

# Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

Volume 25, Number 3

March 2000



*Your old hardware can help a child learn his/her way into the information age.*

## We Need Your Old Hardware

*by Alex Goldfinger*


Do you have outmoded computer hardware you'd like to get rid of? The ACGNJ has a new project that can use that old hardware. We are starting a project called R.O.C.K. — that stands for Recycling Old Computers for Kids. We have already collected 14 machines. These will be checked out, have software installed and be delivered to local students who cannot otherwise afford computers.

The local Board of Education has already contacted school principals, who will choose the deserving students. However, none of the machines we now have is complete. Although all have keyboards and monitors, none have mice, printers CD-ROM drives, or modems. If you have upgraded in the past and have any items in the list below, we sure can use them.

Computers	486 and up
Monitors	VGA and up
Printers	dot matrix and up
Modems	2400 and up, especially externals
CD-ROM drives	any

Except for the computer system boxes, all items should be in working order. We'll rehabilitate the computers or use them for spare parts.

If you have other peripherals or parts you think may be useful, let the author know. To donate your items, please send e-mail to [alexgoldfinger@email.com](mailto:alexgoldfinger@email.com) or call (908) 889-8481. All donations will be acknowledged in writing by the club for your tax preparer.

To see more about the origins of the R.O.C.K. program, go to: [bloomfieldfire.org/community.htm](http://bloomfieldfire.org/community.htm) and follow the link on the lower half of the page. 

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

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# The Internet Corner

by Martin Rosenblum

## Web News

*Item:* Star-Ledger Business/edge, January 3: "Sites follow the money trail of Internet start-ups." An interesting view of a part of the world that may have escaped your attention. The piece deals with venture capital firms and sites that carry news about their activities. You can find a list of venture capital firms at [www.vfinance.com/venca.asp](http://www.vfinance.com/venca.asp). If you want to check out one of the actual firms, check out @Ventures at [www.ventures.com](http://www.ventures.com).

*Item:* New York Times, Cybertimes, February 19: "Portrait of a Newer, Lonelier Crowd Is Captured in an Internet Survey." The surveyer, a researcher from Stanford, was interviewed on PBS. It didn't come off very convincingly. Listening to roundtables on the subject on ZDTV's Silicon Spin and on WNYC, all the commentators thought the study was flawed.

*Item:* CNET News.com, February 16: "FTC investigates DoubleClick's data-collection practices." DoubleClick, one of the principal banner ad companies, has been sued by individuals for collecting data on their clicking habits and selling it to third-party advertisers.

*Item:* Yahoo! News (Reuters) February 17: "State Dept. Withdraws Software With Moscow Links." This belongs in the paranoia department, though some would put it in the "better be safe..." department. It turns out that the State Department has been using a Russian-written accounting program, first in its Moscow office and gradually around the world. Fearing it may have a Trojan horse buried in it that's shipping state secrets back to Moscow, they are removing it from all their office PCs. What's this got to do with the Net? The last sentence in the piece mentions the atmosphere of heightened security brought on by the Denial of Service attacks on prominent Web sites last week.

*Item:* The New York Times, Cybertimes, February 19: "Faster Web Connections Prompt More Surfing at Work." Well, what did they expect?

*Item:* The New York Times, Cybertimes, February 20: "Net's Rise Keeps a Lid on Prices, for Now." Some experts in the dismal science believe that one of the reasons for low inflation is the fear by traditional retailers of online competition, keeping them from raising prices.

## Miscellany

At our last meeting I mentioned that the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) has started a three-times-a-week news list and it's not just technical stuff. Here's the table of contents for the February 18 notice:

- Microsoft Denies Gates Offered to Open Window Code
- GAO Says EPA Web Site is Old Hacker Target
- Attacks to Benefit IT Consulting, Web-Hosting Companies
- Microsoft Set to Challenge Sun
- Virginia Legislature is 1st to Approve Model Net Law
- Data Shows Web Sites Swiftly Bounced Back From Hacker Attacks

- Toshiba Launches \$2.3B Internet Business Initiative
- Web's Next Big Thing Is Small
- MIT Spinoff Preps Brooch Net Communicator
- Hacking Marches in Step with E-Commerce
- Auction Sites Booming
- A Calculated Decision
- Trading Places
- Intel Redirected
- Open Minds
- Business Method Patents
- States Review Commerce Law
- IP Theft Becoming Criminal Matter

(The "IP" in that last is Intellectual Property, not Internet Protocol.) If you're a member of ACM, you get on the list. If you're not, you can still get all the stuff at their Web site, but they don't email you the TOC. See [www.acm.org/technews](http://www.acm.org/technews).

## Security

The big news this past month was the Denial of Service (DoS) attacks suffered by a number of prominent Web sites, Yahoo!, Amazon.com, eBay, Buy.com, CNN.com, Etrade, and ZDNet the best known. Yahoo! was the first to announce its problems which lasted over 2½ hours on February 7. The other sites were hit sporadically over the next few days.

The nature of the attacks was to send a request for transmission to the target site which resulted in data structures being set up in the target's server and held in reserve until the data packets start to arrive. The problem is that they never arrived, since the object is just to bombard the target with such requests and then disappear. The server is then busy to all comers until timeouts release the reserved resources.

There is one feature of these attacks that make a defense difficult. The requests carry an IP address of the sender, which is false and probably different on each of the thousands of requests. Also, the real immediate sender is not the originator of the barrage, but, most probably, a hacked computer network, each node of which carries a "time bomb," a program planted there by the villain and set to deliver the mini barrage of requests to the target with false IDs at a specific time and on a specific date, or by means of a signal. The fact that networks of computers are involved changes the name to Distributed Denial of Service.

The originator of this dastardly scheme is a German hacker called Mixter, who denies responsibility for this set of attacks. The method has been widely published. The principles have been known for a long time — Bill Cheswick presented them at a Lunics meeting at least three years ago.

As with many hacker disasters, the real fault lies with poorly protected nodes in the network. Computers which are well protected are more difficult to break into. Servers which are well protected will not allow spoofing of IP address to originate on their machines. If any legislative or regulatory steps are taken, they will have to be in the direction of requiring

*continued*

ISPs to maintain secure systems as the price of a connection to the backbone.

This was a particularly publicized series of attacks on a number of the largest commercial sites. Each victim produced a grossly inflated estimate of the costs of the outage. The whole affair hit all the news organizations and even brought forth responses from no less than the President, the Attorney General and the FBI. To date, in spite of legions of investigators poring over ISP log files, the villain has not been discovered.

### E-Commerce

In their February 18<sup>th</sup> list mail, Thomas Register announces that they are maintaining a list of e-commerce enabled companies at [www.thomasregister.com/orderonline](http://www.thomasregister.com/orderonline). With all the hype about B-to-B e-commerce, they actually list about 400,000 items available for "secure online purchasing." They also mention a January 26 prognostication of "B2B" growth to about four trillion dollars by 2004 by CyberAtlas, a principal E-commerce news site at [cyberatlas.internet.com](http://cyberatlas.internet.com). CyberAtlas is one of the services of internet.com, which is also home base for Internet World trade shows and has a home page, [www.internet.com](http://www.internet.com), which is chuck full of solid news on such topics as privacy, security, technology and e-commerce. The B2B news item originated with our old friends, the Gartner Group ([www.gartner.com](http://www.gartner.com)).

Staples, the office supply chain, has just filed with the SEC for authorization to raise \$250 million for its Web site by selling a "tracking" stock for that segment of their business.

### Science

Science Magazine's site now offers supplementary material to its printed articles. "Science's Enhanced Perspectives are concise overviews of exciting recent research, either published in Science or elsewhere. For selected commentaries on Science Online, we now offer additional features. Enhanced Perspectives include hypernotes — which link directly to web sites of other relevant information available online — beyond the standard bibliographic references." This all fits in with Vannevar Bush's vision for hypertext. If you can gain access, check out *Superclusters — the Largest Structures in the Universe?* by Michael Drinkwater from the Feb. 18 issue ([www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/287/5456/1217](http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/287/5456/1217)). It is sprinkled with and ends with an enormous collection of "Numbered Hypernotes."

From their *Netwatch* column, February 18, we have for astronomy buffs some gorgeous star photos by David Malin on the Anglo-Australian Observatory's site [www.aao.gov.au](http://www.aao.gov.au). Click on the *Images* button for a menu of visual delights. Don't miss Messier 104, the Trifid nebula, the Horsehead, and this month's feature, The Cone Nebula in Monoceros!

From the same column, lest we forget. A month or two ago there were some news items about supermodels selling their eggs, even some talk of doing it on Ebay. This reminds one of all sorts of foolish movements of the past from the restriction of U.S. immigration from southern Europe to the Holocaust, all in the name of *eugenics*. From the folks at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, hotbed of American genetics research, there's a new Eugenics Archive, with a collection of original

documents and images from the American eugenics movement of the early twentieth century. Visit [vector.cshl.org](http://vector.cshl.org) for this interesting collection as well as their more traditional efforts. (News item: "Fruit fly gene map complete" — this workhorse of genetics research has now been completely mapped, also on this site!)

The Yahoo! of biotechnology is what New Mexico State University at Las Cruces is trying to be. Their three-year-old site at [www.nbif.org](http://www.nbif.org) is now a storehouse of over 7,000 links to biotech resources. Browse to your heart's content.

### Interlude

A recent announcement that National Geographic has issued its latest world atlas included the information that it was produced from a 7-gigabyte database of map data now running at their offices. There were also comments that the digital nature of the source data in no way subtracted from the artistic excellence of the final product. Check out their site at [www.nationalgeographic.com/maps](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/maps).

One of the things you'll notice there is that the complete collection of fold-out maps from past issues of their magazine is now available on CD-ROM. Many of the maps from the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey are now available in that format as well, though their much greater detail implies less area on one CD and more CDs to cover a region, making the enterprise much more expensive than the Geographic's, which is quite reasonably priced.

My daughter made me a present recently of *Longitude, The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time*, the tale of John Harrison, who developed the first sea-going clocks capable of keeping time accurately enough to make navigation over large distances possible.

Our millennial speculations at our last meeting got me to thinking back on the world we grew up through. Looking at my 2-year-old grandson makes me wonder what he will live through. Two fundamental technologies, time-keeping and map-making, have been reduced in our lifetimes to trivial details, of interest only to historians of technology. Their relationship to each other is the subject of the book, more than the histories of the players involved. It can all be replaced by GPS devices and satellite photography.

There was a book published a year or so ago about the death of physics, for it seemed we were about to know everything. Of course some people felt the same about Newtonian mechanics. Having been educated as a mathematician I had often wondered about the disappearance of whole branches of mathematics, like projective geometry, which were still part of the curriculum when I was young, as being no longer of interest. Then, as I wandered through graduate school, I began to realize my finite capacities and that if I wanted to master something new, I would just have to ignore something old. There was, after all, just so much time!

Then comes the question, what have we lost? I remember going through building vacuum tube "flip-flops," binary registers and counters with vacuum tubes, then going through the same with transistors, then integrated circuits, and finally

*continued on page 11*

# Creating a Small LAN & Proxy Server

by Sol Libes

I am a retired Senior Citizen and a volunteer at a Senior Citizen Center where we teach a number of computer courses. We have two classrooms with eight computers in each room. We have two ISP accounts and two phone lines. When we teach the Internet course we would like to have a student at each computer accessing the Internet. We therefore decided to install a LAN (Local Area Network) and a Proxy Server program such that all eight students could use the Internet at the same time. This article relates our experience doing this.

## The Hardware & Software

For each room, we purchased two Linksys "EtherFast 10/100 Network in a Box" kits at \$100 each ([www.linksys.com](http://www.linksys.com)). Each kit included a Hub, two PCI NICs (Network Interface Cards), two 15-foot Cat-5 cables, NIC driver software, and instructions. Also, we purchased four more NICs (\$19 each) and five cables (\$50) since we wanted to have a total of eight computers on the LAN.

The Hub automatically switches between 10 and 100Mbps operation. We found that it always operated at 100Mbps. The Hub has five ports with one of the ports used to interconnect the Hubs to create an eight-port Hub system. This is called stacking. The LAN is called a Peer-to-Peer arrangement since any user can access files and printers on any other user's system (there is password protection and access lock-out ability).

The kit also included a CD with the "Internet LanBridge" software so that systems can share a single connection. We felt that for an eight-user LAN we needed a more powerful Proxy Client-Server program. We chose the "Midpoint Gateway" Proxy Server software ([www.midpoint.com](http://www.midpoint.com)) which works with up to 10 clients (\$250). The Midpoint software contained a cache to speed up multi-user performance, server management tools, and it works with many applications including different browsers, e-mail programs, FTP, and both standard ISP and AOL connections.

The total cost for the 8-user system came to \$572, or about \$72 per user. The organization of the LAN and server is shown in the figure below.

## Installing the LAN

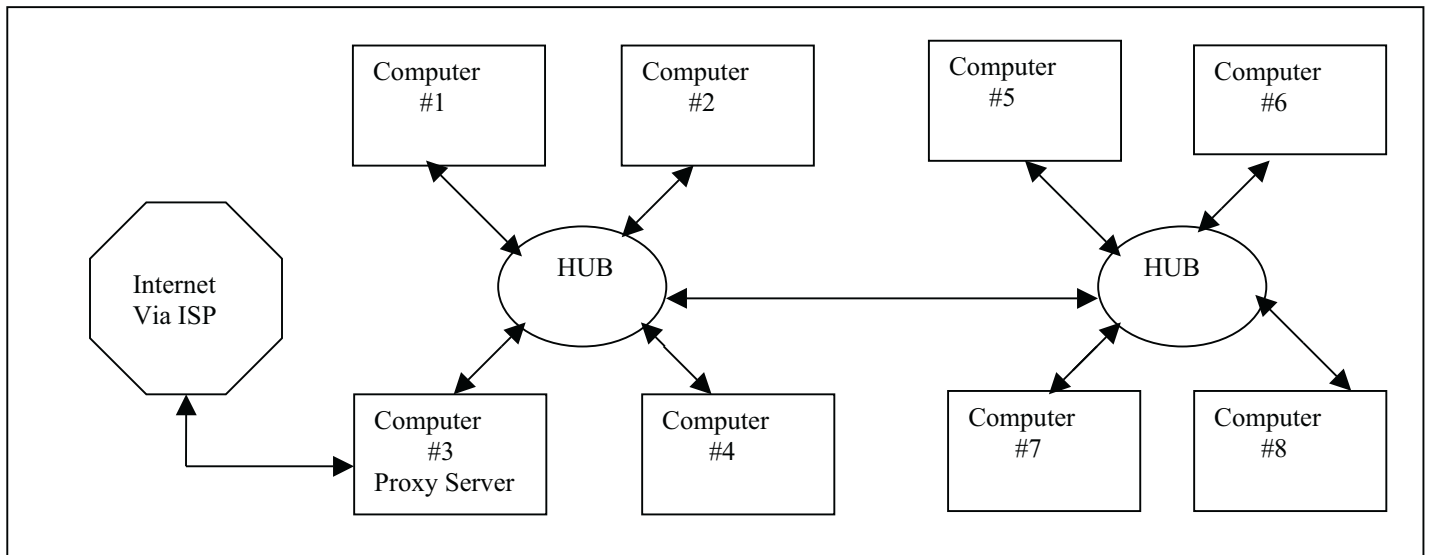
To install the hardware all we had to do was install the NICs in PCI slots in each computer, plug the Hubs into power and connect the NICs to the Hubs with Cat-5 Ethernet cables. A cable was also run between the Hubs as shown.

We then powered up the computers running Windows 98 Second Edition. The Windows Plug-And-Play function detected that new hardware had been installed and ran the "Add New Hardware Wizard" asking us to insert the manufacturer's floppy disk containing the NIC driver software to install the driver. It also created settings for the NIC in the Control Network window. We did have to do some of the settings ourselves (e.g. enable file and print sharing) and these were described in the NIC manual.

Everything went smoothly on six of the computers. When we clicked on the "Network Neighborhood" icon on the desktop the other computers were listed and clicking on the icon for each computer allowed us to access folders and files on the remote computer. We now had a working Peer-to-Peer LAN.

However, two of the computers (they were all supposedly identical machines) did not see the other systems on the LAN. We spent some time checking settings, cables, seeing that the NICs were installed correctly and did not find anything wrong. The manual said that as a last case resort we should delete the driver and the Network settings, turn off power and start over again. On one computer this worked. Apparently, the Windows Plug-and-play function did not work the first time. On the other computer, we had to go through the re-installation several times before the NIC driver would work. After about six hours of work we had an eight-user Peer-to-Peer LAN operational.

*continued*



## Installing the Proxy Server

Two of the computers contained 56K modem cards. We chose one to be the server and installed the Midpoint Gateway software on it. Midpoint will work with multiple modems and ISP connections for even faster performance. We elected to go with the single modem configuration for simplicity. Midpoint will also work with other servers (e.g. a printer server).

There was no printed manual. Rather the manual was an Acrobat file on the CD (102 pages) plus a FAQ file containing troubleshooting information (another 60 pages). We decided to proceed without printing the manuals. When we ran into difficulties we printed about 30 of the pages containing the most important information.

We went through the installation using the default settings suggested by the manufacturer. When we finished installing the Proxy Server software we found that the LAN no longer worked on the computer containing the Server but still worked on the other computers. We again deleted the NIC driver and NIC Network settings and reinstalled them. We checked the Proxy Server settings. We then started studying the manual printing out the more important pages. Nothing we did would get the LAN and the Proxy Server working on the machine.

Finally, out of desperation, we decided to remove the Proxy Server software from the system and reinstall the NIC driver. Now the LAN again worked on the computer. Rather than reinstall the Proxy Server on the system we decided to install it on the other computer containing a modem. This time there was no problem. Both the Proxy Server and LAN software functioned on the computer. We concluded that these systems were not identical after all and that the system that gave us all the trouble installing the NIC driver and then disabling it when we installed the Proxy Server must have some differences. I could have explored further (e.g. check the BIOS settings) to see if a hardware setting could be the problem. However, we still had more work to do on the Server so I did not bother.

The Midpoint software allowed us to create a client setup floppy disk. We ran this on each computer. This installed the static Server IP address on each client so that each computer could find the server. We chose the DHCP (Dynamic Host Control Protocol) option on the server so that it assigned IP addresses to the clients automatically). We configured the Proxy Server to automatically dial and connect to our ISP (Internet Service Provider) when any client runs software that wishes to access the Internet.

To test that the Proxy Server functioned we ran Internet Explorer and tried to access a web site. IE could not find a website. We decided to use the Ping program in Windows to see first if we could do a loopback ping to test the connection to the hub. There was no problem here. We then tried to ping the Proxy Server and found that this did not work. We tried to ping from the Proxy Server to each client and found that this worked. Obviously something was wrong on the clients. A check of IE's Internet settings showed that it had not been configured to use the Proxy Server for an Internet Connec-

tion. Entering the server's IP address fixed the problem and we were able, at last, to access pages on the World Wide Web.

## Printer Sharing

We set up two printers on the network. The printers were connected to two of the computers and settings in Windows allowed them to be shared. If one expects to do a lot of printing then it would be advisable to create a printer server on the LAN. We do not do that much printing so that we felt this was not necessary.

## Performance

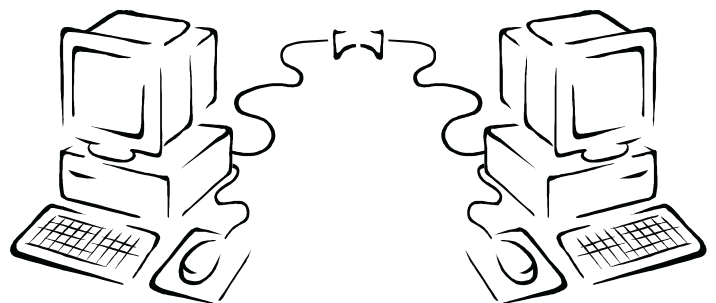
When a client runs a browser and makes a web page request, that request is sent to the Proxy Server, which has a cache. The Proxy Server's cache is independent of the Client browser cache. The Proxy Server checks its cache to see if the requested web page files are in its cache. If it is, then the web page files are sent to the Client via the LAN at 100Mbps (as opposed to the slow telephone modem operating at best 50Kbps). In this case the web page appears instantaneously. If the requested web page files are not in the Proxy Server's cache then the web page request is forwarded to the ISP.

The ISP services the request, getting and forwarding the web page files to the Proxy Server. The Proxy Server forwards the files to the requesting client and at the same time places a copy of the web page files in its cache so that other clients can access them.

Since this is a classroom and the students are accessing the same web pages most of the time, the students rarely have to wait for the pages to appear on their screens.

The Proxy Server also creates a firewall between the clients and the Internet such that we can have file sharing without worry of a hacker getting into the systems. The firewall is created because the IP addresses for the Clients are different from the Server's IP address and someone on the Internet cannot see a specific user's IP address.

The system containing the Proxy Server software can also be used as a client. If one brings up the Proxy Server window and s/he will see all the activity on the server in real time. There also are administration tools that allow one to delete files from the cache, adjust the size of the cache, run a performance enhancement utility, and do accounting. Despite the installation problems that ate up hours of our time, we were very delighted with how this project turned out. ☺



# Ken's Korner: I Want to Hurt My Computer

from Ken Fermoye

**Note:** The following was forwarded to me some weeks ago, and I just had to share it with you. It expresses frustrations we all share at times. I tried without success to backtrack and find the author, so I will just credit it to that famous writer, "Anon." If you are, or know of, the actual author, please write me at so I can give credit where credit is due!

I want to hurt my computer. I want to buy a software program that, when run, causes my computer to suffer grievously, though not permanently. When my screen freezes or turns blue, I want a special button I can push to make the CPU start squealing like a motherboard.

I want a device that stores an electrical charge in my telephone. For every minute I spend on hold waiting for technical support to answer, the charge would increase in intensity. When the guy from tech support finally answers, the electrical bolt of energy would be discharged into him. This should not affect my ability to hear what's going on at the other end of the line, of course. And a special function would allow the volts to double every time a tape-recorded message urges me to continue holding. "Your call is important to us," the featureless voice always claims.

I want my phone to be outfitted with a translation program which will reconstitute this irritating reminder into the truth: "Actually, we already have your money, so we couldn't care less about you. Our technical support department consists of two college kids, both of whom are busy playing Doom. Eventually, one of them will come on the line, but it will be the one who doesn't speak English."

I want my modem to sense when my PC has committed an "illegal function" and issue a warrant to arrest Bill Gates. When my system crashes and I lose a file that has taken me more than an hour to create, I want someone from the computer company to come out and retype it for me.

I don't understand why new, "upgraded" software creates files that cannot be read by old, reliable software with the same name. Is there no one in the computer industry who has noticed that word processor files all look alike once they are open? Why can't 6.0 recognize a 7.0 file? It's all just words, isn't it? There should be a rule that when software engineers buy a new car, their old cars should cease to function. If they don't understand why this is happening, they should call me and I will explain it to them.



How come when my computer catches a virus, I'm the one who misses work? I want to know why my printer always jams on the last piece of paper or the last sheet of checks. When this happens, it makes me want to put sandpaper into the manual feed and print the Emancipation Proclamation.

I am really tired of hearing about all the horrible things that will happen with the Y2K problem: sewers will regurgitate, all of my fillings will return to the dentist, my high school reunion will be held in Spanish, etc. Why doesn't anybody ever ask these computer programmers how in the world they didn't know the year 2000 would follow the year 1999? Software engineers are supposed to be pretty bright people — what did they need, a memo or something?

I recently bought a program that is supposed to tell me if my computer files are Y2K-compliant. The program won't work because — get this — my CD-ROM player is too old (I bought it 34 months ago). The manufacturer doesn't sell an "updated driver." Thus, to find out if my computer is Y2K-compliant, I need to buy another computer.

I want to know what good is a Web search engine that returns 324,909,188 "matches" to my keyword. That's like saying, "Good news, we've located the product you're looking for. It's on Earth."

I want to know why, when I had a tiny hard drive, my operating system was virtually crash-proof and took up so little space. My new operating system is five times the size of my original hard drive. With every "upgrade," it seems to grow 75 percent. That's as if every time your mother-in-law came to visit she weighed another 500 pounds. Now I've found out that my PC no longer "recognizes" my floppy drive. How could they not recognize each other? They live together!

Please understand: I don't hate my computer. I just want to hurt it every once in a while.

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## 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

# From the Dealsguy

by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer User Group ([dealsguy@mindspring.com](mailto:dealsguy@mindspring.com))

If you're thinking about a motherboard upgrade only, consider this: many of the new motherboards now offer only PCI slots. That might mean that if your old motherboard has any ISA boards in it, they would be unusable in the new motherboard unless it has ISA slots as well as PCI. What a great excuse for upgrading other peripherals. I always say do your homework. Wish I always took my own advice.

How about this for a vicious circle: I bought a Matsonic motherboard for a good price at Comdex a couple years ago that gave me problems and eventually died. Since it was guaranteed for two years, I sent it back to the company via US Postal Service insured. After no response from Matsonic, I inquired at the post office. I was told to obtain a letter from the company saying they never received the package. Then I could apply for the insurance.

I called the company, and after persisting, I was asked who signed for it, but was told, point blank, that without a return authorization, I was probably out of luck. Since I hadn't asked for a return receipt, I didn't know who had signed and received no cooperation.

Back at the Post Office, I was told that an insured package had to have been signed for. To find out who it was, I must apply for that information at a cost of \$7.00 to research it. All that runaround because I didn't spend the extra money for a return receipt. I seem to learn everything the hard way. No doubt it was signed for so, forget the insurance. I think I can forget any action from Matsonic as well. I won't forget that name very soon.

Perhaps next month I'll talk about Best Buy, with whom I am in a dispute right now, and it looks like I may take them to court over the warranty on my laptop. Now, let's get on with the column.

## **Assistance For Web Surfers**

"SurfSaver 2.0" from "askSam" simplifies gathering information from the Web and turning it into a searchable database on your PC. New feature lets you save selected links (or an entire page), and all linked pages, easily turning any list of hypertext links on the Web into a searchable database on your computer.

SurfSaver 2.0 includes several powerful new features for organizing Web pages. In addition, the new version is available as a free download at <http://www.surfsaver.com> thanks to advertising included in the software. Download multiple levels of a Web site and browse (or search) the site off-line. Organize information using a Filing Cabinet and Folder metaphor. Create your own filing cabinets, place folders in these cabinets, then search across multiple folders in multiple filing cabinets.

A professional version, SurfSaver Pro, adds the ability to share SurfSaver folders in a network. SurfSaver Pro does not contain advertising and costs \$29.95 per user. I'll check on the possibility of a special for the Pro version next month. Visit askSam at <http://www.askSam.com/> or call

1-800-800-1997 for more info. My thanks to Bea McKinney of askSam for notifying me of this.

## **Things You Didn't Want to Know When You Were a Kid, Besides Other Stuff**

Jay Hogan sent me this one and I don't know his user group. Go to <http://www.learn2.com> to find out all the things your parents didn't remember to teach you. In fact, send your kids there because one of the courses teaches you how to brush your teeth. I didn't have time to dig down, but Jay said they offer user group discounts. Thanks Jay!

## **Help For Photoshop Users**

O'Reilly & Associates have announced the release of a new edition of the book "Photoshop for the Web." In this new edition, author Mikkell Aaland includes important new techniques and workarounds for the latest release of Photoshop version 5.5. You can check their Web site to find out more: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/photoweb2/> Remember that O'Reilly Publishing always offers user group discounts. Free GIFs are available at

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/photoweb2/chapter/ch03.html>

Call O'Reilly & Associates at 1-800-998-9938 and mention your user group, or e-mail them at [order@oreilly.com](mailto:order@oreilly.com)

## **More on Free ISPs**

\*NetGenie: This service hopes to have a new promotion started by February, so check <http://www.netgenie.com/> which will be about when you read this. I was unable to get any more information from their site.

\*Juno Has Joined The Crowd: Yes, the venerable Juno is now offering free access to the Internet. A person I talked to says it has its quirks but it works. You have to develop a technique for using your browsers or it cuts you off. That was from just one person I knew using the free version. I didn't check their access numbers but I think Juno will do okay in that regard because it has been around. I assume there is a better selection of access numbers for the Premium version.

The regular service is free and offers free "online" tech support plus 12 MB (more than my Mindspring) for your Web site. The Premium version costs \$9.95 per month and offers free phone tech support. Both offer file attachments and fax and voicemail capability in the mailbox. Look for it at <http://www.juno.com>. Current subscribers need not fill out any forms.

\*How About a Blue-Light Special!: You guessed it, Kmart has enlisted the help of Yahoo for its new free Internet service. While it is certainly meant for your shopping, it actually looked pretty good. I felt it had a fairly good selection of access numbers, especially for rural towns. Blue Light also offers e-mail accounts and space for your home page. They even offer tech support by e-mail or telephone.

There is not much information on the Web site but it costs nothing to try it out. You can even download it to floppies instead of your hard drive. With the help of Yahoo, you should find plenty of resources. You can download the software, or order it from Bluelight CD Request, P.O. Box 468, Lake

*continued*

# What is this MCP Thing?

by Scott Vincent

To a computer technician, certification is everything. See section on “certs” in the Techie section of Scottsville URL at end of article). Microsoft Certified Professional certifications, often referred to as MCPs, are a necessity if you want to be recognized by a potential employer or client as someone who is competent enough for them to trust with their MS NT based business systems. Microsoft Certified System Engineer is the long term goal of most technicians who are studying to pass MCPs.

The MCP Study Group at ACGNJ was started in September, 1998 to help me get my MCSE. On December 3, 1999, the group accomplished its first goal: I am now an MCSE, and I wish to thank each member of the group for his/her help throughout the fifteen month ordeal. The second goal is to help them and others to reach that level, or at least get a couple of MCPs under their belts.

The group has always been open to anyone with the stamina to see it through, and there are 6 or 8 students who have hung on and need just a little more review to build up their confidence before plopping down \$100 to try an exam. To thank them for helping me, I want to help them succeed.

Trust me when I tell you this is for very serious candidates. Understanding the depths of Microsoft NT requires a lot of reading and problem solving. This is not an introductory course. We do start at the beginning and present it at a layman's level — the material just doesn't stay at layman's level for long. A good understanding of how the PC works is expected before you start.

NT is primarily a business level operating system designed to be implemented on a network. Although NT can be used as a stand alone machine operating system, it is not usually used as a home computer operating system except by power users who can benefit from NT's environment and capabilities.

We used to require that you bring a network-ready NT system or laptop to class, but we are letting up a bit with that requirement. You can watch over someone's shoulder or follow what is going on up front on the screen, but it would be to your advantage to have such a machine if you really intend to learn NT. Only recently have we been using the screen instead of just NetMeeting over the network because the later sample exams are now interactive type exams. When we go over the answers, the newer exams have video/audio clips to explain the topic in the question by showing the actual steps taken on the various menu and parameter screens in NT.

Everyone is welcome to come and watch (and hopefully stay and learn). Windows 2000 will be out in February but NT version 4 is what Win 2K is based on — and it's never too late to learn.

We have been using the “Exam Cram” books for our reading. These are condensed considerably and generally are for review and a source of practice questions. In the past we really didn't spend a great deal of time with the books in class. They were for use as a standard reference that we all had access to. However, numerous other books popped up at student work areas as the classes progressed, and they provide a much more in-depth view of the material.

Having gone through the material once and understanding the “big picture”, so to speak, the veterans of the class should be able to present a pretty well rounded education in NT to others willing to stick it out to the end. It was a real challenge — and it was GREAT accomplishing the goal.

See more about it at <http://www.scottsville.net/mcp.htm> ☞

## DealsGuy, continued

Orion, MI 48361. Kmart is so well known that they wouldn't actually need much advertising. When you see the familiar red Kmart logo flash by, it is a sort of “subliminal” reminder. The same as when your car seems to pull it on its own when you pass your favorite store (or tavern).

\*Tritium Network: Tritium offers free access to the Internet through a nationwide network of local access numbers. You can find this one at <http://www.tritium.net>. I found access numbers only in the major cities. Only supports Windows presently. Offers limited tech support. Supports 56K/V90 modems. They plan to increase access number availability. E-mail accounts available.

\*Junp.to/FreeISP: This one may have been sent to other user group officers when it was sent to me recently. I thought it had an impressive Web site. See <http://jump.to/FreeISP>. This site is both comprehensive and up-to-date (their words) and there's also a good Web ring for Free Internet Access: <http://move.to/FreeISP>. This site is very interesting, so I suggest you visit it and draw your own conclusions. It actually lists dozens of free ISPs that you can check out, as well as many other free services. Some are just for a certain area. One service listing surprised me, but I guess it shouldn't have these days. You'll see it, I'm sure. There is plenty of information — too much to categorize here.

### Last Minute Special From JASC

Just in time for tax season, if you upgrade to JASC Paint Shop Pro 6 and buy the book “Creating Paint Shop Pro Web Graphics” for only \$79, you'll get TaxCut, the #1 Rated tax prep software from H&R Block FREE! This offer is a \$114 value - a savings of over 30% off the suggested price! To order, go to: <http://www.jasc.com/jascstore/22722>

### Next month

I'll continue with free ISPs and perhaps even talk about an upcoming FREE DSL service. My thanks to Central Florida Computer Society President “Bud” Stonaker for searching out a few of these and passing them on to me.

This column is written to make user group members aware of special pricing I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthusiastic I am. Bob Click. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com> for past columns. ☞

# A Free PC?

by Joe Barth, Alamo PC

## Part I

Most of my family and friends know I am not really a cheap-skate — I have frequently bought them a free drink of water at fountains and now and then offer to treat at a nice restaurant. (Too bad they have other things to do, but I tried, didn't I?).

In keeping with my desire to keep my money safe I seek out bargains as best I can and I try to make things last. There has been much amusement about my wonderful computer and its superb operating system among those that know me. I see nothing wrong about operating with Windows 3.1 and have seriously thought of upgrading to the more advanced 3.11 OS. In addition, I did upgrade from a 386-25 to a more powerful 5x86-133 that has done me just fine, thank you very much.

I noticed an article in one of the magazines I was reading (yeah, in the library, so what!) and I saw something about a Free PC. My years in law enforcement have convinced me that things that are free seldom are, so I sent my name in and filled out a questionnaire at [www.free-pc.com](http://www.free-pc.com) and thought nothing more of it since I suspected that my (almost) retired status and age (60+) would be outside the demographics that were desired. I applied in February or March.

In September I was notified I was selected to receive a free PC and it would be shipped in October. The specifications are great: Compaq Presario 5301 with AMD K62-380 processor, 64 MB of RAM, 4.3 Gigabyte hard drive, 32X CD drive, 56K modem, 15" monitor, speakers and free (no monthly, yearly or one-time-payment) Internet access with a local number.

The small print says I am obligated to use the machine 10 hours per month including one hour on the Internet. The screen will have a banner advertisement on the right side and across the bottom. I am not allowed to "tinker" with the advertising system but can add any devices I want.

What about money? I am obligated to return the machine if I won't use it, or pay \$600. I receive a credit of \$20 for every month I comply with the agreement and after 30 months I can do anything I want with the computer.

It comes with Windows 98 (whatever that is) plus some Microsoft small office programs so I can get started using some more modern programs which means, I guess, the end of WordPerfect 4.1 and dBASE III.

Is it a good deal? Well, with no money outlay from me, no Internet Service Provider that I must use at \$20 per month or so and with free delivery — sure looks like it to me. The system is due to be delivered either the 13th or 14th, so I'll keep you posted. Gotta admit, the price is right.

Free PC claims that they are shipping about 20,000 PCs or so every few months and they make the money on the ads. If you have ever used the free e-mail programs such as Juno I am sure you know how the ads work.

Interested? Go to the web site and look it over. Read the agreement and, if you are interested, fill out the application and wait and see what happens. The worst thing will be that they don't accept you and you spent a few minutes looking at a web site and reading some material. Otherwise, you'll receive about \$600 worth of computer free.

Note: you do have to provide them a credit card number in case you decide to not live up to the agreement and refuse to send the PC back. I think this is fair. They do not charge your card unless you fail to live up to the agreement.

So I guess I am moving into the advanced stages of computers. I am troubled though — seems to me someone said something about Windows 2000? Wonder what that is!

## Part II

Yes Virginia, there is such a thing as a free PC — no hidden charges — no surprises. It took me about 6 months to be selected and another month for delivery. The monitor has a built-in microphone for Internet telephony if you want to beat out the long distance carriers. Preloaded software is a miniature of Office, Outlook Express, MS Money, and Windows 98. It also has McAfee Virus software in place.

The "price" you pay is in the ads on the right side and bottom of the screen. My wife doesn't like the changing ad but it doesn't bother me. Some programs, PrintShop for instance, require that I use the "minimize" button to keep the entire project within the screen area but other programs work quite well. The small font size on the screen might bother some people so that should be a consideration.

Free Internet service is provided by the free-PC network. It uses a local dial-up number and I've never had a problem connecting on the first try. I get a 50.6 connection almost every time (a long way from 300 baud on my first modem). You can use an additional ISP if you want but you still have to use their service for one hour out of the ten per month you agree to when you accept the computer.

Technical Support is free but there is no toll-free number. There is a HELP section at their web site and you are supposed to get an answer within 72 hours. I tried it and asked about whether there was a built in timer to keep track of monthly usage that the customer could read. I received a case number and then I waited almost one week for the answer. The answer was no.

I have a continuing problem that has resisted their best efforts. I log onto the Internet and get a "Work Offline" box telling me I can't connect. However, I am connected and all I have to do is click "try again". I spent 28 minutes on hold to be told someone would call me back. They never did. I asked through the web site. I was promised an answer in 72 hours. No answer. I contacted the "media relations" address and mentioned I had a deadline to meet for this article and had three e-mails and two phone calls within 24 hours. Very nice, helpful people tried to resolve the problem and spent over one hour on the phone trying various solutions but to no avail. The problem still is there and we're working it.

Bottom line — free is good and the free PC is a good deal in my humble opinion. The next time you see the ad on TV asking if there is such a thing as a free PC, you can shout "YES" — that is, if you are the type of person that talks to inanimate objects!

Reprinted from *PCAlamode*, the newsletter of Alamo PC. ☐

large scale integration. Now, all the elegant technology that produced today's computers is reduced to history. One can find those wonderful old scientific instruments only in museums and on the Antiques Road Show. We can be thankful for such institutions as the Deutsches Museum in Munich which is dedicated to the history of technology. It has everything from mockups of mine shafts (about a dozen of them) to the latest devices. I recall being amazed at an enormous hall devoted entirely to displays of variable-speed drives. Visit them at [www.deutsches-museum.de](http://www.deutsches-museum.de). If your German is rusty, click on the British flag.

### End of Interlude

Now, what got me off on all this? Oh yes, the next item in *Netwatch* is the Okanagan University College at British Columbia with its great introduction to the fundamentals of physical geography at [www.geog.ouc.bc.ca/physgeog](http://www.geog.ouc.bc.ca/physgeog).

Another new book which I'm hoping to get from one of my daughters is *Galileo's Daughter* by Dava Sobel, author of *Longitude*. The next hot site from *Netwatch* is [es.rice.edu/ES/humsoc/Galileo](http://es.rice.edu/ES/humsoc/Galileo), at Rice University in Texas. Galileo Galilei's 436th birthday was this week, making it an apt time to visit "The Galileo Project", a monstrous stack of documents on early astronomers. You can pore over the first drawings of sunspots, bone up on the history of the telescope, or read letters from Galileo's daughter. A database offers biographies of over 600 16th and 17th century scientists. The history of the telescope! Now there's a technology which still has a way to go — I don't think the Hubble is the end of the road.

Are you looking for an educational institution? Try [www.braintrack.com](http://www.braintrack.com), which claims to have the world's most complete education index, over 5,300 links.

In February 11 *Netwatch*, another piece set me to reminiscing. When I was in junior high school, I became fascinated with mathematical curves with names like *the Witch of Agnesi*. Then in college and graduate school I had a Professor, Einar Hille, who spiced up his lectures with biographical vignettes of the mathematician of the day. We get both of these in today's site pick, [www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/history](http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/history), from the University of Saint Andrews, in Scotland.

One of the popular protagonists of evolutionary biology is Richard Dawkins. One of his fans set up a site devoted to the subject, discussing matters from artificial life to creationism in Kansas at [www.world-of-dawkins.com](http://www.world-of-dawkins.com).

Resources for the Future, a greenish Web site, has a section on nuclear cleanup at [www.rff.org/nuclearcleanup](http://www.rff.org/nuclearcleanup).

The NY Botanical Garden publishes the *Index Herbariorum*, with information on herbs, who's studying them, and where. It can now be found online at [www.nybg.org/bsci/ih](http://www.nybg.org/bsci/ih).

In January 28 *Netwatch*: Drexel University, not to be outdone by Rice's homage to Galileo, hosts a site on Archimedes: [www.mcs.drexel.edu/~crorres/Archimedes/contents.html](http://www.mcs.drexel.edu/~crorres/Archimedes/contents.html).

From the January 21 column, if you're into Buckyballs or just want to see one, there are some great graphics at Stony Brook's chemistry department's molecular structures page, [sbchem.sunysb.edu/msl/fullerene.html](http://sbchem.sunysb.edu/msl/fullerene.html).

One of the astronomical clocks discussed in *Longitude* was the motions of the moons of Jupiter, discovered, measured, and tabulated by Galileo. This brings us to the February issue of the Scientific American, which features an article, "The Galileo Mission to Jupiter and Its Moons." This amazing, hypertext-rich piece is definitely worth a visit at [www.sciam.com/2000/0200issue/0200johnson.html](http://www.sciam.com/2000/0200issue/0200johnson.html). There are some spectacular graphics!

The February 14 online Web Features star *Seeing Sea Winds*, about satellite work aiding wind and hurricane observation. One satellite, QuikSCAT orbits some 800 kilometers up in such a way that SeaWinds scans 90 percent of the earth's skin in a day. See [www.sciam.com/exhibit/2000/021400wind](http://www.sciam.com/exhibit/2000/021400wind).

Other Web specials are: "Happy Valentine's Day from Mars," "Genetic Footprinting," and "Tectonics."

The March issue features a series of articles by folks from Buzz Aldrin to Glen Zorpette on the exploration of Mars, all Web enhanced. If you want to dream of visiting Mars (you ain't gonna visit Jupiter), this article is for you. Drop by [www.sciam.com/currentissue.html](http://www.sciam.com/currentissue.html), while it's current.

From the British journal, *Nature*, there's good news and bad news. First the bad: they won't let us get into substantial parts of the magazine without a paid (expensive) subscription. But, the good is, though you have to register (free) to get article access, they have weekly and daily articles with this level of access at [www.nature.com](http://www.nature.com). Probably just current stories, though. This week's articles are: "Science with Supernovae," "Aging," "Palaeoclimate" and "Neural patterning." "Today's news" (actually tomorrow's, February 21): "Making Vinegar on the Early Earth," and "Flight of Time." The latter is about how birds solve the longitude problem in their navigations. (It all seems to connect, doesn't it!) And, for the daily stuff, they let you pull up a week's worth of copy.

### Finance

The gaff of the month happened at H&R Block's tax preparation site, [www.hrblock.com](http://www.hrblock.com), where they say: "It's secure, easy-to-use and only \$9.95." Some folks returning to the site the other day to work on their returns, got someone else's, including name, address, SS# and financial data.

ZDTV's Money Machine program has several links to sites where you can file your tax return for little or no money, in some cases. I'm not sure Block's \$9.95 is such a good deal.

On today's program, there was an interview with a representative of Charles Schwab. They reviewed many of Schwab's services, especially the tutorials on investing and financial planning. Look them over at [www.schwab.com](http://www.schwab.com). I'm sure Fidelity ([www.fidelity.com](http://www.fidelity.com)) has lots of good stuff, as well. Most of the information and opinions are available to all, so you might get your ideas with Fidelity, but do your trading with Brown & Co.

On February 9 Reuters announced a major new venture to redo their Web site, making it more freely available to the public. Their stock had been in the doldrums since they seemed to be losing their grip on their core financial information business, letting it move to Web upstarts. The investment community was so impressed with the plans that they bid the

# SIG News

## PC Users Group

Jo-Anne Head ([tinarock@aol.com](mailto:tinarock@aol.com))

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

**March 17:** Follow-up to Main Meeting topic, "Home Automation." Now that you've bought that X-10 switch and set it up at home and you've got questions, bring them to this meeting and we'll get you answers.

**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.

**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. ☞

## Random Access

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

## Main Meeting

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

**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 ☞

## MCP

(Preparing for Microsoft Certification Exams)

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

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

## C/C++ Users Group

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

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

This month's presentation will explore some of the language differences between C++ and Java by examining a small application that was written in both programming languages.

C++ and Java are similar in many ways. This is, of course, due to the fact that Java was modeled after C++. However, the designers of Java intentionally omitted C++ language features, such as pointers and overloaded operators, that were considered dangerous and complex.

Some of the language differences that will be highlighted with this application are:

Class mechanism syntax

Memory allocation/deallocation

Exception handling

Output to stdout

The application is a command-line program that calculates the wind chill factor based on ambient air temperature and wind speed using the formula used by the National Weather Service. Information regarding wind chill factor can be found at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>.

Code can be downloaded from the ACGNJ FTP site. Follow link from <http://www.blast.net/barnold/Csig9910.htm> ☞

## Internet

Martin Rosenblum ([m.rosenblum@ieee.org](mailto:m.rosenblum@ieee.org))

**January 6:** Being the first meeting of the year, we tried to hold reasonable nominations and elections for SIG leader, but lack of interested parties forced us to continue with the same slate as last year. Did the rounds on Web news, as usual, and then I turned the meeting over to Jim Wong. Jim, our new Webmaster, has already spruced up our Web site quite a bit and I think he deserves no small measure of thanks. He spoke about his aims—the important thing is that he's doing something about them—and his tools, MS Front Page, for which he gave us an interesting tutorial.

**February 3:** The main subject was "the Internet and the Millennium, Reflections and Speculations" by Alex, Marty and SIG members." We started off with Web news and a bit about some of the guests on Ziff-Davis' Big Thinkers program, who inspired the millennium subject. Alex had also prepared some remarks about the major social changes wrought by technological progress throughout the last two centuries.

**March 2:** For this meeting we will have our first outside speaker, Keith Sproul, head of the ACGNJ MAC Users Group. Keith will demonstrate Web cameras. This grows out of a talk he gave to the Princeton group, and he says: "I even have more 'toys' than before to show," so it should be even more interesting than we originally anticipated. Alex will chair what promises to be a very good meeting.

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:mwb@injersey.com))

<http://www.njlnug.org>

**March 16:** For our main topic we will have a representative from Team Studio here to present on their Notes development tools.

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@home.com](mailto:jraff@home.com))

**April 14:** National Instruments, Debra Varma will demo some application or product.

**March 10:** Cimmquest Corp. will demo their solid modeling software package for their machine tool software. This is the software machine shops use to manufacture parts from conception to final product.

Keep an eye on <http://www.acgnj.org/groups/symposiu.html> for updates. ☞

## VBA

Jim Ditaranto ([fyr92a@prodigy.com](mailto:fyr92a@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](mailto:sheldonk@intac.com))

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

February 10: We discussed William O'Neil's new book - 24 Essential Lessons for Investment Success. I stated whether you are new at investing, or have been around for a while, there is something here for you. I received the impression that every one agreed. During our discussions of the lessons in the book, we all shared our investing experiences. We covered several of the book's lessons in depth

Market direction and it's effects.

How to pick a strong stock by the use of sector analysis.

The use of a set of buying and selling rules rather than emotions. (Don't fall in love with a stock)

There continues to be high interest in the problem of the best way and time to sell a stock. We discussed this topic at great length. Over all, this was a good and well attended session. As usual, members contributed a number of good ideas. ☞

# Musings by an Accidental Revolutionary

Book review by Peter Fillingham

The title of the book is "The Cathedral & The Bazaar", subtitled "Musings on Linux and Open Source by an Accidental Revolutionary" by Eric S. Raymond, 1999, O'Reilly Sebastopol, CA, ISBN: 1-56592-724-9.

The book is actually a compilation of several books: "The Cathedral & the Bazaar", "Homesteading the Noosphere", "The Magic Cauldron" and "The Hacker's Revenge", with an introduction by Bob Young, Chairman & CEO of Red Hat Inc.

"The Cathedral & the Bazaar" refers to Raymond's description of how conventional programming differs from Linux programming. Conventional programming is that method of programming in which, usually in isolation, an author writes programs for hire. The latter being the method of programming introduced by Linus Torvalds, in which workable source code is offered to the world via the Internet, then is revised and/or expanded on by various authors/programmers. It is also known as "open source" programming.

Raymond lists the following as "Lessons":

- (1) Every good work of software starts by scratching a developer's personal itch.
- (2) Good programmers know what to write. Great ones know what to rewrite (and reuse).
- (3) Plan to throw away, you will anyhow.
- (4) If you have the right attitude, interesting problems will find you.

(5) When you lose interest in a program, your last duty is to hand it off to a competent successor.

(6) Treating your users as co-developers is your least-hassle route to rapid code improvement and effective debugging.

(7) Release early, release often, and listen to your customers.

(8) Given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow.

By the Noosphere, Raymond refers to "the sphere of human thought", and relates an "analysis of the hacker culture as a 'gift culture' in which participants compete for prestige by giving time, energy, and creativity away."

The "Magic Cauldron" refers to the Welsh goddess Ceriden, who had a great cauldron which would produce nourishing food, and compares this to "the successes of the open-source community [which] seem like an implausible form of magic".

In "Revenge of the Hackers", Raymond refers to "hackers" in the sense in which he popularized the term in his "A Brief History of Hackerdom" (1992) in which they are described as programmers who do good rather than today's sense of "someone who maliciously breaks into an area in which he/she has no business".

I highly recommended this book for anyone who wants to gain an understanding of the philosophy of the open source software movement. ☺

## ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

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

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Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## Other Local Computer Groups

<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, Mallory Hall, Montclair State University, Montclair NJ. (201) 893-5274 or (201) 659-1017.
<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

**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>)

**March 4-5:** NJ Convention Center, Raritan Center - Edison

**March 11-12:** NJ National Guard Armory, Morristown (Near I-287), Free admission!

**March 18-19:** South Jersey Expo Center, Pennsauken

### ACGNJ Hotline

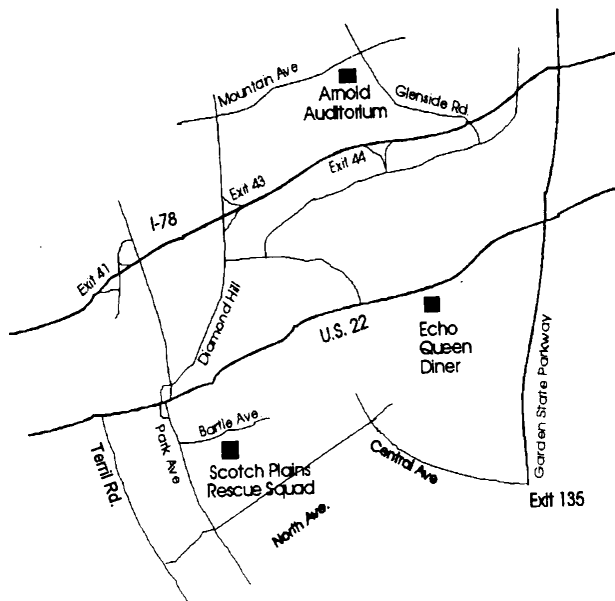
(908) 322-4654

### ACGNJ Bulletin Boards

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

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

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



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

### From New York City or Northern New Jersey

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

### From Southern New Jersey

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

### From I-78 (either direction)

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

### From US 22 Westbound

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

### From Western New Jersey

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

## ACGNJ NEWS

AMATEUR COMPUTER GROUP OF NEW JERSEY, INC.  
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# ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

### 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.

### Friday, March 10

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

### Monday, March 13

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

### Wednesday, March 15

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

### Friday, March 17

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

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

### Tuesday, March 21

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

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

### Thursday, March 23

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

### Friday, March 24

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, March 27

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

### Wednesday, March 29

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

### Monday, April 3

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

### Tuesday, April 4

8 P.M. - ACGNJ Board Meeting.

### Wednesday, April 5

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

### Thursday, April 6

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

### Friday, April 7

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

### Monday, April 10

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

### Wednesday, April 12

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

### Friday, April 14

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

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.