a database of dangerous sites and risk management plans which would be publicly available. Well, what about terrorists? Read the article at www.sciam.com/1999/0999issue/0999cyber.html. ☐

SIG News

Investing

Sheldon Koepf (sheldonk@intac.com)

At our **May** meeting, we reviewed a book that Dick Boyd found, "Trade Your Way to Financial Freedom", by Van K. Tharp, published by McGraw Hill, ISBN 0-07064762-3. Cost a little under \$30. I have now read the book and highly recommend it. This covers all the "traps" that I have seen many investors, including Dick and me, run into when making investments. Dick and I read many (perhaps 65 or so) books on investing every year. We seldom find one we both consider very good. This is one that both of us recommend to any investor.

Our **June** meeting featured Jim Fleming, Quantum Portfolio Manager for Prudential Securities. His presentation proved my statement that he (and his 32 years of experience), is far from your normal broker. He showed how he supplements Prudential's excellent research with his own technical analysis installed on a PC. Mr. Fleming gave us a demonstration of the use of point & figure technical analysis. He used chart examples from Dorsey, Wright & Associates to explain how to interpret this type of chart. Jim discussed a suggested approach to equity investing designated by Prudential as their Quantum Program, a fee-based program. Our group received this new knowledge with a great deal of enthusiasm. For more on this approach, visit <http://www.dorseywright.com/>

At our **July** meeting, Jack Smith, one of our members, presented an estate-planning checklist. He told us some estate stories to help our thinking about a subject most of us ignore. His handout listed five recommended books.

- Leaving Money Wisely - David Belin (1990)
- Plan Your Estate - D. Clifford & C. Jordan (1998)
- Estate Planning Made Easy - D. Phillips & W. Wolfkiel (1994)
- Live Rich - Barry Kaye
- Loving Trust - R. Esperti & R. Paterson (1994)

One fund (American Century Gifttrust Fund) was suggested as an estate planning tool. Jack also mentioned a few useful Internet sites:

- www.troweprice.com - a user-friendly retirement planner
- www.vanguard.com - inexpensive source of variable annuities and trust services
- www.nolo.com - a good place to find books and software for wills and estate planning

Afterward, there was a lively discussion period.

For those current and prospective investors out there, I would like to extend an invitation to attend our group. We look forward to meeting new members and ideas. Our group includes newcomers to investing and computing as well as those who have many years of experience in both.

At our **August** meeting we discussed how to go about establishing a trading system with some comments on day trading. The discussion was based on the book discussed at the May meeting: "Trade Your Way to Financial Freedom" by Van K. Tharp. We covered objective selling, personal factors, and

the six key parts of setting up a system. Most of the typical personal and psychological problems were discussed thoroughly. The book includes examples of techniques that can be used. I recommend it because it gives you a good feel for tailoring a trading system to your own requirements. We also talked about many of the pitfalls of day trading and some of the statistics on this approach. ☞

Internet

Martin Rosenblum (m.rosenblum@ieee.org)

July 1 Meeting: We had the usual random access, touched briefly on the Microsoft anti-trust completion of testimony and went on to talk about PCExpo and my shopping case study on Rex Stout's *The Black Mountain*.

August 5: There was no meeting and we hope everyone enjoyed the respite.

September 2: We'll discuss some of the history of e-commerce as touched on in this month's *Internet Corner*. Once again, if you're a newbie or want to bring one along, we'll do newbie stuff at 7:30. :

PC Users Group

Jo-Anne Head (tinarock@aol.com)

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

June: Mark Middleton from Adobe Systems on Acrobat 4 and the latest from Adobe. Several Adobe products were given away after the presentation. The winners were: John Raff (Adobe PhotoDeluxe 3.0), Andy Meyer (Page Mill 3.0) and Joy Martin (Acrobat 4).

July: Our annual summer party. The meeting topic was Home Automation by Frank Warren.

August: Meeting was cancelled due to summer.

September: Debra Pfundstein on Office 2000 — See how Microsoft Office 2000 makes the Web work for you! Learn how Office 2000 makes everyday tasks easier than ever before and offers exciting new ways to use the Web to help you streamline the way you work. ☞

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. The Layman's forum will meet in June, but will not be meeting during July and August. See you in September! ☞

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 ...). 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. ☞

Symposium

John Raff (jraff@injersey.com)

September: Stan Stoler, president of Micro-Surgeon Data Recovery Services. Focus on recovery of data that has been lost due to mechanical failure or logical file structure damage on fixed disks, floppy disks and removable disks.

October: Ron Murawski, an open discussion.

November: Celestial Automation by the director of the Hunterdon College Planetarium. ☞

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. ☞

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. ☞

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. ☞

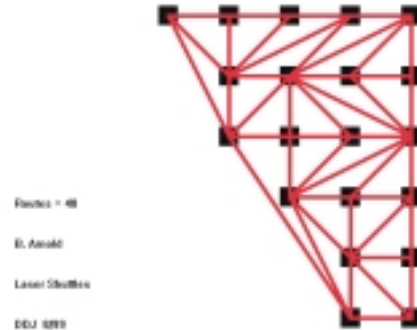
September 1999

C++ Users Group

Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net)

<http://222.blast.net/barnold>

June: A C language utility for processing text files by Bruce Arnold. The original program was designed to analyze network log files produced with backup tapes in order to find out if the backup was successful or not.



July: The presentation was on “Laser Shuttles”, a Dr. Dobb’s Contest. The challenge is to make as many connections as possible between the twenty points of the puzzle map without any of the connections intersecting. A more detailed description of the problem with our software for finding the solution can be found on our Web page.



August: The programming project was “The 8 Queens Problem” by Ron Winter. Visit our Web site for the code. ☞

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. ☞

Horizon, continued from page 5

sound recorder and a wave editor. This is the software provided with the Diamond Monster MX-300 sound card.


Mirror - Directory Synchronization

All things change. I recently purchased a CD re-writer (CD-RW) and no longer backup to floppy disks. The CD-RW disk is large enough (650 MB) to hold my files uncompressed. Originally I used Windows Explorer to drag and drop my Data directory to the CD-RW disk. I liked the simplicity of this method but not how long it took — 20 minutes with my 2X CD-RW. As time passed it took longer and longer. Why? My CD-RW disk was becoming badly fragmented. Using Windows Defrag took almost two hours. It was faster to entirely erase the disk before a fresh backup — dangerous, because until the new backup was entirely finished, I had no complete backup of absolutely irreplaceable files.

What I needed was a program to detect changes and copy only the changed files to the CD-RW disk. Mirror, written by Swiss programmer Juerg Jenzer, is a Windows 95/98 program that can synchronize two or more directories on two devices. Push the “Check” button, wait about a minute while Mirror churns away checking for changed files, get a response that several files have been changed, then press “Continue” button to copy the changed files.

Juerg asks \$10 for Mirror. You can download it from <ftp://ftp.simtel.net/pub/simtelnet/win95/fileutl/asmirror.zip>. There is a 30 second startup pause in the unregistered version. Before someone sends me email explaining how I can backup free using Xcopy: Yes, I could, but the convenience, speed and low price of Mirror seem to me the better choice.

Next Month: Shareware Favorites, Part 2


Ron Murawski is a computer consultant from Staten Island, New York. Feedback or advice for future articles is invited. You can read “On The Horizon” online at <http://www.castlemall.com/ron>. Copyright © 1999 by Ron Murawski. 

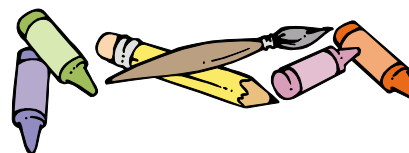
Ventura, continued from page 8

Corel 8 offers a choice. (I love having choices!) Embedding is the default, but you can also export on save so there are separate text files which include all the changes you made during layout. (And I can send the m to Jo-Anne for proofreading.) These are linked to the publication file, but if one is damaged or missing, Ventura just goes back to the last saved version which is embedded in the publication — the best of both!

Because of the way I make transition from one month’s newsletter to the next, I’m especially enjoying the ability to have more than one publication open at once. Much of the material carries over from one issue to another, and although Ventura allows you to tag the articles to be kept in the new issue, I always forget something. With both the old issue and the new issue open, it’s easy to cut and paste the forgotten items.

Corel 8 is an extremely powerful and sophisticated piece of software. It will probably take me many more months to explore and learn to use all the new features and enhancements, and I will probably never use some of them (unless we go to color for the ACGNJ News) but I can tell already that I like it very much. I may have more to say after I’ve learned more. (I haven’t even mentioned installation — there’s really nothing to mention, it was so easy.) I would recommend Ventura 8 to anyone who needs a powerful publishing tool. For small jobs, there’s probably too much of a learning curve, and WordPerfect may have everything you need.

Thank you, Corel Corporation, for providing the review copy I’m now using. 



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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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 10.

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>)

June 12-13: NJ Convention Center, Raritan Center, Edison, NJ

June 19: South Jersey Expo Center, Pennsauken, NJ

ACGNJ Hotline

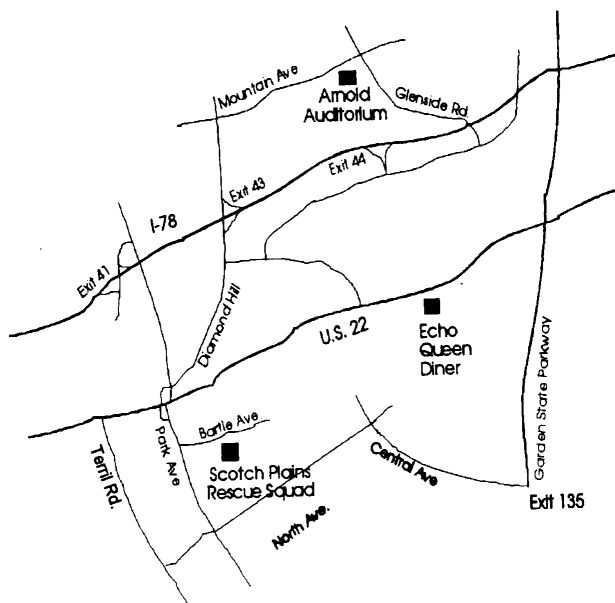
(908) 322-4654

ACGNJ Bulletin Boards

ACGNJ Bulletin boards were shut down in April due to lack of interest. Of 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 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

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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, September 1, 1999

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

Thursday, September 2

8 P.M. - Internet. Marty Rosenblum

Friday, September 3

8 P.M. - Main Meeting.

Monday, September 6

8 P.M. - (Lunics, Peter Fillingham.) Labor Day, no meeting.

Wednesday, September 8

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

Thursday, September 9

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

Friday, September 10

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

Monday, September 13

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

Friday, September 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, September 21

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

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.

Thursday, September 23

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

Friday, September 24

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, October 27

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

Tuesday, September 28

7 P.M. - ACGNJ Board meeting

Wednesday, September 29

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

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.