

# Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

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## Elections Coming

While you're thinking about your local and national election choices, don't forget ACGNJ has elections too. The ACGNJ Election of Officers and Board Members takes place at the December Main Meeting.

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Bill Farrell, is seeking candidates for office. If you can volunteer some of your time to help ACGNJ, please call (732)572-3481 or email [wfarr18124@aol.com](mailto:wfarr18124@aol.com).

All Officers and five Directors are up for reelection, and competition is invited. Nominations can be made to the Nominating Chairman before the meeting, and will also be accepted from the floor at the meeting. Current occupants of the chairs are listed below.

President	Frank Warren
Vice President	Jo-Anne Head
Rec. Secretary	Charlie Huffsmith
Cor. Secretary	Evan Williams
Treasurer	John Sheetz

Directors

Peter Fillingham
Bob Berto
Ted Martin
Kevin Shelly
Malthi Masurekar

Make a note come out and vote! Better yet, volunteer to serve! ☞

## Help Wanted

Nominations for Officers and Board of Directors are now being accepted.

See any officer or Bill Farrell

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[www.acgnj.org](http://www.acgnj.org)

Founded 1975

Back issues of ACGNJ News are available in PDF format at <http://lightning.prohosting.com/~acgnj/nl.htm>

## In This Issue

Internet Corner, <i>Martin Rosenblum</i> . . . . .	3	AMD Challenges Intel, <i>Ken Fermoye</i> . . . . .	5
What's a :Cue:Cat?, <i>John Raff</i> . . . . .	6	Inkjet Tips, <i>Sol Libes</i> . . . . .	7
Microsoft Changes Eudora?, <i>Alex Goldfinger</i> . . . . .	7	From the Dealsguy, <i>Bob Click</i> . . . . .	8
Palm Court #1, <i>Cass Lewart</i> . . . . .	10	SIG News . . . . .	12

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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.

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**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 Charlie Huffsmith ([chaz026@aol.com](mailto:chaz026@aol.com)) and/or to his attention at the ACGNJ address above.

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

# The Internet Corner

*Martin Rosenblum*

## Web News

**Item:** Sunday Star-Ledger, April 23: "Library of Congress jumps into cyberspace." Don't know how I missed this — Maria just showed it to me. The LOC, [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov), is celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> birthday this year and one of its presents to the public is a new kids and families site, [www.americaslibrary.gov](http://www.americaslibrary.gov). Lots of history, with interesting and lively presentations. There's also a very nice Web presentation, which parallels the exhibit of Jefferson's library, which runs to October 31.

## Miscellany

A few days before the last meeting, [my.yahoo.com](http://my.yahoo.com), my news portal, came up with an item under Reuters health news about depression in a hospital environment. One of my kids is a psychologist who serves a couple of nursing homes as well as being in private practice and I thought she might like to know about it. I checked the article and found a reference near the end of the source of the news, the Journal of General Hospital Psychiatry. This is one of many hundreds of scientific publications by the Dutch publisher, Elsevier. I went to their Web site, [www.elsevier.nl](http://www.elsevier.nl), found the journal, and although as a non-subscriber I was denied access to the full text, I found a reference to the article. I noticed that one of the authors had a familiar last name, that of our old family doctor and friend from my Brookhaven years. It was an odd name, so I looked it up on [www.anywho.com](http://www.anywho.com). There were only four entries; one on Long Island, probably my old doctor, one in New York City, one in Cheshire, CT, and one in Florida. The one in Cheshire, CT had the same first initial as the author of the article.

My first attempt involved looking for the name in the email directories, and only found the New York entry. I sent email, but it got bounced. I tried to call the Long Island number, but got a machine. Then I figured that the author's address, being in Cheshire, might mean that she was on the Yale faculty. I looked on the Yale site, and there she was, so I sent her email asking about the article and if she was related to my doctor.

Later in the evening, I received a call back from the wife of my old friend and, sadly, learned of his passing. I also learned that the New York fellow was his brother, a retired broker from Merrill Lynch — that's why the email didn't work. But, most important, that the author of the article was their daughter! Much to my delight, we had a very nice exchange of email, and we have an open invitation to visit with her when we're in the area. Don't tell me the Internet is isolating!

## Survival

While attending the Genome conference (more below) I learned that your entire genome, containing all you share with the rest of humanity, as well as the tiny bits that make you different from everyone else, including your genetic Achilles' heel, could be stored on a CD ROM. I suppose that means that your whole family would fit on a DVD. Since the Genome alphabet only contains four letters, and there's quite a bit standard stuff (the genes account for a small percentage of the whole code), considerable compression is possible (MP3?) Once again I raise the specter of not only designer

drugs, tailor made for an individual or group, but designer viruses. How will you keep your genome safe? Can you trust your pharmacist? Doctor? Hospital? Insurance Company? Police Department? Government?

## Security

Here's one from John: You've heard of anonymizer, which lets you surf the Web under a supposedly untraceable shield ([www.anonymizer.com](http://www.anonymizer.com)). Now he has found a site which lets you shop anonymously. You deposit money and shop using their alias, account and shipping address. I assume they transship to you when they receive your merchandise. They're called Privatebuy and can be found at [www.privatebuy.com](http://www.privatebuy.com). I wouldn't try to buy bomb ingredients, though.

We've spoken about email encryption, before. There's still no standard algorithm, as there is for http, which uses RSA. The reason is probably that smtp assumes that the body of email is in seven-bit ASCII, a relic of the past. That's why there has been such a mess with respect to the handling of non-ASCII attachments, with each mail client being required to handle all of the many binary/ASCII conversion methods. I noticed a Web-based product, ZixMail, which guarantees confirmed, secure delivery only to the addressee. One of the methods it uses is to inform the recipient by regular email that there is a secure message waiting. The recipient then uses his/her browser to authenticate and the message is sent to the browser using secure sockets layer (SSL) http protocol, which uses RSA 128-bit encryption. Their system works with a number of standard email clients such as Eudora and MS Outlook. Check out their site at [www.zipmail.com](http://www.zipmail.com). A search of CNET on email encryption reveals over 60 downloads which are free or shareware. Many are based on Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) which is excellent for security, but not the simplest thing in the world to set up. See

[www.mtt.com/envelope](http://www.mtt.com/envelope), [www.xs4all.nl/~comerwel/pgpeudra](http://www.xs4all.nl/~comerwel/pgpeudra), etc.

Then there's the big brother dispute. The FBI wants the right to tap email transmissions at ISP level. Their "Carnivore" technology can do this. Once again there is a product involved in which someone has a financial stake. The issues here are the usual ones of control of government snooping and the ease of serious criminals circumventing surveillance through encryption, as above, or using unbreakable code book methods. See Computerworld's node for this issue:

[www.computerworld.com/resources/carnivore](http://www.computerworld.com/resources/carnivore).

Last month was Netscape's turn to be charged with a security breach. Here's some details from an AP August 8 report: "Netscape Security Hole Affects Users" "Washington — Security experts were warning Internet users Monday about a security hole in Netscape's Web browser that has already infected almost 1,000 computers."

"Once a computer is infected, a hacker can click through the victim's computer and see, run and delete files on the target computer. The method, dubbed 'Brown Orifice', referring to the popular hacker tool BackOrifice, has been making rounds of computer security mailing lists and bulletin boards..."

*continued*

This month the ball is back in Microsoft's court. In a report by Patricia Jacobus from CNET's news.com: "IE 5.5 hole lets hackers into personal records ... Georgi Guninski of Hungary published his advisory on the exploit today, warning Web surfers using Microsoft's recently released Internet Explorer 5.5 that they are at risk."

"Malicious programmers who set up booby-trap Web sites to lure unwitting surfers can break into someone's computer records (including cookies, or digital tags that reveal valuable information about a person) using Microsoft's ActiveX technology, which manages sending and receiving of files. 'The attacker may steal every file to which the user has access and send it to an arbitrary server,' Guninski wrote in an email."

Is enabling ActiveX over the Net really so useful that we are repeatedly put at risk of this type of attack? At least Java tries to stay within its sandbox! In the Netscape case, they violated the Java rules. The problem is fixed in NS 4.75 and 6.X.

### Browser Wars

I must admit that I haven't downloaded IE 5.5 yet (I'm tired of having to reset all the defaults changed by the installation) but all the reports are that it is a neater product than NS 4.75. However, latest reports have it that preview (beta) release 2 of NS6 has regained the lead. It is smaller, faster and has lots of nifty new features. CNET and ZDNet both have reviews.

### MP3, eBooks & Copyrights

From CNET, September 26: "Lawmakers want to legalize MP3.com service." Several congressmen have introduced legislation that would legalize the services for which MP3.com faces potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in copyright damages. "Dubbed 'Music Owners' Listening Rights Act of 2000", the bill would give companies the right to copy CDs, store them online, and stream songs individually to listeners who could prove they already owned the CD.

That's almost exactly the service that MP3.com offered to consumers earlier this year, for which it was sued by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and the 'Big Five' record labels (Sony Music Group, EMI Recorded Music, Bertelsmann's BMG Entertainment, Warner Music Group and Seagram's Universal Music Group). Although MP3.com has settled with four of the five plaintiffs, it still faces the prospect of paying Universal as much as \$250 million in damages. "Rep. Rich Boucher, D-Va., and at least three colleagues think that's not a good precedent for the young online music business. 'We believe that the technology, which gives rise to this new convenience, should be encouraged,' Boucher said in a floor statement introducing the bill yesterday. 'Our legislation will remove legacy copyright restrictions, which were written for a different era and that threaten to strangle the technology in its infancy.'"

Here's a cute one from the September 25<sup>th</sup> USA Today: "Barenaked Ladies skin Napster users." This rock group (five men) was about to release a CD to radio stations and feared Napster users would deprive them of royalties. They created a "trojan horse" version with embedded messages which ran something like "if you want to hear the full, uninterrupted version, buy the CD" and flooded Napster with links to it.

Downloaders would have to play a whole track at normal, not downloading, speed to see if they had a trojan version.

### Finance

While the world of online investing hasn't been standing still, it has produced few real innovations. There are tales of problems with the business model and rumors of some companies in trouble. E\*trade, [www.etrade.com](http://www.etrade.com), one of the first, has had to cut back on some investment advice services according to Gomez Advisors, [www.gomez.com](http://www.gomez.com), the broker, banker, insurance, etc., advisory service. Charles Schwab, [www.schwab.com](http://www.schwab.com), one of the few brokers, discount or otherwise, to have successfully integrated their online and legacy operations, continues to enhance their site, and is still rated number one, though neither the day traders choice nor the cheapest.

An investment innovation that seems to have originated online is that now you can buy fractional shares online. TechTV's Moneyline, tells how sites have sprung up which let you invest, for example, \$100 — \$40 in Cisco, \$30 in AOL and \$30 in IBM for a charge of \$2 each. You end up with fractional shares of each, of course. All through the magic of batching orders once a day or so, computer databases, and Internet interconnections. ShareBuilder at [www.sharebuilder.com](http://www.sharebuilder.com), and BuyandHold, at (watch out!) [www.buyandhold.com](http://www.buyandhold.com) are two sites mentioned. See the report at ([techtv.com/moneymachine/investing/story/0,3666,11047,00.html](http://techtv.com/moneymachine/investing/story/0,3666,11047,00.html))

### Science: The Genome Project

What has this to do with the Internet or computing? Plenty! Here's how we found out. A couple months ago Maria noticed in a publication we get from the American Museum of Natural History, [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org), that they were sponsoring a two-day symposium (September 22-23) on "Sequencing the Human Genome." Among the presenters would be Harold Varmus, formerly of the NIH, [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov), and now President, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, [www.mskcc.org](http://www.mskcc.org); James Watson, co-discoverer of the double helix structure of DNA and now director of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, [www.cshl.org](http://www.cshl.org); and William Haseltine, Chairman and CEO of Human Genome Sciences, [www.hgsi.com](http://www.hgsi.com). We immediately called for tickets and got hotel reservations nearby to eliminate commuting distractions.

Friday, Sept. 22, after a stimulating introduction by Ellen Futter, president of the museum, Harold Varmus gave a lecture which supplied background and glimpses of what was to come. He was in at the start of the sequencing project at NIH, and had always been deeply involved in the study of cancer, which can't be understood without understanding genes.

This was followed by the first session, moderated by Nicholas Wade, science editor of the New York Times. First Eric Green, director of the NIH Intramural Sequencing Center gave the history of the sequencing effort from James Watson's (and others) initial push to start the project, to the multinational public effort, involving many institutions in many countries, to the squabbles that arose and the rapid acceleration of progress using the techniques of both the public sector effort and Celera, [www.celera.com](http://www.celera.com), Craig Venter's private enterprise. (Although Venter didn't appear on the

*continued on page 13*

# Ken's Korner: Intel Faces Strong Challenge from AMD

*Ken Fermoye*

Is the WinTel dominance over the PC universe crumbling at the edges? The synergistic combination of software and central processing chips forged so successfully by Microsoft and Intel is far from losing its place as king of the computer hill, but it is facing new challenges.

For Microsoft, of course, the main problem is the legal one, the threat of being broken up into two separate companies. A lesser thorn in Bill Gates' side is the growth of Linux and other open source code, including Apache, which rivals NT in the Internet server arena.

In the case of Intel, the clear and present danger comes from AMD and its expanding impact on the central processing unit (CPU) market. AMD's current Athlon chips already have leaptfrogged Intel offerings in some respects and a recently-announced cross-licensing deal with Motorola promises to result in high-performance copper-based chips running at more than twice the speed of today's fastest mainstream CPUs. This could make AMD an even more formidable competitor for Intel, which has not yet announced plans for a similar copper interconnect technology.

Only a few years ago, AMD was strictly a minor league player. Its products were the poor relations of the CPU family, while Intel was Big Daddy, Big Mama and Big Brother, all rolled into one. The K6 processor marked the beginning of AMD's rising fortunes, but a modest one. The chip was used only in lower-priced computers, and vague rumors surfaced that it might not be fully compatible with all Windows features and some applications. That was fully laid to rest with the advent of K6-2 chips, but the gurus advanced new doubts. Would AMD be able to produce the chips in adequate quantities to win respectable market share?

Then came the K7 chip. It attacked Intel right in the heart of its most lucrative product area: high-end, premium-priced, cutting-edge processors for power or work station users and other early adopters who are willing to pay top dollar for the latest and greatest in computerdom.

Better known as the Athlon, the K7 processor is totally different from that of the earlier K6 series. The processor has an internal architecture which uses Digital Equipment Corporation's Alpha EV6 system interface technology. This gives it a system bus interface of 200 MHz, capable of delivering data transfer rates of up to 1.6 GB/sec. The EV6 can scale up to 400 MHz in future, as faster processors arrive. The Athlon has a 128 KB L1 cache broken into two 64 KB instruction and data caches each. It is a .25 micron chip with 22 million transistors

By contrast, the latest Pentium III (PIII) processors run have a 100 MHz system bus. The PIII has a 32 KB L1 cache. Both processors have a 512 KB L2 cache. It is also a .25 micron but with 9.5 million transistors

The Athlon employs enhanced 3DNow! technology. Instead of the original 21 instructions meant to improve the floating-point capabilities of the processor, the K7 has 45, or 24 new instructions. They are designed improve the processor's performance in speech-recognition and video processing, and to provide enhanced functionality for Internet browser

plug-ins. They also add new digital signal processor (DSP) instructions, to enable better communication with soft modems, ADSL, and sound.

The PIII fits into a Slot 1 motherboard based on the Intel SE440BX-2 chipset. The Athlon fits into a Slot A motherboard based on the AMD-750 chipset. This chipset consists of two chips, namely the AMD-751 and AMD-756. The first controls the 200 MHz front-side bus, system memory, AGP, and the PCI bus. The second one controls the PCI-to-ISA bridge, USB interface, and EIDE interface for both UltraDMA/33 and UltraDMA/66.

What does all this mean in practical terms? Essentially there seems to be little difference between the K7, or Athlon, and equivalent PIII chips when it comes to running typical productivity programs: word processing, spreadsheets, presentiaon apps and the like.

Where the Athlon outpaces the PIII in most cases is in high-end tasks, such as CAD and other graphics-intensive processing where good floating point capability is important. This is a major improvement in an area where previous AMD processors were notably weak

Despite AMD's improvements, Intel PIII chips still seem to have an edge in 3D performance and remains the best choice if you do such 3D tasks as animation and rendering.

As for the AMD-Motorola alliance to produce copper-based processor chips, it's far too early to tell how successful the effort will be, although the combination is intriguing.

Announcements so far report that Motorola's Semiconductor Products Sector, Austin, Texas, will contribute its manufacturing expertise to the effort, moving both parties to a 0.18-micron, and then to a 0.15-micron design rule with its HiPerMOS copper interconnect process technology.

In return, Motorola will receive the rights to AMD's flash-memory patents, allowing it to begin offering high-density, low-power embedded flash microcontrollers sometime next year. The two companies will conduct jointly staffed programs in Austin and at AMD's headquarters in Sunnyvale, Calif., and will share development expenses.

Keep tuned for more information on future developments. ☐

## 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](mailto: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

# What's a :Cue:Cat?

John Raff

I first time I heard about this thing was at the September Internet SIG meeting. Digital Convergence (<http://www.digitalconvergence.com>) had been distributing their devices free of charge at Radio Shack (<http://www.radioshack.com/CAT/Gateway/1,3654,,00.html>). The device looks like a stretched mouse-size cat complete with tail (cord). It's 5 inches long and 1¾ inches wide at the back end. You can comfortably hold it in your hand and swipe the business end across bar codes. The open end (nose) has two visible red LEDs that I assume assist in reading the bar codes. Marty had acquired some and I installed one on the club computer just to see what it did. Even before I loaded the software I noticed that the device connected between the keyboard and the computer with a PS/2 style connector. Either they were doing something very strange or the data would be coming through the keyboard. I opened the Windows Notepad and tried scanning some bar codes. Sure enough, after a few tries I got some gobbledygook code on the notepad page. More about the code later.

I tried it again on some other bar codes provided in the :Cue:Cat documentation and presto, it works! There is nothing proprietary about the interface, it comes in by way of the keyboard port, plain and simple. **But** (and this is one of the "may be nasty" parts of the picture), because the data comes in via the keyboard port, the software will have to hook and will be able to read **everything** you type on the computer keyboard. ("Hook" refers to a software process whereby one intercepts some data stream programmatically and performs some processing on that stream. In this case "hooking the keyboard" allows Digital Convergence software to examine everything one types. They probably don't but it's possible. DC probably only does something special when the stream includes the codes. (See example below)

Now, on to the code. An example of some random bar code reading displays the following:

```
<Alt-F10>.C3nZC3nZC3nYDhv7D3DWCxnX.cGf2.ENr7  
C3b3DNbWChPXDXzZDNP6.
```

One does not normally see the <Alt-F10>, which is probably a key to the software to start looking at the succeeding codes for decoding if appropriate. If one examines the code string generated by the device in "raw" format, one can see the <Alt-F10>. (It's the use of this device as input to notepad that prevents one seeing or noticing the <Alt-F10>. All software, both Digital Convergence and those on the web handles this properly.)

I installed the software for the device on the club computer giving answers to the identification and marketing questions appropriate to the club. Frank has received mail, so we are registered. My comment about the registration: You go through several layers of "fill in the blanks" forms before being informed that they will send e-mail with an "access code" that must be plugged into the software to "activate" it. So much for getting the code, since the e-mail will go to Frank whenever they send it. As a result, I could not use the software provided. One of our attendees offered the information that

the hacker community had already "broken" the code with details on SlashDot.

After reading this information, and knowing that the software held a lot of personal information, I quickly saw that this is a marketing manager's dream. Every time someone uses the device, the ID/SerialNumber comes along with it, identifying the user. This allows Digital Convergence to collect marketing data on whatever is swiped. When you swipe something, you are obviously interested in that item, be it a magazine article with some URL, a can of peas, a catalog with marked items for purchase or whatever. One is immediately tagged and will be sure to receive e-mail and/or SnailMail relevant to what ever is swiped.

In a similar situation to the DVD player software, the hacker community quickly "reverse engineered" the code and software. Some even took the device apart and determined what was doing what in the guts. All of the details are available on <http://slashdot.org/>

- \* Digital Convergence Changes EULA, and Gets Cracked by CmdrTaco on Monday September 18, @08:05AM EDT 357
- \* A Metric Ton of Quickies by CmdrTaco on Monday September 11, @07:59PM EDT 316
- \* Slashback: Guido, Games, Felines by timothy on Thursday September 07, @07:59PM EDT 260
- \* Barcode Maker Responds After Forcing Drivers Offline by CmdrTaco on Tuesday September 05, @10:46AM EDT 977
- \* Linux Drivers For Free Barcode Scanner Cease-And-D... by CmdrTaco on Friday September 01, @10:21AM EDT 674

Digital Convergence, being the ever-watchful master of their fate quickly sent "cease and desist" letters to many sites which were providing device drivers and engineering information. There is an issue of a "license", which only appears if you register the device on a Windows machine, "So if I don't register it, am I bound by the license?" Another issue is the warning about opening the package — standard plastic bag constituting acceptance of the license. "Opening this software constitutes acceptance of our License terms contained herein." You don't even see the license until you install the software or go to the Digital Convergence site to read about the device, so how can you accept something that you cannot read? Another issue is the attempt to restrict use and abuse of this device by "leasing" it to all users rather than selling it. The question that comes up immediately: Is giving something away (since for the most part one can acquire this thing for free at Radio Shack) sale or lease? A recent addition to the problems/issues is the "release of personal data" that Digital Convergence reported. Someone hacked their web site and glommed registration information.

There are hundreds of user comments on SlashDot about this device and attempts to control the user community, along with comments and suggestions about what they could do

*continued*

## Inkjet Printer Tips

*Sol Libes*

Manufacturers of ink jet printers caution users to use the power switch on the printer to turn it on and off. Do not use the switch on a power strip to power down. The printer relies on its internal circuitry to properly position the print heads. Shutting the power off at a source outside of the printer may be detrimental to the print heads/ink cartridge.

Paper makes a difference in how your document looks. Whether it is text or a graphic the quality of the paper you put into your printer is important. Copy paper is made for copiers. It has surface qualities appropriate for the electrostatic process copiers use to place the toner on the paper. Inkjet printers require a better grade of paper with a surface that will capture and hold the ink that is sprayed from the nozzles. Inkjet papers will also have a smoother surface and contribute less to clog up your printer. Spend a little more for inkjet paper. You will see a difference in the quality of your output.

Inkjet printers can adjust the quantity of ink used to form the characters or figures. They use terms like Econofast; Normal; or Best; to differentiate the quality of output. When you are in the dialog box, look for a button marked Properties, click on that and you will find the area where you can choose which mode to use. Econofast will save ink and be quite a bit faster. Best will lay down a lot more ink and will be much slower. The Best mode, combined with photo grade papers in newer printers, gets pretty close to what you are used to seeing when you get your film back from a photo processor. ☞

## Problem in Eudora Courtesy of Microsoft?

This exchange of e-mails should be self-explanatory once you understand that I use Eudora 4.3 as my e-mail client.

From: [aanda@qualcomm.com](mailto:aanda@qualcomm.com)

Date: Wed, 30 Aug 2000 09:24:59 -0700

To: [alexgoldfinger@email.com](mailto:alexgoldfinger@email.com)

Subject: Re: Eudora 4.x for Windows 98; Tech Support Question

At 05:34 PM Monday 8/28/2000, you wrote:

“I have the Tools, Options, Font, Screen set to Arial, small. Everything was fine. Recently, the body font for the messages on the screen is always a Serif font like Courier. The option font still is listed on the Font page as Arial. It works on the Subject line, but not in the body portion. The Always use Proportional Fonts box is checked. How can I get it to work again?”

“Hi. Go to Tools\Options\Viewing Mail and uncheck the Use Microsoft viewer. This is caused by the upgrade to IE 5.5 and will be addressed in the upcoming release of Eudora Pro.”

More Microsoft hubris. What the heck are they doing messing with my non-MS e-mail client? Another of their “features”, or rather “innovations”! ☞

## :Cue:Cat, *continued*

with their “cease and desist” letters and threats. The legal eagles will be swarming on this for a while.

One ACGNJ member commented that the Radio Shack catalogs now have :Cue:Cat bar codes all through the listings. There are so many that the pictures are now smaller to make room for them. You have to use :Cue:Cat to bring up the Radio Shack site in order to view pictures large enough to make out what the item is. This may cause all sorts of problems.

On another level, :Cue:Cat comes with an audio cable (:Convergence:Cable) that connects your TV to the line or microphone input jack on your computer sound card. The :C.R.Q software will then bring up relevant web pages when an appropriately audio tag is “heard” by the software. Talk about having marketing and advertising shoved down your throat! You can’t even watch TV with out web advertising taking over your monitor. I envision this being used to link children’s programs to web advertising encouraging children to hound their parents to purchase the item or service.

At first look, this device is a nice cheap way to read those bar codes one sees everywhere — grocery and commercial products, magazines, Newsletters, Business Reports, Books, Records, Tapes, Music CDs, Videos and more. One commenter on SlashDot programmed the device to read the ISBN numbers on books. He can now catalog his personal library with data from <http://www.isbn.nu/> or

[http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/\[isbn number here\]](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/[isbn number here]).

If Digital Convergence could/would guarantee privacy, this might be a worthwhile device, but given the intended data warehousing of everything you swipe, it forces the user to give up **all** attempts at privacy.

By the way, this is not the only way you lose your privacy on bar coded items. At many stores you are encouraged to hand the cashier a “check cashing” or “coupon” or “special” granting card that identifies you to the system. Then all products you purchase are logged for marketing and advertising. Cute, and most people don’t realize the loss of privacy here. Do you really want ShopRite to inform Hustler how many “adult” magazines you purchase?

One of our members suggested the closing comment for this article/review should be; “don’t” and “it s\_\_ks.” These both refer to the fact that this device in its intended usage provides Digital Convergence way too much personal information for targeted marketing and advertising. This is a privacy breaker as far as I’m concerned. The device is cute and it works as advertised — it is the abuse of personal information that alarms me. While the club and I can not advocate “theft of service”, one can avoid the theft of privacy issue by getting much if not all of the software to use and abuse this device on the web (<http://slashdot.org/>) without giving up one’s personal information. ☞



# From the Dealsguy

Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

## Best Buy

The Best Buy story is over, but I can't talk about it. In order to settle, I was required to sign a nondisclosure agreement that my attorney says is standard. I refused at first, but finally agreed because of a conversation recently with another attorney who told me something disturbing.

He mentioned that our Florida lawmakers have passed legislation preventing you from collecting for attorney fees if you sue and warned that I'd better take what I could get. If this is true, it's like the song says, "there goes the little guy." I decided to settle the best way I could if it was within reason. I disliked the length of time it took, and the attitude I received (I have letters) until settlement day, but it's over.

## You Dirty Rat - er — I Mean — Spy

What if there's "Spyware" hidden in your computer sending out information periodically about your Web travels. That can happen and the spy can actually be hidden in a shareware program you might be using, or might even be placed on your hard drive unbeknownst to you while you were on the Web (without a firewall).

Some shareware programs containing Spyware are named in an article written by Don Singleton in "APCUG Reports" about "Aureate." He suggests you go to Steve Gibson's Web site, <http://www.grc.com/optout.htm>, and download OptOut to look for and clean that garbage from your hard drive. By the time you read this, there may be a charge for a newer version that finds more, but it's worth it in my opinion. It found nothing on my machine.

Users Group members might enjoy reading the quarterly APCUG Reports I spoke of. It's interesting, so log on to <http://www.apcug.org> to find it. You need the Acrobat Reader.

## New on My Web Site

I sometimes get product announcements and feel their interest might be limited, so I tend not to use them all in the column. I have uploaded some new pages to my Web site containing some of these announcements for your perusal. Take a look to see if there is anything that catches your eye. They are edited a bit (originally meant for users groups) because of the Web site's availability to the general public. I'll keep updating for a few weeks until I get them caught up. Some are older, but I thought they might be of interest. Remember that these are just announcements I received; however, there may also be a "deal" there from time to time, but ending too soon for the column. <http://www.dealsguy.com>

## High-speed Web Service For Free?

How many of you have checked out <http://www.freedsl.com>? Dave Gerber of the Sarasota PC User Group sent the URL to me, but has not replied telling me if he tried it. I checked the Web site and it looks like it's nationwide with no monthly fee, although it looks to me like you must buy the modem for \$199.00.

Of course you realize that DSL is not available in all locations because of phone line limitations. I didn't see details about

the installation. I've heard there is a catch, so if you check it out, look carefully.

Some feedback on [freedsl.com](http://freedsl.com) says that if you don't keep the service for one year, there is a stiff termination fee. I noticed that you are forwarded to a different URL, but the information is the same. Thanks for the feedback.

## Attention Game Addicts

Ken Winograd is the author of a game called "Hang 2000" and is offering user group members a special discount. It's a new take on the classic hangman word-guessing game you may have played when you were kids. It features colorful, nonviolent graphics, digitized sounds, dozens of built-in word categories, thousands of words, unlimited lists of your own words, and much more.

Hang2000 is "secretly educational." It has a new "knowledge area" including information associated with the guessed word or phrase. For example, if the word chosen is from the States or Countries category, the knowledge area will show the capital of the State or Country. If the category is Authors or Composers, the knowledge area will show facts about, or famous works of, the author or composer. You can also make your own lists (unlimited in number) and include your own associated information.

There's more info and I have the "secret" URLs for user group people. Mums the word on these URLs. Users group pricing and other details are available there. Since I'm not a game person, I have not tried it. For Mac User Group Members: <http://www.winograd.com/macug.html>. For Windows User Group Members: <http://www.winograd.com/pcug.html>. For more info (available to everyone): <http://www.winograd.com>

Ken Winograd e-mailed me that he has released two new games that are very educational. They are "States3000" and "Presidents3000" and are based on an improved Hang2000 engine. You can check for more info at <http://www.winograd.com>.

## Internet Call Waiting

BuzMe is Internet Call Waiting enabled with callerID and voicemail. It lets people with a single phone line receive incoming phone calls while online and tells them who is calling. It does that by deploying a small pop-up on the user's desktop. They can then type a reply that is read to the caller, disconnect and take the call, send the call to voicemail, or reject it. BuzMe's free voicemail box provides the same features as a voicemail offering from a telephone company. There are both free and \$4.95/month levels of service. If you would be interested in trying BuzMe service, visit their Web site at <http://www.buzme.com>, register and download it. The full service will be free to users for 30 days.

## Free Software for Linux from Corel

The following are excerpts from a recent "Corel Clips", Corel's e-mail newsletter.

*continued*

“The Latest on Corel & Linux(R): Free Download of Corel PHOTO-PAINT(R) for Linux(R) now available — CorelDRAW(R) for Linux Coming Soon!”

“We’re happy to announce that Corel PHOTO-PAINT for Linux), Corel’s photo editing, image-composition and painting application, is now available as a free download. It lets you create incredible special effects with Artistic Media brushes, filters, precision retouching features and more. Whether for print or the Web, your images will be captivating! Download Corel PHOTO-PAINT for Linux at <http://www.linux.corel.com>.”

“The exciting features included in this download are just a hint of what will be included in CorelDRAW Graphics Suite for Linux, slated for release later this summer. Stay tuned for more details in the near future.” (I checked, and these files are very large.)

### Mow the Lawn from Your Hammock

What’s that you say, professional lawn care costs too much!! No, no, no, that’s not what I’m talking about. It’s a “robot” lawn mower. You know how much I love gadgets. Friendly Robotics makes a mower that looks like a big yellow bug running around mowing your lawn all by itself. I’m not kidding! The first thing to do is stake down a “perimeter wire” around the zones you wish it to mow so it knows where to stop, then hook up the perimeter switch, charge the mower battery and you are in business. After some initial calibration, just run it into position and press start. Then sit back and relax with your favorite beverage, read the paper, have a snooze, or whatever because the lawnmower knows what to do, even if it bumps into something.

Installing the perimeter wire is easy (just stake it down on top of the ground). If you didn’t do it right, it’s easily changed. The machine is a 21" cut with three rotary blades and can mow a lawn of 2500 to 3200 square feet on a battery charge. It starts by mowing (also mulches) around the perimeter, then back and forth for the duration you program it for. You’ll find you must mow more often, but who cares, you’re not doing it! You can go back inside and watch TV if you prefer. Can you spell “It’s Miller Time?”

There’s was a “Sizzlin’ Summer Sale” on their Web site ending July 31, but they extended it just for the Deals column through September 31, and I think you can still take advantage of it. Check details at <http://www.friendlyrobotics.com>. The MSRP is \$795, but this sale gets you a \$100 rebate. That’s \$50 off the MSRP + free S&H. Also, a \$100 gift certificate for a national retailer or home improvement store bringing the total rebate to \$200, but I’m not sure about how long for that coupon after July. If you have a problem ordering, ask for Scott Slaughter at Friendly Robotics. Also offers a money-back guarantee. Ordering number 1-888-244-5178.

I’m working out some problems using mine as I close the column so check my Web site for further details. They have offered to send me a new mower to correct a bad charging message which I’ll take advantage of. That doesn’t keep the mower from doing its job and I certainly have the neighbors intrigued. I have kept a diary (Announcements page) for you

to read. However, right now it looks like a “keeper”. Maybe with next year’s model you can just yell, “go mow the lawn” without even getting out of your chair.

### For Cheapskate Investors

I know many of you are trading stocks for as low as \$8 per trade, but how about trading securities **free**? Freetradez.com is the latest entry in the online brokerage field. They said they went into operation on June 19, 2000 with the intention of doing options trading towards fall. They are offering trades with **no** commission charge, even for limit orders, and they offer Nasdaq Level II quotes.

You guessed it, advertising pays for it. If you type in a ticker symbol, up pops an ad from that very company. Or, get this, if that company wasn’t interested, the ad at the top of your screen will be for their competitor or a related company. How’s that for strategy! And, another company will sponsor confirmations. Your monthly statement has an ad from that same company.

Most trades should be executed in one second, but if it is not executed in 45 seconds, your account is credited with \$5. A day trader can set a price at the bid, or below the bid. Just so you know, any time you type in a stock symbol, an advertiser pays them. And yes, they accept trades any time of the day or night. Check them out at <http://www.freetradez.com>.

### Convert Old Videos

(After brushing off the dust) Here is an announcement I received some time ago from Bill Loesch, vice-president of Consumer Products for Pinnacle Systems. I’ve not tried their products which appear to be just for PCs.

“Do your members want to edit those baby videos collecting dust in their attics, or maybe preserve the memories of their best vacations? With Pinnacle Systems’ Emmy-award-winning technology, video editing is simple. All you need is a Pentium-based computer, a video camera and/or a VCR. Sign up your Users Group at the Users Group Support Program Web site at <http://usergroup.pinnaclesys.com/> and review our products for your newsletter on a 60-day loan. (DealsGuy note - “a loan” just doesn’t work for me. If the reviewer can’t keep it for all their work, forget it.) User group members receive a 15% discount off suggested retail price (SRP) on all our Studio line of video editing products; arrange for a customized demo from a Pinnacle Systems representative in your area.”

### Check Out E-mail Hoaxes.

I hate to take up column space with this kind of stuff, but I have been deluged with so-called warnings lately and many people read this column. If you are a person who “insists” on sending out all those “warnings” to your friends, do them a favor and check further before you send them any more “spam.” Here are some informational sites gleaned from newsletters I receive. Out of all those URLs I read and tried, several either didn’t work, or else I couldn’t find the correlation, but here are the ones that worked for me:

<http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/index.html>

<http://www.avp.ch/avpve>

*continued on page 11*

# Palm Court #1

Cass Lewart (rlewart@monmouth.com)

In this column, which will appear from time to time, I will try to cover interesting features, give hints and review software and hardware for the ubiquitous Palm Personal Digital Assistant (PDA). Palm Court is the place in the famed Plaza Hotel where Eloise liked to hang out. In the first column I will cover the Palm Emulator program and also show how to improve backlight visibility of certain Palm PDAs. In the next issue of the Palm Court, I plan to review two commercial programs: Quicksheet/Quickgraph, which lets you use your Excel spreadsheets on your PDA, and the OmniRemote program which turns your PDA into a universal remote control for TV, VCR, HiFi, or X-10 devices. In future columns I will review the mapping program Mapopolis, also the AvantGo program which lets you, for example, read for free the New York Times lead articles on your PDA.

## Palm Emulator

Since I got my Palm IIIx as a birthday gift from my wife (see "Connecting Palm Pilot to the Internet Cheaply" in an earlier issue of this Newsletter) I wished that there would be a pro-



gram to emulate my PDA on the desktop. I could then test PDA software before actually installing it. I could also save screen prints of the PDA display and use them for my talks and articles.


Well, such a program exists and it is used by most Palm program developers. You can download the latest version of the program free from: <http://www.palmos.com/dev/tech/tools/emulator/> Because of copyright restrictions, the emulator program does not include the Palm operating system. When you download the Palm Emulator to your computer a picture of the Palm PDA appears on your screen but the emulated PDA is as dead as a doornail. To install the Palm operating system on this "soulless" desktop PDA you have two choices. You either register with Palm as a developer and sign various non-disclosure agreements or you download the operating system from your own Palm PDA. I followed the second, simpler approach. The emulator software includes a small 5 KB program "ROM Transfer.prc" which you should install



on your Palm PDA. This program, when executed will copy the Palm OS from the PDA via the sync cradle to the emulator on the desktop. Now the emulator on your desktop is "alive" and you can load, execute and test any Palm programs before you install them on your PDA. The main difference is that instead of a stylus on the PDA you use the mouse on the desktop. The picture shows the desktop screen with the Palm Emulator running the Mapopolis program.

## Backlighting Change on Palm Series III PDAs

Many Palm series III PDA users are unhappy with the default backlighting. The regular display is acceptable, though not great, when watched in reflected light. In the dark with backlighting enabled, it is hardly readable. Recently, when browsing through messages on a Palm newsgroup, I ran into an undocumented hint: Touch with stylus the Find icon, then write with the stylus in the left graffiti section the "upside down fish" shortcut symbol, followed by two taps - still on the left, followed by "8" in the right graffiti section. When message "Inverting Back" appears on the display touch the "OK" icon. Now when you activate backlighting the screen inverts to white on a black background instead of black on a white background. It is much more readable than the default option. You can always go back to the default option by repeating the graffiti sequence. The message "Normal Backlight" should then appear on the display.

If you like or don't like what you see in this column or have suggestions please contact me via e-mail. 

## CD-RW Prices to Drop

As predicted in an earlier article, CD-RW drives are replacing other storage media (floppy diskettes, tape, cartridge drives), with more than 10 million shipped by midyear. Prices as low as \$150-160 for 4x3x24 drives appear regularly in ads now, and even lower prices will prevail this fall.

The reason? Double-density drives and disks offering twice the capacity of today's 630MB products are coming soon. Cirrus Logic Inc., market leader of CD-RW chips, promises to deliver a new double-density encoder/decoder this fall that makes it possible to store 1.3 gigabytes of data on a single CD-RW disc. This translates into 60 minutes of real-time video, or 144 minutes of real-time audio. The new drives also will boost read and write speeds to 48x and 16x, respectively, faster than anything now on the market.

This means we can look for price drops as vendors clear out inventory of current drives. We might see prices of 4x4x24 drives drop close to \$110-125 as vendors clear out inventory to make way for the new higher-capacity drives. That will make them tough competition for removable-cartridge drives with much less storage capacity and far higher costs per unit of storage media.

Ken's Korner TidByte 

# SIG News

## PC Users Group

Steve Rodriguez ([help72@bigfoot.com](mailto:help72@bigfoot.com))

<http://www.intac.com/~tinarock/pcug.html> and  
[http://www.acgnj.org/2k00/sig\\_pcusersgroup.htm](http://www.acgnj.org/2k00/sig_pcusersgroup.htm)

Our focus is on any topic that touches on personal computers. Some of our meetings are fairly technical and some are oriented to total newbies. Our members reflect this mix. Come out to a meeting and get to know us, we're friendly.

Steve Rodriguez has taken over running the PC User Group from Jo-Anne Head. We are most grateful for her tireless efforts going all the way back to January 1995. Check out some of the group's previous meetings.

**October 20:** MP3 Fest: Making MP3s, getting them, downloading them, converting them, distributing them. Bring your own MP3. ☞

## Layman's Forum

Matt Skoda ([som359@aol.com](mailto:som359@aol.com))

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

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

## Random Access

Scott Vincent ([svincent@ix.netcom.com](mailto:svincent@ix.netcom.com))

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

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

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

This is an official "Newbies too" group. ☞

## MCP

(Preparing for Microsoft Certification Exams)

Scott Vincent ([svincent@ix.netcom.com](mailto:svincent@ix.netcom.com))

<http://www.scottsville.net/mcp.htm>

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

For more information, including reading assignments and course schedule, visit us at the Web site above. ☞

## C/C++ Users Group

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

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

The C/C++ User's Group was founded several years ago with the following goals: to be a forum for discussion about programming in general; to discuss beginning and intermediate level C, C++, and C-Win programming; to demonstrate real programming in a non-intimidating way; to discuss hardware, software, code, algorithms, operating systems; and to present the complete code for working programs in 3-5 sheets of paper. Each meeting is divided into three sections: random access question, answers, and discussion; standard library functions, Windows API functions and other topics of a narrow and simple scope; and a main presentation which is normally a small program, 300-1000 lines, which actually performs some useful function. The program is discussed and demonstrated in terms of its philosophy, algorithm, flow, code, challenges, options, improvements, etc. This case study also provides a forum for additional questions and audience participation. Source code for the program is handed out and is also available on the ACGNJ FTP Server: <ftp://ftp.acgnj.lrg/pub/acgnj/cug/>. ☞

## Multimedia & Mobile

Steven Rodriguez ([help72@bigfoot.com](mailto:help72@bigfoot.com))

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

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

## Main Meeting

Frank Warren ([kb4cyc@webwarren.com](mailto:kb4cyc@webwarren.com))

<http://www.acgnj.org/groups/main2k-1.htm>

**October 6:** Modem Technologies: POTS, DSL, Cable and Satellite Modems. Which are better, worse, cost-effective. Host John Raff.

**November 3:** Digital Photography. Host Joe Kennedy.

**December 1:** GPS. There have been many new developments since the last presentation. Host Frank Warren.

**January 5:** Home Automation - Smart Home. Host Charlie Huffsmith.

**February 2:** Microsoft presents Windows ME (Millennium Edition), giveaways. Host Jo-Anne Head.

**March 2:** Building a Computer. Host Ted Martin.

**April 6:** Use of Scanners, Transmitting Scanned Data via Email. Host Jerry Entin.

**May 4:** No meeting due to TCF 2001

**June 1:** Web Technologies such as Dynamic HTML, Cascading Style Sheets, XML, XHTML, XSL, and the use of these technologies to do "neat" things to a website with very little effort. Host Mike Barlow.

Any changes and/or updates will be posted to the website above. ☞

*continued on page 14*

## **Lunics (Linux/Unix)**

*Andreas Meyer (ahm@spies.com)*

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

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

**October 2:** "Home Automation Using Linux" will be presented by Neil Cherry. ☐

## **VBA & Excel**

*Jim Ditaranto (fryr92a@prodigy.com)*

<http://www.excelvba.homestead.com>

VBA is currently implemented in Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Project and Microsoft Access. In the future, Microsoft will implement VBA in Microsoft Word and in Microsoft PowerPoint. Anyone interested in using any one of the Microsoft Office products and VBA is urged to attend. Meetings start at 7 P.M. on the fourth Monday of the month

**October 23:** Running Macros with Buttons. There are two types of buttons in Excel. The first is created with the Forms Toolbox. The second is created with the Control Toolbox and is available only in Excel 97 and Excel 2000. We will review the advantages and disadvantages of each by way of some simple practical examples.

**November 27:** Building a Web Page with FrontPage 2000 that Queries Excel Files. ☐

## **Genealogy**

*Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)*

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

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

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

## **Macintosh Users Group**

*Keith Sproul (ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu)*

<http://dorm.rutgers.edu/~ksproul/acgnjmug.html>

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

## **Lotus Notes**

*Mike Barlow (mwb@injersey.com)*

<http://www.njlug.org>

Lotus is giving away 2 tickets to Lotusphere in Orlando Fla in 2001. All you have to do is Register for and attend one or more of the Lotus Masters Broadcasts taking place during the months of Sept, Oct and Nov. Subjects are: Securing Your Environment 26 Sept., What's New in Knowledge Management 31 Oct., Special tips for Domino Developers 21 Nov. To register, go to <http://www.lotus.com/home.nsf/welcome/usamasters> or call 800 759 8599.

Of course the "Sweepstakes Rules" link on the page gives a "404 Error" Entry not found in Index, so even Lotus is not immune to putting things out for the world to see before they are ready, but it is my understanding that Lotus will be giving away **two** of the following: 1 Ticket to Lotusphere 2001 in Orlando, FL, 4 Nights at a Disney Hotel during the Conference, and \$1,000 expense money. Now, that is two winners selected from the attendees of **each city**, so there will be two lucky people who attend one of the broadcasts from Piscataway, over the next 3 months. It could be you!!!

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

## **Symposium**

*John Raff (jraff@home.com)*

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

**October:** To be announced. Keep an eye on our website for updates. ☐

## **Investing**

*Sheldon Koepf (sheldonk@intac.com)*

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

**September 14:** We introduced an Excel spreadsheet which Dick Boyd and your chairman had programmed. This uses data from Investor's Business Daily (IBD) to evaluate both an overall portfolio and individual holdings to compare strength and risk against the overall market. (This was Dick's great idea) We stated that this is very useful in making those important investment decisions. Even if you do not use spreadsheets, the techniques introduced will sharpen your investing skills and hopefully lead to bigger investing profits.

We passed out current copies of IBD for all that attended. If you are interested in the risk spreadsheet presented at the September 14, 2000 meeting, look at the Investor's Business Daily Risk Spreadsheet.html. This will tell you which file to download depending on what version of Excel you are using. Then go to The SIG files directory, and download the proper file. Jack Smith, one of our SIG members, commented on some of the recent improvements in TC2000, the technical analysis program. You may remember Jack, he has showed us TC2000 in the past and has talked to us on estate issues.

You can see more information on previous meetings at our SIG Meetings page ☐

<http://www.datafellows.com/virus-info>

<http://www.datafellows.com/news/hoax>

<http://www.icsa.net/services/consortia/anti-virus/aler-hoax.html>

<http://www.kumite.com/myths>

<http://www.snopes.com>

<http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/>

I had some problems with icsa.net, but have included it anyway, and snopes.com loads slowly because it has music.

### Can Your Browser Get A Ticket?

Not likely — I assume everybody is interested in accelerating his or her browser power. Murray Davis of Akron/Canton PC UG passed this one on to me. Your browser's cache is meant to help if visiting a Web site again by already having the data to load it. However, you have little control over that cache. There is PC software to speed the whole process called "NetSonic." It works with any browser and they can share NetSonic's cache, thus saving space on your hard drive as well. It also retains Domain Name Server information. There's more, so I suggest you visit their Web site and take a look at this **free** program. They are hoping you will like it enough that you will eventually purchase their full-featured "NetSonic Pro" that sells for \$39.95. Discounted to \$29.95 if you use the special URL their marketing people gave me:

[http://www.netsonic.com/redir/buy\\_redirect.asp?DIRECT\\_FLAG=25off&netsonic=~,-c~,~](http://www.netsonic.com/redir/buy_redirect.asp?DIRECT_FLAG=25off&netsonic=~,-c~,~)

(If you're typing that one in, remember to omit the hyphen.) Find out more about the software at <http://www.netsonic.com> where you can also see a description of the Pro version. Unfortunately, I had to wrap up this column a bit early and the special ordering URL doesn't find the \$29.95 price. If it is a problem this month, I'll feature the special offer next month for the Pro version. That will give you time to see if you like the free version enough to buy it.

### Combine Your PC and the Web for Some Projects

Beth Fordyce from Southeastern Michigan Computer Organization referred this to me some time ago and I'm just now following up. I e-mailed French Prescott of Enfish Software and the following is what he told me:

"Enfish's current release product is 'Onespace.' This product has superceded the Tracker Pro, their original flagship product. It incorporates the same tracking and search functions, but it now extends the product to bring Web content and the user's own content into one unified workspace."

"For example, if you're working on a project, say the annual Christmas party, you can earmark the relevant Web pages (caterers or decoration suppliers) and see it all in context with all e-mail you send and receive about the project. You'll see any documents (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.) related to the planning, and any other files that you specifically indicate are involved. Onespace does the tracking on your own system automatically and you can use search tools (much like Internet search engines) to expand the tracking. The user can set up and configure the working area to fit individual needs."

This product is a **free** working download from the Enfish site: <http://www.enfish.com>. The latest release version was made available July 19. French gave me many more details, so

check the above Web site for more information. Looks like it is for PC only. I've seen good reviews on it.

### More Invasion Testing

You've all read in many places about Steve Gibson's "Shields Up" for testing your machine for hacker invasion, a great service at no cost. In case you want an additional test to check further, I read that you can visit Webtrend's site at <http://www.webtrends.net/tools/security/scan.asp>. Or try Hacker-Wacker at <http://www.hackerwacker.com> and click on "Free Security Scan."

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click ([dealsguy@mindspring.com](mailto:dealsguy@mindspring.com)). Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com> for past columns. Also check out the distribution page. ☺



## Internet Corner, continued from page 4

panels, he apparently did show up for the speakers' dinner Friday night. They didn't say who might have dropped out of that — there has been a lot of bad blood generated by the private/public debate.) Green also spoke in depth about the rationale behind the project — what it might all be good for. Green headed the effort to completely map human chromosome 7, which involved particular attention to genes involved in genetic diseases. His CV can be found at

[www.nhgri.nih.gov/Intramural\\_research/People/green.html](http://www.nhgri.nih.gov/Intramural_research/People/green.html).

Here we had our first view of how computer arts came into the picture. One of the basic routines in any computer environment is the string matching function. (You feed it a short string and an ASCII file, and it goes through the file looking for the string.) We all know and love the various "find" tools and we'd die (or be revealed as dolts) without the indispensable spell checker. Now, excuse me for an excursion into molecular biology — I'll try to keep this in computerese.

The double helix, discovered by Crick and Watson in 1953, is like a very long ladder whose rungs are each made of a pair of chemicals called bases. There are only four of these bases, and they are represented by the letters A, C, G and T. A always pairs with T and C with G, so that to know one side of the ladder is to know the whole ladder. The ladder is called DNA (never mind what that stands for.) There may be hundreds of millions of rungs in a DNA ladder. Each chromosome in each of our cells is a DNA ladder, and there are 46 of them. In a human cell there about three billion base pairs.

Each chromosomes is paired with another (one from the father and one from the mother) making 23 pairs of chromosomes. Each of these can be compared to a volume in an

*continued on page 14*

## Internet Corner, *continued*

encyclopedia, the pages of which are covered with As, Cs, Gs and Ts. These strings, like the strings of 0s and 1s in a computer, can be thought of as data and program for the machine of life. The data bits are called genes and their job is to direct manufacture of proteins in our cells. There are probably under 150,000 genes located on our chromosomes. The rest of the code is mostly instructions for exact replication and activation of themselves and the genes. If you want a course in the subject, go to James Watson's Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory tutorial, "DNA from the Beginning" at [vector.cshl.org/dnaftb](http://vector.cshl.org/dnaftb). You can start at the beginning, "Classical Genetics," or jump to "Molecules of Genetics." It's full of great text, pictures, audios and videos. If you've read this far, you shouldn't miss it!

Problem: how do we find these genes and determine their composition? The original plan was to take a chromosome, multiply it many times, chop it up into manageable pieces, and, starting from one end of each piece, map the letters. It's beginning to sound like a computer problem! This technique progressed so slowly that a parallel method appeared to be a necessary next step. This led to thousand-fold increases in the rate of mapping. Craig Venter stepped into the scene with a new machine which could add orders of magnitude to the speed, but involved cutting the DNA into smaller pieces, decoding and feeding the fragments into a computer and, by matching substrings of each piece, construct larger and larger pieces until the whole chromosome was "sequenced."

Most public sector researchers were skeptical of Venter's method as being prone to error because of the tiny fragments he used. Venter was unable to persuade them, so he got venture capital and built Celera, [www.celera.com](http://www.celera.com), to perform his method. He hoped to beat former colleagues at NIH and sell access to his database by subscription to biotechnology companies, making a nice income for himself and his investors. The fact that he had gone commercial rubbed many old col-

leagues the wrong way. One technical point in his favor: he could use the information on the public database (freely available on the Internet) to correct gross errors, at no cost to his enterprise. Want to see it? It's at [www.gdb.org](http://www.gdb.org). (You have to know what you're looking for, though — it's not obvious.)

After this review of the sequencing project, Leroy Hood, President and Director of the Institute for Systems Biology, [www.systemsbio.org](http://www.systemsbio.org), gave a talk, "After the Genome, Where Should We Go?" Hood made it quite clear that modern biology was no longer just in the hands of biologists, but that chemistry, physics, mathematics, biology, computer science and systems science are now working together in a concerted effort to advance our knowledge of biology and disease.

The conference continued with lawyers, doctors, journalists, ethicists, and mutual fund managers. There's a list of subjects and speakers at [www.amnh.org/welcome/specials/genomics](http://www.amnh.org/welcome/specials/genomics). The conference was Webcast live from Sun's streaming servers, and they promise the complete transcript will be posted. Perhaps they will include videos. As I write this, there is only the original home page, but keep looking for the archive. If you check the link marked resources, there's an excellent reading list and a list of useful Web sites. A final note: Compaq was commercial conference sponsor.

Returning home by train, I couldn't get a taxi, and called a mathematician friend to rescue us. I told him about the conference and he told me about mathematician/computer jock Richard Karp, who developed the algorithms that made super efficient string matching possible. The name was familiar — he is the nephew of friends of my parents and I had heard them speak of him more than twenty years ago. I made contact with him by email, and hope to get in touch with his uncle, who's still around. Karp works mostly in genomics, now, and you can check out his overwhelming accomplishments at [www.cs.washington.edu/people/faculty/karp.html](http://www.cs.washington.edu/people/faculty/karp.html). ☞

### 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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  New Member  Address Change  Renewal of (Membership #) \_\_\_\_\_  
 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

<b>Princeton Macintosh User Group:</b> 7:15 pm 2nd Tuesday, Jadwin Hall, Princeton U. (609) 252-1163	<b>NY/NJ/CT Relational Database User Group:</b> Corporate and independent users. (212) 839-0125	<b>New York Personal Computer Club:</b> For information call hotline, (212) 533-NYPC
<b>Computer Education Society of Philadelphia:</b> 7:30 pm, 2nd Wednesday, St. Asaph's Episcopal Church. Lee Le'mon, (717)786-2260	<b>Brookdale Computer Users Group:</b> 7 pm,3rd Friday, Forums 103 at Brookdale Community College, Lincroft NJ. Andrea Tarr (732) 229-2959.	<b>Macintosh User Group:</b> Third Tuesday, Dickson Hall, Montclair State University, Montclair NJ. (973) 655-5274, <a href="http://www.njmug.org">http://www.njmug.org</a> .
<b>WordPerfect SIG of PCUG of So. Jersey:</b> 2nd Tue., Queen of Heaven School, Cherry Hill; 4th Wed., Cherry Hill Library. (609) 354-1159.	<b>Hunterdon Computer Club:</b> 8:30 am to noon 3rd Saturday, Hunterdon Medical Center, Rt 31, Flemington. (908) 995-4042	<b>PC Club of South Jersey:</b> 7 pm, 2nd Tuesday, Holy Cross HS, Route 130, Delran NJ. Pat Murphy, (609) 428-8759
<b>Philadelphia Area Computer Society:</b> 3rd Sat., 9 am Main Meeting, groups follow. Drexel U., Philadelphia. Pat Murphy, (609) 428-8759	<b>Central Jersey Computer Club:</b> 8 pm, 4th Friday, Rm 74, Armstrong Hall, Trenton St. College. Rich Williams, (609) 466-0909.	<b>NJ PC Users Group:</b> Bergen County Community College, Paramus NJ. Maureen Shannon, (201) 853-7432
<b>Morris Micro Computer Club:</b> Bill Traywick, (973) 635-5393.	<b>Fairlawn Computer Club:</b> Last Monday, Fairlawn Senior Citizen Center. Joe Mathias ( <a href="mailto:fair.lawn.computer.club@juno.com">fair.lawn.computer.club@juno.com</a> )	<b>Princeton PC Users Group:</b> 2nd Monday, Lawrence Library, Rt 1 & Darrah Ln, Lawrenceville, Paul Kurivchack (908) 281-3107, <a href="http://www.ppcug-nj.org">http://www.ppcug-nj.org</a>
<b>Workshop, Hands-On:</b> 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

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

**Software Review TLC** Sat.10 p.m.

**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>)

**Oct. 7-8:** NJ Convention Center, Edison, NJ. Sat. 10-4 & Sun. 9 AM to 2 PM (Due to Jewish holiday! Sunday admission is reduced to \$5 for this show only.)

**Oct. 21-22:** South Jersey Expo Center, Pennsauken NJ

### ACGNJ Hotline

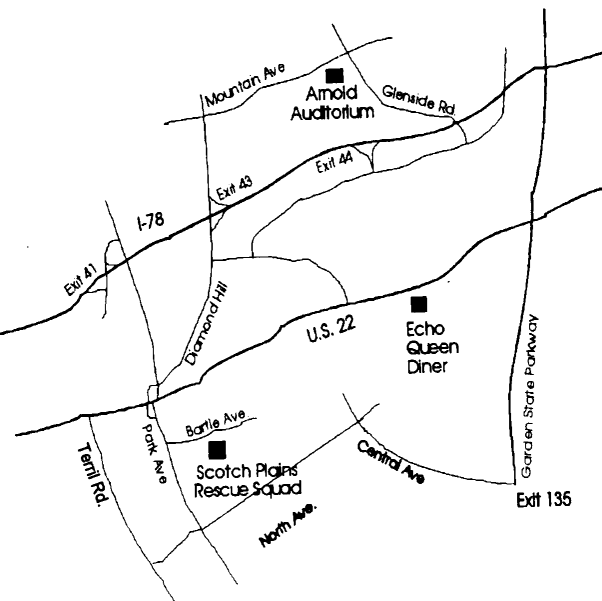
(908) 322-4654

### ACGNJ Bulletin Boards

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

**(732) 739-3693 Dave Wrobel**

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



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

### From New York City or Northern New Jersey

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

### From Southern New Jersey

Take Parkway north to Exit 135 (Clark). Stay on left of ramp and follow circle under Parkway. Bear right onto Central Avenue; follow to Westfield and under RR overpass. Left at light onto North Avenue; follow to light in Fanwood. Right onto Martine (which turns into Park Ave.). Right onto Bartle Avenue in middle of shopping district. The Scotch Plains Rescue Squad is located on the right. It is a two-story brick building. Please do not park in the row next to the building.

### From I-78 (either direction)

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

### From US 22 Westbound

Exit at Park Avenue, Scotch Plains. The exit is after a McDonalds Restaurant on the right, diagonally opposite the Scotchwood Diner on the left, and immediately before the overpass. After exiting, turn left at the light and use the overpass to cross US 22. Bear right at bottom of ramp to continue south on Park Avenue. Turn left at the second light (a staggered intersection). The Scotch Plains Rescue Squad is located on the right. It is a two-story brick building. Please do not park in the row next to the building. We normally meet upstairs, entering by the door at the right front of the building.

### From Western New Jersey

Take US 22 Eastbound to the Park Avenue exit. The exit is about a mile past Terrill Road and immediately past the overpass. Exit onto Park Avenue South and follow the directions above to the Rescue Squad building.

## ACGNJ NEWS

AMATEUR COMPUTER GROUP OF NEW JERSEY, INC.  
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SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ 07076

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# ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

### Monday, October 2, 2000

8 P.M. - Lunics: Home Automation using Linux. Andreas Meyer, [ahm@spies.com](mailto:ahm@spies.com), 908-382-4297

### Tuesday, October 3

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

### Wednesday, October 4

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, [svincent@ix.netcom.com](mailto:svincent@ix.netcom.com), 973-361-5793

### Thursday, October 5

8 P.M. - Internet, Martin Rosenblum, [m.rosenblum@ieee.org](mailto:m.rosenblum@ieee.org), 973-376-8965.

### Friday, October 6

8 P.M. - Main Meeting: Modem Technologies, host John Raff. Frank Warren, [kb4cyc@webwarren.com](mailto:kb4cyc@webwarren.com), 908-756-1681

### Monday, October 9

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

### Wednesday, October 11

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, [svincent@ix.netcom.com](mailto:svincent@ix.netcom.com), 973-361-5793

### Thursday, October 12

8 P.M. - Computerized Investing, Sheldon Koepf, [sheldonk@intac.com](mailto:sheldonk@intac.com), 973-740-2489.

### Friday, October 13

8 P.M. - PC Symposium. John Raff, [jraff@home.com](mailto:jraff@home.com), 973-533-0664

### Tuesday, October 17

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

8 P.M. - Lotus Notes, Mike Barlow, [mwb@infi.net](mailto:mwb@infi.net). Meeting at offices of Bright Ideas Software, Edison NJ. Info Line: (732) 417-5778 ext 5.

### Wednesday, October 18

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, [svincent@ix.netcom.com](mailto:svincent@ix.netcom.com), 973-361-5793

### Friday, October 20

7 P.M. - Multimedia & Mobile Computing, Steven Rodriguez, [help72@bigfoot.com](mailto:help72@bigfoot.com).

8 P.M. - PC Users, Steven Rodriguez.

### Monday, October 23

7 P.M. - VBA (Visual Basic, Excel) Macro Buttons, James Ditaranto, [fryr92a@prodigy.com](mailto:fryr92a@prodigy.com), 973-772-7171.

### Thursday, October 28

8 P.M. - Genealogy, Frank Warren, [kb4cyc@webwarren.com](mailto:kb4cyc@webwarren.com), 908-756-1681.

### Friday, October 27

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

8 P.M. - Random Access, Computer Q&A, Scott Vincent, [svincent@ix.netcom.com](mailto:svincent@ix.netcom.com), 973-361-5793

### Tuesday, October 31

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

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.