
Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

Volume 25, Number 2

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From the Editor

ACGNJ members should take a good look at the table of contents below. You may notice that although some of the names are familiar because their writings have appeared here before, you probably haven't run into any of them at ACGNJ meetings. There's good reason for that!

Although some of the writers may maintain membership in ACGNJ in order to receive the ACGNJ News, all of the articles have appeared elsewhere first. The only original material in this issue is in the SIG News pages (and there isn't much of that). Although I believe in highlighting good articles from other publications, I don't believe that should be our only purpose.

There are some excellent writers among ACGNJ ranks, and I know there are others who could contribute much to the material appearing here with a little editorial help, which I am more than willing to supply.

When I signed up for this job, I announced that I would accept articles in any form. Not just any word processor, but any form. That offer still holds. If you can talk but not write, I'd be happy to transcribe from audio tape. I'll even try to decipher your handwriting. The one thing I can't do is supply the material to make a newsletter (although I don't mind writing an article once in a while myself).

Please consider this a call to action. I believe that every one of you has some knowledge or experience that would be helpful to the others. If you think you can't write, then talk, but share what you have. I promise to do my best to make you look good in print! ☺

TCF is Coming!

May 6-7, 2000

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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.

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Optimizing Your Windows 98 PC

www.microsoft.com

Whether you've just acquired a new Windows 98-based PC during the holidays, or you're looking to get the most from the OS you're already running, here are some handy tips for keeping your computer in tip-top shape into the new millennium.

Remove unneeded files

One of the handiest utilities in Windows 98 is the Disk Cleanup tool, which is designed to help you free up hard disk space. While Disk Cleanup automatically starts when the available free space falls below a 3% threshold, you can run it at any time. To do so click Start/Programs/Accessories/System Tools/Disk Cleanup. When Disk Cleanup launches you'll see a Files To Remove list box that contains four check boxes: Temporary Internet Files, Downloaded Program Files, Recycle Bin, and Temporary files. (You may find other check boxes on your particular system.) Simply select the check boxes you want and click OK.

If you click the More Options tab, you'll see two more choices - Windows setup and Installed programs - that allow you to easily remove unneeded Windows components or application programs.

Clean up your hard drive with Scan Disk

Through normal use of your computer, your hard disk drive can become cluttered and a bit messy. And folders can become crosslinked, file names can contain invalid or unknown characters or become damaged, and file names can become disassociated with their files. ScanDisk can fix these and other problems for you. It's also a good idea to run ScanDisk on a regular basis: once a week for Standard, and once a month for Thorough. Here's how to use ScanDisk:

Click the Start button. Point to Programs/Accessories/System Tools, and then click ScanDisk. Click the drive you want to scan, and choose either the Standard or Thorough test. Click Start. The Standard test checks the files and folders on the selected drives for errors. The Thorough test will give you further options. It performs the Standard test plus checks your hard disk drive for physical damage. You can even specify to scan areas of your disk containing only data files, or just the areas with system files, or both.

Both Standard and Thorough have a set of Advanced options that help you to deal with lost file fragments, invalid files, and files that overlap the same disk space. You can also choose to keep a log file of what ScanDisk finds.

Convert to FAT32 and save space

The File Allocation Table (FAT) is the way in which data is stored on your hard disk drive. Until now, the only option has been to use FAT16, but Windows 98 has the capability of converting your drives to FAT32. The difference between the two is in how they store data. FAT32 stores data in smaller units than FAT16 and by using these smaller units, can save a lot of hard disk space.

Here's how to convert a drive: On the Start menu, point to Programs/Accessories, and then click System Tools. Click Drive Converter and follow the instructions on your screen. Older disk compression software is not compatible with

FAT32, so if your drive is already compressed, you may not be able to convert to FAT32. For more information on this and other FAT32 issues, please read the Using Drive Converter Help on FAT32, located in the Windows 98 help menu, before you convert.

Defragment for faster file loads

Files and applications on your computer's hard disk are not always stored together as one unit, but are often divided into smaller units and scattered around the hard disk. This is caused by normal use. On a fragmented hard disk, a computer has to work harder to gather all of the small units to perform the commands you give it; this slows down its ability to access files and run applications. Running Disk Defragmenter helps by putting all like files and applications into contiguous groups so the computer can access them quickly.

If you use your computer a lot, it is a good idea to run Disk Defragmenter on a regular basis. It's also a good idea to run Disk Defragmenter after you install a lot of applications to enable them to run at top speed.

To run the utility, it is best to shut down all your applications first. Then click Start, point to Programs/Accessories/System Tools, and then click Disk Defragmenter. Click the Settings tab, select the check boxes you want (to ensure fastest startup of programs, select the first box), and then click OK. Click the drive you want to defragment, click OK, and then click Yes.

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ZD Tips

Problem: For easier scrolling and dragging and dropping of files you'd like to keep two copies of Windows Explorer on the screen at the same time. Unfortunately, Windows 2000 doesn't let you do this.

Solution: Twofer, a utility written by Vince Chen and first mentioned in the pages of PC Computing way back in March 1998, works just fine with Windows 2000. It brings up two copies of Windows Explorer and lets you customize where and how the copies appear onscreen. You can even specify a different default starting directory for each. Visit <http://cgi.zdnet.com/slink?11764:2139974> and download a free copy.

Problem: You need to reformat your hard drive, then reinstall a bunch of programs, including Netscape Communicator. What steps should you take to make sure all your bookmarks and mail files survive the experience?

Solution: In a nutshell, you have to save the c:\Program Files\Netscape\User(s) folder, reformat the hard drive, then restore the \User folder by copying it into the \Netscape folder before running Navigator. Netscape has detailed instructions at <http://cgi.zdnet.com/slink?11960:2139974>.

Reprinted with permission from ZDNet Tip of the Day. 

Win98 Big Deal

by Tom Lassiter, HAL-PC

Talking of big deals, how are you coming along by now in handling the goodies offered by Windows 98? Isn't it a hoot? By golly I haven't had this much fun since DOS 2.0! I will never learn. Every time there is a major change in operating systems I hang back intending to let the forerunners discover the problems before I venture forth into that new territory. Then once I get up the courage to jump in, I discover my fears were unfounded and I missed several months of enjoying the new technology and its features. I did it again with Windows 98, and since an old dog can't learn new tricks (at least not quickly), I'll probably do the same thing when Windows 2000 pops out of the box. Let's see what's in Win 95/98.

Clear the Junk Off your Hard Drive

Space of all kinds is sometimes wasted on your hard drive by files and folders you no longer use, need or are otherwise ready to be trashed. Win 98 offers two ways to correct this little mess.

First, open My Computer or Windows Explorer. Right click on the drive you wish to clean up: then click on Properties. From the General tab click on disk cleanup then click on the unnecessary files you wish to remove. It will give you a description of each file type in the area under the list, including files such as temporary files, internet files, and unnecessary program files that you may safely delete. Click on OK.

The second is to click Start\Programs\Accessories\System Tools\Disk Cleanup. From there proceed as above. It should speed up your PC. How much depends on how much junk there was to remove. I like to think I run a pretty tight PC-, but it found 55Mb to delete, mainly in temporary and temporary internet files. That's 5 1/2 times the size of my first hard drive. We've come a long way, baby!

Time to Redecorate Your PC

No, I'm not talking about painting your PC and monitor cases a different color; although that would certainly spruce things up a bit. I'm talking about utilizing some of those really nifty desktop themes that Windows 95 and 98 never get around to using. Hey! Are you still staring at the funky green desktop that some expert determined was really, really restful for your eyes? If so, shame on you. Don't you feel bad not using the cool stuff the Windows 95/98 design teams worked so hard to offer for your computing sport so proudly, and which many folks pleasure? Get a life!

Simply click on Start\Settings\Control Panel\Desktop Themes. In the Theme box at the top, click the down arrow on the right side and then select one of the many themes offered. It will show you a sample window of how each component will look under that theme. Find one you want to try and click OK. You can accept the entire theme, including wallpaper, sounds, pointers, etc. or deselect any part in the list on the right by unchecking the appropriate box. Heck, if you don't like it after a few days, just go back and try another. Chances are it will brighten your day(s).

Tom Lassiter is a member of the Houston Area League of PC Users and can be reached at jamesl@hal-pc.org. ☐

Yeah Write for Windows

Lloyd D Mizer, NOCCC (lmizer@juno.com)

Yeah Write for Windows is an inexpensive and powerful shareware word processor. If you need a word processor that provides more features than Windows Notepad, but you do not need the power and complexity of Microsoft Word for Windows you should consider this program. It is powerful enough for most word processing projects, but its main strength is ease of use. There are versions of Yeah Write for Windows 3.1, Windows 95/98 and Windows NT. The download size is only about 1Mb. It does not include a "What You See Is What You Get" interface. It won the prestigious Shareware Industry Award for the best word processing application and was awarded 5 stars by the editors at ZD Net. It is designed to handle any date from January 1, 1850 until December 31, 2200.

To get your trial copy of Yeah Write for Windows go to the Word Place web site and download it. After you have downloaded and installed Yeah Write you can use the free version or a 15 day trial of the full version. The free version includes about 50% of the features of the full version. The full version costs \$29.00. You can order the Yeah Write for Windows CD for an additional \$10.00. When you purchase the full version they will e-mail you with a name and registration number. There is special pricing for schools, churches, and charitable organizations and large organizations.

This program is an excellent example of how to hide complexity to make an easy to use program. It has an interface that is so intuitive that anyone can use it. It makes the file system completely invisible to the user. If you need a word processor for someone that doesn't want to know anything about the computer check it out. This is a word processor that your children will love. It has a help system, but you will probably never use it.

The latest version includes headings, justifications, bold, Italics, underlining, check boxes, bullets, post/sub scripts, spell checking, and a thesaurus. It includes most of the features of more expensive word processors. Including spell checking with 12 dictionaries.

Types of documents preformatted by the program include, Address Book, Diary, E-mail, Faxes, General, Journal, Letters, Memos, Notes and a To Do List. When you check on any of the tabs you are presented with a screen that lists existing documents with information about that document. At the top of the list is to generate a new document, when you double click on a document window is opened for data entry. The address book includes information about the individual including address, phone numbers, employment, the spouse and children.

Word Place, Inc 11 East 200 North Suite 201 Orem, UT 84057 Voice: 801-221-7777 Fax: 801-221-7707 <http://www.wordplace.com> List Price: \$29.00

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Street Atlas USA

Dick Freymoyer (dickfrey@aol.com)

How many times have you had to travel to a location you were totally unfamiliar with? When I did, I would have given a lot for a map with my final destination pinpointed on it. Street Atlas USA will make one for you. I have used this fine program for several years for estimating the distance and time it will take me to arrive at my destination, most of this time without a GPS receiver.

What it is

Street Atlas is a detailed mapping system that has almost every US highway and city street plotted on it. Give it start and finish locations, and it will build you a "Trip Map". This year's version (7.0) offers 3 million Points of Interest (businesses, hotels/motels, gas stations, restaurants, government facilities, churches, educational institutions, etc.). Points of interest (POI) were not included in previous versions — if you wanted them on your map you had to use DeLorme's Map'n'Go 5.0, which was great for mapping long-distance trips, but not so good on details such as city streets.

Installation

Street Atlas comes on two CD disks, an install disk and a program data disk. Installing the program was easy and problem-free. With the expanded data for the POI on Version 7, you have a choice how much of this data you want to load. Your option prompts will allow you to load the **Minimum** (50.5MB); **Maximum** (256.8MB) or **Custom**. I selected Custom on my laptop because of space and found that I could load just the POI for states that I know I would visit. The POI data for 14 Eastern states takes up 65.3MB. If you don't load any of POI onto your computer, the book tells me you would use 35MB of disk space for the regular data. Custom loading the POI as I did takes extra time (about 40 minutes in my case) because it must search out the selected data from the CD disk. Before the program will load the POI, it checks hard drive space so if you don't have enough space on your drive, you can make adjustments.

Getting Started

Insert the Data disk, it spins up and you are ready to go. You should first set your Preferences, which can be found under the **Plan Route Tab**. You can set what kinds of roads you prefer (Quickest; Shortest; Preferred or Scenic). You can also set your route preferences (what type of road, road speed; reverse route; show state borders and much more. After your preferences are set, go to Set Route Start by clicking on **Plan Route / Route Waypoints /** then **Set Route Start**, on the **Green button**, then type in a zip code or a city address. In the event that Street Atlas doesn't find the specified street address (house), type in the city or zip code, then zoom in and right-click where the house would be located, making it the **Set as Start or Stop** location and name it. (I pinpointed my house and called it Dick's House). If you own a GPS Receiver, the satellites will find your location and that can be your start location. With the starting point settled, go to the **Red Button** (Finish Location). If you have a street address and/or ZIP code, type it in and then refine the end location.

Next, click on GO and the program will calculate your route for you. Written directions appear on the left side of your screen and the road map on the right with your route marked in color. You can print the whole trip plan (maps and directions) or just the directions or the maps. If the program is not taking you the way you prefer to go, you can zoom (using page down key) in on the road you want to use, right-click and choose **Insert as Via**. Whenever you click on a road or other object you have a choice of **Set as Start; Stop; Add as Via; Insert as Stop; Insert as Via or Set as Finish**. When you **Insert**, whether it is a **Stop or Via**, that puts the object along the route. When you set it as an **Add** the point as a **Stop or Via**, you mean it as a diversion or a stop off your main route of travel. It could be a road branching off your main route, away from your destination. **Insert as Via or Stop** means this point is along your main route.

Reverse Route

You don't have to build a new model for your trip home if you intend to use the same route. If you found a short cut after you got to your destination, you can go to **Plan Route/ Manage Route/ Reverse Route**, then change it as needed. I have done this several times and save it as #2 of whatever I called the file. If, after trying the new short cut you don't like it, just go back to the original file.

New features

Automatic Recalculation (for GPS users) of your route if you miss a turn. In V-6, if you missed your turn, the only way besides seeing it on your display was that the program's voice would tell you "turn left on "—" road 2 miles ahead, then 3 miles, etc. and that way you would know you had missed your turn. Then you had to either go back or pull off the highway to do a manual recalculation of your route.

Another great improvement is the ability to vary the time that program gives you when announcing turns. This can be found by going into the **GPS** tab then **GPS Preferences / Announce Time**. You can vary the time from 20 seconds to 120 seconds. I noticed that with Version 6, if your laptop clock was off or the road wasn't plotted perfectly, you would be past the road before it told you to turn.

There is another setting you can make under **GPS Preferences** and that is **Detect Off Route**. This setting allows you to set it from one tenth of a mile to 2 miles and really helps when you must exit one road onto another.

If you own a PDA device such as Palm Computer or Windows CE handheld computer, you can go into DeLorme's Web site and download **Solus Basic**. When it is installed on your PDA device, it is ready to receive your map data after you plan your route. (The average size of a map created on your desktop computer is 100-300 KB. I created a route to Florida which uses only 200KB.) For more information on this item, see DeLorme's web site.

Adding GPS

After trying Street Atlas, purchased the Earth Mate GPS Receiver from DeLorme. I deliberately went off course several

continued

Mail the Size of a Whale

Gerald Ingram, Vice President of Syberdyne

We all have them: MP3s, AVIs, Zips, MPEGs, photos, drawings, and other files we'd like to send that are more than 3MB. Like everything else we do, when we decide we want or need to send a file to someone, we usually want it there now rather than later. You could copy the file to a zip disk or CD and send it via overnight delivery, but by Internet standards, this seems slow and expensive.

It would be great to send the file as an email attachment since the recipient would get the file instantly, but you can't send a file that big through regular email because Internet Service Providers generally limit you to 3MB files. File transfer protocol and some of the file sharing or archiving services get around this, but you have to learn how to use them and get your recipients to learn how to use them too.

That's where WhaleMail comes in. This free Internet service makes it possible for you to use nothing more than a browser and email to send and receive files as large as 50MB. You sign up for the service online, upload your file to WhaleMail, tell WhaleMail where to send the file, and click "send." Your recipients will get an email saying they have WhaleMail. Whenever they want to download the file, they click on the link in the message and down it'll come. Syberdyne is the creator of WhaleMail.

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Help Wanted

Experienced in Java and ASP&VB development.

Email resume to jobs@adiinc.com

Street Atlas, *continued*

times to see if the new features of Street Atlas would help me get back on my planned route. I am happy to say it really did a job for me. When you miss your road, the digitized voice tells you that you are off your planned route, and it is recalculating the route.

For another test, I drove past my destination to see what would happen. Within a few seconds it told me to turn around at the next intersection and go back. Street Atlas now has a brain that thinks for you. I think this feature is worth every dollar spent to upgrade.

Also improved: the time it takes to find the Satellite. With Version 6, it sometimes seemed to take forever to lock onto them. Now, when I tell the program to start tracking it does it within 30 seconds giving me a 3-D fix. I believe they have re-defined the strength of the receiver.

I'd like to see

A way the user can draw or make adjustments on the map when the road has changed. For example, if there is a new exit, allow you to mark it so it will permit you to exit there and not plot you around another way.

Points of Interest should be on a data disk. We all don't have 6GB hard drives in our laptops!

A way to store a location such as Dick's House, so you can ask for that location when you are going from that point to another point when plotting other trips.

Summary

In my opinion, Street Atlas USA Version 7 by DeLorme is the best mapping system available. Street price is about \$25, a great value. Other interesting products from DeLorme: Topo USA (Topographic Maps) @ \$99; AAA Map'n'Go @ \$29; Atlas & Gazetteer Series (based on USGS data) @ \$16.95 for a paper book of each state; Eartha Global Explorer (Satellite Imagery of Earth on CD or DVD) @ \$49; Phone Search USA (I don't know the price), and Earthmate GPS Receiver with Street Atlas USA @ \$159. All the prices given are street prices. You can get direct prices from www.delorme.com or by calling 1-800-511-2459. DeLorme is working on special discount prices for their products, so talk to your Review or Program Chairperson to get the list for your user group.

For support, go to www.support@delorme.com or call 207-846-8900. The support people seem to care. For this review I worked with Marlon Welch, Public Relations Coordinator from DeLorme, who was very helpful. Thank you, Marion, and thanks to DeLorme! ☐

Classified

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CD-RW Drives Unseat Other Media

by Ken Fermoye

The king is dead! Long live the king! (Until a successor ascends the throne.) The “dead king” in this case is the traditional 3.5-inch floppy disk drive and its cousins: Zip drives, Super Drives, tape backups and other removable storage media. The new king is the CD-RW (Compact Disk-ReWriteable) drive. The successor, already waiting in the wings, is the DVD-RW (Digital Versatile Disc or Digital Video Disk, depending on your orientation). Portable USB hard drives may be pretenders to the throne.

Of course I’m exaggerating a bit. You can’t count out the lowly 1.44-megabyte floppy drive just yet. It is adequate for typical word processing and other applications that don’t produce big files. Prices are low enough for drives and diskettes to keep them alive for the near term. Shipments should peak in 2001, then start a slow decline.

Iomega’s Zip and Jaz products, Super floppies, tape drives and their kin won’t disappear overnight either, but they all have drawbacks that will make it hard for them to compete with CD-RW drives in the long term. Generally, they have more limited capacity, higher media costs, and aren’t priced all that much lower than the CD products. (Note that Iomega recognizes the inevitable and introduced its own CD-RW drive, the ZipCD, in June 1999.)

For example, a 100MB Zip drive costs about \$100 to \$130, depending on type (internal, external, SCSI, parallel, USB). Disk prices range from about \$8 to \$15 as this is written in mid-January, 2000. A 1GB Jaz drive costs about \$200, with disks going for \$90 to \$100.

By comparison, CD-RW drives hold 650MB and sell for anywhere from \$170 to about \$400, with most of them in the \$200-250 range. That means their disks hold as much as 6.5 Zip 100 disks and roughly 66% as much as the 1-GB Jaz disk. The kicker is the cost of media.

CD-R disks cost just \$1 to \$2 each. You can write files to them only once, no rewriting, but you can write to them in increments, adding files until the disk is full. This makes them ideal for permanent backup or archiving files. They are easily portable, since they are compatible with all CD-ROM drives of recent years. And they’re so cheap you can use a lot of them without busting the budget.

CD-RW disks cost more, about \$5 to \$6, but you can write and rewrite to them just as you would a floppy or Zip drive. Generally there are more compatibility issues than with CD-R disks; they may not be readable in any CD-ROM drive, or even other CD-RW, drives. They are best used for day-to-day backup. The nice thing is that a CD-RW drive gives you the best of both worlds, because you can burn CD-R disks or use CD-RW disks.

I have been using two quite different types of CD-RW drives since September, 1999. One is a Verbatim brand, Model 4420a (4X Record, 4X Rewrite, 20X Read). The drive itself is made by Mitsubishi. The other is more exotic: a Compro external drive from ACS Innovations. Made specifically for use with notebook computers, it weighs a little over a pound and connects to a notebook PCMCIA slot or USB port.

Necessity led me to the CD-RW drives. I was preparing to do my Media Workshop in Orlando last fall and realized the PowerPoint slide show I use to support my presentation was far too big to fit on a floppy. Putting it on a CD-ROM disk was the logical way to go. I began by investigating CD-R (record only) drives. They were cheap (\$160 or less) but I learned this was because they were being phased out. I was advised to go for a CD-RW drive instead — and settled on the Verbatim 4420a as one of the fastest in my price range.

Installing it was simplicity itself. I merely disconnected my existing CD-ROM drive and plugged in the new drive in its place, using the existing cable. It came with **just!burn** software from CeQuadrat (taken over by Adaptec in mid-1999), which I found very easy to use after an initial goof. I ruined several disks by trying to format them not realizing that they were preformatted by Verbatim! The **just!burn** Wizard makes it easy to create backup, audio or data disks. The CD-ROM disks I’ve burned with the CeQuadrat software have been readable by every CD drive in which I have tested them. The tests have included drives in a half-dozen desktop computers and three notebook computers. I should mention that none of the drives was more than 24 to 30 months old. I can’t vouch for compatibility with older drives.

The Compro notebook CD-RW drive is a real gem, the world’s first CD Rewriter with CD 4X recording, 4X rewriting and 20X reading function all in a slim 23mm height housing. Bare drive weight is only 18 oz. Other weights are: battery pack w/5 AA batteries (Alkaline or NiCAD and NiMH 1.2V rechargables), 7 oz; AC adapter, 8 oz; PCMCIA card/cable, 5 oz; USB cable, 4oz. Currently priced at \$269. The whole works adds up to 42 oz., but one normally would use either the PCMCIA or USB cable so actual weight, including a few disks, is less than 2.5 lbs.

The amazing thing is how well this little drive works. It performs so well I don’t use it only with my notebook. It is connected via USB port to one of the desktop machines in our office when I’m not travelling.

The Compro slimline came with Adaptec’s Easy CD Creator, which most experts consider the top CD creation program. It includes DirectCD, which lets you treat the CD-RW drive like a floppy drive. You can copy information in small packets and erase separate files (“random erase”) instead of having to erase the entire CD. Packet writing allows sending of small amounts of data or “packets” to CD-R and CD-RW drives without wasted overhead and without risk of data transfer interruptions (buffer underruns).

Easy CD Creator makes it simple to create music, photo, video, and data CDs. You can even make bootable CDs. I have V.3.5 but plan to upgrade soon to V.4.0 which has some desirable features added. (Check it out at www.adaptec.com/products/overview/ecdc.html)

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Adobe's After Effects 4.1

by Lloyd Mizer NOCCC, lmizer@juno.com

Adobe's After Effects 4.1 is an excellent tool for motion graphics and visual effects. It gives you the freedom and control you need for designing motion graphics and visual effects for film, video, multimedia, and the Web. It will make you productive faster than other similar products. The open architecture enables third-party developers, such as Atomic Power, Cycore, Ultimatte, and DigiEffects, to produce plug-ins that are closely integrated with the tools and environment of After Effects. This means you get a wide range of affordable design options that aren't available with other products.

Version 4.1 features not included in version 4.0 include 3D file support, and support for higher image resolutions. Work with image resolutions up to 30,000 pixels by 30,000 pixels. Visualize the relationships between compositions, layers, and effects by viewing compositions or projects in Flowchart View. Copy a composition or project and all of the associated source files to a single location for rendering or archiving. It includes real-time RAM preview, new caching capabilities for improved interactivity, faster rendering, built-in file format and cross-platform plug-ins, and an expanded API. Greater creative control, with powerful new video and audio effects, superior new masking capabilities, and efficient adjustment layers.

There are two different After Effects programs because they are designed for two different groups with different needs, motion-graphics designers and visual-effects artists. The standard version provides the core compositing, 2D animation, and visual-effects tools that the motion-graphics professional needs. The Production Bundle version includes everything in the standard version, and advanced motion control and keying capabilities. It also contains 3D channel, audio, and visual effects, Effects Pack, Keying Pack, Motion Pack, Audio Pack, 3D Channel Pack, Render Engine, FAQ, Press Releases, and workflow.

It includes free three fully functional plug-in effects, Cycore Computers' Cult Effects(tm) collection: CE ColorsQuad, CE Radial Shadow, and CE Turbulent Noise. With CE ColorsQuad you can blend four colors together, colors, positions, and amount of blending can be animated. It is used for creating backgrounds and gradients. With CE Radial Shadow you can create cast-perspective shadows from a nearby point light source as opposed to an infinite light source. The shadows are projected from the alpha channel of the source layer, which can cast colored shadows through transparent areas. With CE Turbulent Noise you can create animated fractal noise. Various types of fractal noise are included, and controls can be used to generate endless variations of each type. The plug-ins are included with the Standard and Production Bundle of the Macintosh and Windows versions.

After Effects is highly integrated with Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and Adobe Premiere, so you can perform dynamic media production tasks more efficiently.

Now you can transform layered Adobe Photoshop images into artful animations with ease. Import Photoshop files as compositions one at a time or in batches. Adobe After Effects 4.1 preserves layers, layer effects, adjustment layers, alpha channels, and transfer modes. You can then apply visual effects to color-correct, stylize, or manipulate each layer, and animate these layers over time. Move easily between Photoshop and After Effects to complete your work.

To add first rate typography and eye-catching graphics to your motion graphics and visual effects. Import layered Adobe Illustrator files as compositions one at a time or in batches. You can choose whether After Effects preserves the layers or merges them upon import. Then resize the layers to any resolution without losing detail, and animate them with complete control. After Effects will play back your animations much quicker than Illustrator images, since it offers faster and smoother rasterization.

You can import Adobe Premiere projects as compositions. Each video, audio, and still image clip appears on its own layer, arranged in the correct time-based sequence in the Time Layout window. You can then manipulate these clips to create the sophisticated effects and animations best produced in After Effects. You can also drop After Effects movies into projects you're editing in Premiere.

The new masking tools, allows you to create up to 128 named masks on one layer and to import masks from Photoshop or Illustrator. Then you can edit them just as you would in those programs. The Reshape plug-in (in the Production Bundle) demonstrates this ability, reshape allows you to apply complex transforms defined by the mask shape directly to an image.

The Production Bundle version of After Effects includes a Render Engine that users can install on an unlimited number of CPUs to enable network rendering. The Render Engine works with the new Watch Folder feature in version 4.1 to allow multiple computers to render multiple projects unattended and remotely monitor the status of the renders. When you're ready to render, the render queue allows you to output several versions of the project in one step. You can render a D-1 version for broadcast video, a 320 by 240 version for CD-ROM, and a 120 by 90 version for the Web. You can specify output in NTSC, PAL, or SECAM, and use 3:2 pulldown/removal to convert the 29.97 fps rate of NTSC video to the 24 fps rate of motion-picture film.

In video production you need more than just the ability to edit pictures. Without great audio the impact of the video is diminished. After Effects 4.1 doesn't totally eliminate audio editors, but it offers significantly enhanced audio processing. There are new equalization and tone controls in both editions of the program. You will be delighted with the real-time audio scrubbing. To play audio tracks, hold down the 1 key while dragging the cursor in the timeline. It is easy to place keyframes so they synchronize with the audio. The best audio-filter enhancements are in the Production bundle. There

continued

SnagIt

Libby Albright, NOCCC

SnagIt is a great program for capturing text, pictures, and on screen events! I found use is almost instinctive; even with my minimal experience in graphic techniques or programs, I didn't have to read, highlight, and study steps.

I have been using screen shots extensively as I created student manuals for Microsoft applications. All I had done before to capture a picture of the screen was press the Print Screen button, then paste the screen shot into a Paint, Word, or Excel program as a bitmap file. Because those heavy .BMP files were sinking my MS files, I later resorted to using MS Photo Editor (part of Office 97) which allowed me to easily edit and save a file in a tiny .GIF format for later copying into a file. SnagIt is far superior to these techniques.

With SnagIt, inexperience did not matter! I clicked the option to record onscreen actions, and made an instant .AVI file showing my mouse-cursor moving on screen. SnagIt lets you preview the screen shot you took (a region you drag, an entire window, or the entire monitor screen) and crop it. I could capture text and edit it in Notepad. I could then open the file in Excel to set up columns for spreadsheets and databases, as well as append and annotate multiple text captures to a single file. I could also save individual frames from an .AVI file. "Save File as Type" options included GIF, JPEG, PCX, PNG, or TIF.

The AutoScroll feature will capture the hidden part of the screen. A picture can be rescaled, colors can be converted or stylized. The catalog offers very large thumbprints in the familiar Windows Explorer format, some of which I easily imported into the MS Clip Gallery. I like the way it works like Microsoft programs — using right mouse menus, toolbars, and the same organization — so I didn't have to learn another set of commands.

My only problem was that SnagIt could not capture a three-part cursor in an operation I wanted to picture, or capture a circular region I had drawn freehand. Compared to the Free Shot program, this program wins easily. I recommend SnagIt for all others who are graphically challenged! All software should be this easy.

Available at local computer stores. Cost in the \$15 to \$25 range.

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ZD Tip

PROBLEM: You've heard that there's a file in Windows that contains alternative desktop icons. What's the file's name and its location?

SOLUTION: The file is called moricons.dll, and it's located in the Windows folder.

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A Printer for Only \$50?

Jim Louderback, Editorial Director ZDTV

So how much printer does \$50 buy? Surprisingly, the new Canon BJC-1000 color Bubble Jet is actually not bad. Clearly you have to compromise somewhere. Don't expect it to support two ink cartridges simultaneously. If you want true black, you'll have to swap out the Cyan/Magenta/Yellow cartridge for the black one.

And you'll be catching quite a few Zs while waiting for the printer to deliver the goods. At the highest quality level, it took more than 10 minutes for a 360x360 dpi color photograph to print out. And even that quality wasn't very good. The image literally paled in comparison to Hewlett-Packard Deskjet 832c — a good printer, but for four times the price. Even in low quality-mode, the Canon is still slow. Low-resolution color images took 3-4 minutes to print, while you could squeeze out about a page and a half in a minute in black and white.

OK, so it's not great quality and it is slow. But this printer does have more to recommend it than price. It's got a nice set of starter software, including hundreds of graphics and templates, and it does get the job done.

Sure, you'll want another printer for really fine results. But if you need a low-cost printer for the kids, the dorm room or the basement, the Canon BJC-1000 fills the bill. Just remember, though, before you buy that the cost of consumables, including ink and paper, will really hit your wallet. Black cartridges can be had for around \$20, while the color ones will run you

After Effects, *continued*

are new filters for adding echo, flanging, modulation, and equalization effects.

As with their other products Adobe has added a book to the Classroom in a Book series for After Effects. The book was developed by the Adobe Development Team so it is complete and thorough. It is an excellent resource for new users. The new edition has been updated with coverage of enhanced and new features in the latest version of After Effects.

There are versions of After Effects for both the Macintosh and Windows Platforms. Requirements: PowerPC, System 7.6.1 or later, 32Mb of application RAM, 80Mb of free hard disk space, QuickTime 3.0, CD-ROM drive, 16-bit color display (Recommended: G3, 64Mb or more of application RAM, video capture and output hardware, 500Mb or larger hard disk for ongoing work, 24-bit color display)

Adobe Systems Inc. Mountain View, CA 800-833-6687 415-961-4400 <http://www.adobe.com/>

\$ 995 standard version \$2,195 Production Bundle

\$ 299 upgrade from standard version 3.x

\$1,295 upgrade from version 3.x to Production Bundle

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Before You Click "I Agree"...

Cyberlaw Report by Marc L. Lippincott (HAL-PC)

It is 6 p.m. on Sunday as you pull into your driveway, thankful that you made it to CompUSA before closing. You just spent two weeks researching the best software application for your needs, and after an hour of looking around the store in what only can be described as "Geek Bliss", you made your purchase. Two weeks of research and an hour argument with the spouse about how necessary this utility is, and it all comes down to this. If you'd had a computer in the SUV on the ride home, you probably would have torn it open like a kid with a bag of candy in a ride home from the grocery store.

Five minutes later you're in your home office, wishing the computer would just boot up already. If you have to hear the hard drive for 30 seconds more, you would just toss the system out the window. Finally, as the sound card salutes you with its opening .wav file "Helloooo Baby" downloaded from TheBigBopper.com, you are ready to take on the monster. You tear open the package, take the CD out of the jewel case (you've perfected the technique to a science, perfectly timing the opening of the Rom drive with the opening of the jewel case so as to waste no more time), put it in the drive, and close the drive door. "C'mon, Installshield, c'mon". A few seconds later, you click "I Agree", and you fall to your knees in geek bliss as the install performs flawlessly, and you are on your way to playing with your new toy.

Man, if I had a dollar for every time that I have done that since my introduction to PC's. In the early 1980s, if Hard Hat Mack was in my possession more than a few seconds before install, I'd be surprised. And it still happens to me today. Other than in my official role as an attorney, I am as bad as everyone else when it comes to software licensing agreements. I never read them. I don't think I ever read one at home before researching for this column. But there are some tricky folks out there, my friends.

What did I just do?

If you've already clicked "I agree", you probably just signed yourself a contract to abide by all of its terms. Interestingly enough, I dare you to try to find that license agreement on your computer without re-installing. I'm typing this on WordPerfect v. 7.0, and I can't find it. I tried in Outlook 2000, again I can't find it. If someone knows how to revisit your licensing agreement on these programs, please email me, I'd love to know. Nonetheless, it is not the easiest of processes.

So what does it matter? All that legal mumbo-jumbo, it's probably just some disclaimers and stuff. I mean, it's no different than that legal mumbo-jumbo that comes with the insert for my toaster, right?

Well, there is some truth to the fact that the licensing agreements are written in mumbo-jumbo, some more than others. Part of the implicit reasoning is to make it so boring and monotonous that you don't realize what rights you are giving away in the process; but other reasons, the more innocent ones, include wanting to be as thorough as possible so as to protect one's intellectual property from dissolution. But to think it is merely some disclaimers in a "CYA" world is defi-

nately wrong. With software, unlike your toaster, the license controls your use, sale and distribution of the item. I can sell my toaster any time I want. I can lend my toaster to a friend. I can take my toaster to the church and use it for a prayer breakfast. But software? Think about what is in that agreement! It purports to control everything we can do with the product, and in some circumstances we may be violating criminal laws by failing to abide by its terms. And we didn't even read it! This is worse than the tag on the mattress!

What did "I Agree" to?

Although the screen may look the same every time, literally there is no way to know what you agreed to by clicking "I Agree" without reading it, word for word. You may also encounter some of these so-called "click-wrap agreements" on the Internet as you access databases, subscribe to an online service, as well as getting a hotmail-like free e-mail account.

Of course, you're not always going to read it; they know that, I know that. But guess who doesn't know that? Judges and lawyers. Think about it, lawyers spend all of these hours drafting this language; they have to think you are going to read it; otherwise, their clients would not be paying them to draft the language. So what makes those clients pay those lawyers to draft these license agreements? There is a basic premise in the law that states that generally everyone who signs an agreement has read, understood and consents to the terms of that agreement. Now, this may not be the case in some fraud, personal injury and deceptive trade instances, but that's the general rule. And it makes sense for the most part, for without the rule, contracts would essentially be worthless. If all you had to do was claim that you hadn't read a section of a contract, it would be too easy to avoid the contract and soon there would be mayhem. And soon clients would not pay their lawyers to draft the agreements.

But the assumptions may be often overstated in the consumer realm. It is highly likely that the individual pulling a ticket at a car garage will not read the terms on the back saying "we're not responsible for any damage to your car". It is also likely that an airline traveler will not read the .3-point type contract and disclaimers (unless they are having a rather nasty descent). And it is almost 100% that a consumer will not read the software licensing agreement if all they have to do is click "I Agree" and they get instant gratification. Plus, have you ever known someone to read the license agreement, reject it, and return the product to the store? No, of course not. But for some reason, courts have been reluctant to allow purchasers of software out of these click-wrap contracts.

Some common "gotchas" in the license agreements

The biggest concern for many software developers in many of the software agreements is the intellectual property right associated with the license. This is because the company has spent thousands, sometimes millions in development costs, including the programming, beta testing, marketing and so forth that with a \$200 CD-RW drive and \$1 CD-RW media can be duplicated all too easily. That creates what is known as

continued

the free-rider problem. If I can get a Corel Suite for \$1, why would I pay the \$700 for a full license? The answer is, easily, I wouldn't. So through copyright laws, and licensing agreements, Corel controls what you can copy and what you cannot copy, and what is "for archival purposes" and what is not. This is not a difficult concept, and most users understand that if they start burning 30 copies of Corel Suite a minute, they are likely to be soon visited by lots of guys in dark glasses in short order.

Another area in these agreements, perhaps less obvious, is the fact that many of these software companies are concerned about having to be sued everywhere the software ends up. This can certainly be annoying, but what is interesting is the fact that the toaster manufacturer has few ways to control this problem, but software dealers have figured this one out. How do they fix this? By putting in a choice of law and choice of forum agreement in the software license. So when you say, "I Agree", you agree that you will only sue Microsoft in Kings County, Washington, and you will only sue AOL in Virginia. This has been upheld various times by the courts. But think about what that means to you. If Microsoft delivers a bad product and it destroys all of your data, and you have to spend \$100,000 on programmers and hardware to fix the problem, can you sue Microsoft in Texas in front of those good ol' Texans who will give you a fair shake? No, you get to sue them in Kings County, Washington, where Bill Gates might have a little more influence than you do. You also may be suing under Washington law in some circumstances, and think about who has more influence in the Washington legislature. Furthermore, you want to sue AOL because the phone lines were busy for three straight months? Better hire a Virginia attorney and expect to fly to Virginia for your trial.

Some other areas often included in these license agreements include, generally, terms of service or use. This is especially true of web sites and online services. A lot of it is standard, but some interesting things have begun to show up in these agreements, such as anti-spamming language. Most users have no problem with this protection, but it does raise some interesting free speech arguments. Another interesting development in the "terms of service" realm came up recently in e-Bay's agreement for registration. At e-Bay, the user agrees that the seller or bidder feedback rating, regardless of the fact that it was created through the hard work of that bidder or seller, cannot be used outside of e-Bay's environment. This has caused some ruffled feathers with other auction sites, where the sellers are proud of their e-Bay ratings and want to tell the whole world about it. If you've registered on e-Bay, you're subject to being kicked off the system if you so advertise your rating. The best bet here is, if you're not prepared to lose your rights to use the service, you may want to check that click-wrap agreement.

One final area that has crept into this area are disclaimers for Year 2000 readiness and compliance, something that may only mean something to you if something goes drastically wrong. And as Congress and Junior have already gutted those consumer remedies, that's not likely going to affect your license too terribly much. But it can be important for a corporation that is trying to fix a Y2k problem, for they might

be violating their software licensing agreement by re-compiling the software in preparation for 2000.

How far can they go?

Naturally, then, the question is raised, well, how far can these companies go? Pretty far, and they are generally not bound by the copyright laws in the restriction of your use rights. The only instance where I have seen that the courts have rejected a term in a click-wrap agreement in these circumstances is when Gateway, a computer manufacturer, put a forced arbitration agreement in its install, forcing the consumer to submit to binding arbitration with the International Chamber of Commerce's arbitration tribunal. Only problem was the fact that it cost \$4,000 to initiate the proceedings, \$2,000 of which was non-refundable, and the whole systems don't cost that much. Tricky, tricky. The court said that that was not a reasonable term, and forced the parties to submit to binding arbitration by a court selected arbitrator.

Certainly, beyond what is written in some of these agreements, there are still some very basic, consumer protections that the courts will force onto an agreement. I guess my point here is that it is not prudent to rely on those very basic consumer protections. It is time consumers thought pragmatically about our legal system. Who generally makes the rules, the consumer, or large businesses? Who is more likely to have a massive lobbying effort? Assuming there is a direct connection between money and influence, who is more likely to have given money to legislative or judicial elections, a consumer or a business? So then I ask you, who is more likely to have the law in its favor as we take the trip to the federal building?

So what do we do?

I guess the best thing one can do is be aware. If you have the time, read the license agreement before you click "I agree", and be aware of what software and hardware licensors attempt to do with them. And most of all, be aware that what you are signing is, in all reality, a binding contract. I know most of you may not be able to change the contract, especially if the software is off the shelf, but if you really dislike the way software, hardware and online companies are behaving, let your Congressman know your feelings. A loud consumer can do a lot of things.

Marc Lippincott, a HAL-PC member, is a business litigation attorney employed with the McLain Law Firm. He can be reached via email at marclippincott@mclainlaw.com, or through the firm website at www.mclainlaw.com. This article is for informational purposes only and is not to be construed or relied on by you as legal advice. ☞



SIG News

PC Users Group

Jo-Anne Head (tinarock@aol.com)

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

May 19: J.D. Abolins is speaking on Computer Security and Privacy. With all the security holes in popular software, this is a very timely topic. See J.D. Abolins' bio or check out his website for more information on security and privacy.

April 21: Victor Laurie speaks on "Have It Your Way: Configuring Windows 95/98 to Suit Your Own Personal Needs and Preferences." Mr. Laurie is an excellent speaker and very knowledgeable about Windows. You are sure to learn a lot, even if you think you are a Windows expert.

January 21: Meeting cancelled because of bad weather and road conditions. ☹

Random Access

Scott Vincent (svincent@ix.netcom.com)

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

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

This is an official "Newbies too" group. ☹

MCP

(Preparing for MS Certification Exams)

Scott Vincent (svincent@ix.netcom.com)

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

We are starting the course over again and primarily reviewing the NT core material courses for potential MCPs and MCSEs. For existing MCPs and MCSEs, it will help in preparing to take advantage of Microsoft's offer of one "accelerated" exam (70-240). It will clep the first 4 exams (out of 7) necessary for the new Windows 2000 certification. This is available to anyone with MCPs in NT Workstation, NT Server and NT in the Enterprise. The MCP exam will be available through December 31, 2000. Certifications will be recognized by Microsoft and exam 70-240 offer will also be available through December 31, 2002. By then, MCPs and MCSEs are expected to be Windows 2000 certified. We started studying on January 12, 2000. ☹

Main Meeting

Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)

February: Frank Warren and Scott Vincent present on Home Networking

March: Fred Mawson, an independent X10 contractor presents X10, plus Frank Warren and Alex Goldfinger on Home Automation.

April: Computer Privacy and Security, host John Raff ☹

C/C++ Users Group

Bruce Arnold (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/> and/or

<http://www.blast.net/barnold/Csig9910.htm> ☹

Internet

Martin Rosenblum (m.rosenblum@ieee.org)

January: I was reelected SIG head. Jim Wong gave a lively presentation of his plans for the ACGNJ Web site and a short tutorial in Microsoft Front Page.

February: (originally planned for January) Since this will be almost the first ACGNJ SIG meeting of the millennium, Alex and I will lead a review, with Web visits, of the Internet so far and make some guesses about the Internet to come. You are encouraged to bring along your own ideas: what were the highlights of the Internet in the past years, what are your favorite sites of all time, and what do you think the coming year, and years, will bring. Alex warns that he is against speculating, but has some interesting ruminations on the events of the past century and what we can learn from them!

March: Keith Sproul will give talk on Web cameras, which he gave to the Princeton MAC group. ☹

continued

Lunics (Linux/Unix)

Peter Fillingham (pete@panix.com)

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

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

Multimedia & Mobile

Steven Rodriguez

(cybertech72@bigfoot.com)

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

Layman's Forum

Matt Skoda

(matthew.skoda@acgnj.org)

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

Genealogy

Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)

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

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

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

Macintosh Users Group

Keith Sproul (ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu)

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

Lotus Notes

Mike Barlow (mwb@injersey.com)

<http://www.njlnug.org>

February 15: Main topic: Lotusphere 2000.

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

Symposium

John Raff (jraff@injersey.com)

February 11: Bruce Arnold on Partition Magic. ☞

January 14: Getting More from Windows 98. Unfortunately, due to the short announcement time and the frigid weather our turnout was light to moderate. At 8PM we had 12 attendees which swelled to about 25 by 8:30 - 9PM. Sonal Shah gave an excellent Marketing type presentation on Windows 98 and Second Edition. She is new to this so her technical knowledge was light, but she did indicate that all queries would be taken back to MS for review and response. We hope to hear more from her in the future. Some MS products and giveaways were won by attendees at the end of the presentation. John Sheets won Office 2000 Pro. ☞

VBA

Jim Ditaranto (fryr92a@prodigy.com)

VBA = Visual Basic for Applications

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

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

Investing

Sheldon Koepf (sheldonk@intac.com)

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

January 13: We discussed the recent market roller coaster ride. Market statistics were shown and discussed. The significant changes in market behavior that have occurred in the last year or so were emphasized. Attendees expressed their opinions as to why these changes have happened. As usual, I learned much from members.

We visited the SIG web site and checked out many of those links to Internet investing sites. We looked at MetaStock Professional v.7.0, this time from the point of view of the new Internet integration. We saw how easy it is to obtain research, news and other information from the Web by simply right clicking on a chart.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 10, 2000 — visit our web site for the latest information about it, and come join us. All are welcome! ☞

Can You Date This Issue?

Thanks to Jerry Entin for sending his collection of ACGNJ News. See if you can date this issue based on the summary.

The table of contents included articles on the TRS-80, Locating Apple II Hangups, 6800 News, Portacom RS-232 Connector Pinouts, Commodore PET, a book review on "Hints and Tips in Basic Programming", and a Selectric Routine for the Z-80. There was a notice that a Heathkit User Group had been formed and was meeting in Fairlawn, and the Board was considering starting a national CP/M User Group.

A tip on diagnosis and treatment of an "over-erased e-prom", recommended wrapping it in foil and baking it at 350° F. for 30 minutes.

Sol Libes offered an analysis of the "first 1000 membership applications received", noting a small increase in out-of-state members and a rise in renewals to 79%.

The membership included 247 Electrical Engineers, 112 Elect. Technicians, 85 Systems Analysts, 87 Programmers, 71 Students, 55 Teachers, and 25 Consultants as well as Chemist/Engineers, DP managers, Business Managers, Businessmen, Doctors, Dentists and Attorneys.

Most of the members lived in NJ (741), but there were members in NY, PA, MD, CT, CA, MA, Va, and 7 lived out of the country.

There were 171 members who did not even own a computer system. Only 73 had more than 2 systems, 136 owned 2 systems, and 587 members had only one system. The majority of systems were built from kits, and almost 400 people now owned disk systems (an increase from 70 the previous year). The disks were, of course, seven-inch or five-inch floppies.

Ownership of modems increased 400% to a total of 112, and increases were reported in DAC, ADC, Voice-In and Voice-Out.

You have a month to think about it — no fair asking Jerry! ☞

ZD Tips

Problem: You're traveling overseas and want to know the latest currency exchange rate.

Solution: Find exchange rates for 164 countries at <http://cgi.zdnet.com/slink?15534:2139974>, the Currency Site. You can even enter a specific amount into a customizable currency converter and see the results in both directions (from dollars to pounds, for example, and vice versa).

Problem: You want to make My Documents the active location when you first start Windows Explorer.

Solution: The method you use to access Windows Explorer dictates which location is active when you first open it. To make My Documents the active location, create a shortcut icon to the My Documents folder on your desktop or on the Quick Launch toolbar (part of the Taskbar). When you right-click on the My Documents shortcut and choose Explore, the My Documents folder will be the initial location displayed in Windows Explorer.

Problem: You use the Start, Documents list in Windows to open up files. Is there a way to clear the list so that when you begin a new project you don't have to wade through the files from your last project?

Solution: Right-click on a blank area of the Taskbar and choose Properties. Click on the Start Menu Properties tab and press the Clear button to reset the Start, Documents list. When you click on OK, there may be a delay before the dialog box closes (since Windows is in the process of clearing the Documents list). Note: This process also clears the Address listing in Internet Explorer.

Reprinted with permission from ZDNet Tip of the Day. ☞

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

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

New Member Renewal Address Change

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ E-Mail _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____ URL _____

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

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

Other Local Computer Groups

Princeton Macintosh User Group: 7:15 pm 2nd Tuesday, Jadwin Hall, Princeton U. (609) 252-1163	NY/NJ/CT Relational Database User Group: Corporate and independent users. (212) 839-0125	New York Personal Computer Club: For information call hotline, (212) 533-NYPC
Computer Education Society of Philadelphia: 7:30 pm, 2nd Wednesday, St. Asaph's Episcopal Church. Lee Le'mon, (717)786-2260	Brookdale Computer Users Group: 7 pm,3rd Friday, Forums 103 at Brookdale Community College, Lincroft NJ. Andrea Tarr (732) 229-2959.	Macintosh User Group: Third Tuesday, Mallory Hall, Montclair State University, Montclair NJ. (201) 893-5274 or (201) 659-1017.
WordPerfect SIG of PCUG of So. Jersey: 2nd Tue., Queen of Heaven School, Cherry Hill; 4th Wed., Cherry Hill Library. (609) 354-1159.	Hunterdon Computer Club: 8:30 am to noon 3rd Saturday, Hunterdon Medical Center, Rt 31, Flemington. (908) 995-4042	PC Club of South Jersey: 7 pm, 2nd Tuesday, Holy Cross HS, Route 130, Delran NJ. Pat Murphy, (609) 428-8759
Philadelphia Area Computer Society: 3rd Sat., 9 am Main Meeting, groups follow. Drexel U., Philadelphia. Pat Murphy, (609) 428-8759	Central Jersey Computer Club: 8 pm, 4th Friday, Rm 74, Armstrong Hall, Trenton St. College. Rich Williams, (609) 466-0909.	NJ PC Users Group: Bergen County Community College, Paramus NJ. Maureen Shannon, (201) 853-7432
Morris Micro Computer Club: Bill Traywick, (973) 635-5393.	Fairlawn Computer Club: Last Monday, Fairlawn Senior Citizen Center. Joe Mathias (fair.lawn.computer.club@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.

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

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

Free Help Line

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

KGP Computer Shows

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

Feb. 12-13: South Jersey Expo Center, Pennsauken

Feb. 19-20-21: NJ Convention Center, Raritan Center, Edison

ACGNJ Hotline

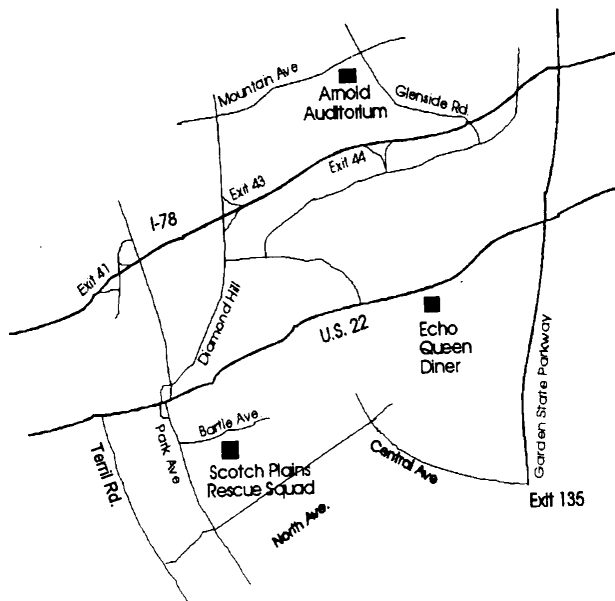
(908) 322-4654

ACGNJ Bulletin Boards

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

(732) 739-3693 Dave Wrobel

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



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

From New York City or Northern New Jersey

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

From Southern New Jersey

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

From I-78 (either direction)

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

From US 22 Westbound

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

From Western New Jersey

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

ACGNJ NEWS

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

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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>)

Tuesday, February 1, 2000

8 P.M. - ACGNJ Board Meeting.

Wednesday, February 2

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

Thursday, February 3

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

Friday, February 4

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

Monday, February 7

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

Wednesday, February 9

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

Thursday, February 10

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

Friday, February 11

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

Monday, February 14

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

Tuesday, February 15

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

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

Wednesday, February 16

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

Friday, February 18

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

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

Thursday, February 24

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

Friday, January 28

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

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

Monday, February 28

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

Tuesday, February 29

8 P.M. - ACGNJ Board Meeting.

Wednesday, March 1

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

Thursday, March 2

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

Friday, March 3

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

Monday, March 6

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

Wednesday, March 8

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

Thursday, March 9

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

**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.**