

Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

Volume 25, Number 7

September 2000

There's some thing new in the News. It does n't show on your hard copy, but those who hate typ ing in long URLs will be happy to know that start ing with this issue, the on line version of ACGNJ News will contain live links. Point, click, have fun!

Also in this is sue: the Main Meet ing topics schedule for 2000-2001 (page 18).

Remember to mark May 5 & 6 on your calendar for TCF 2001.



www.acgnj.org

Founded 1975

Milton T. Astroff

1925-2000

Mil ton T. Astroff, Pub lisher of ACGNJ News and mem ber of ACGNJ's Con cordia Group, died sud denly at his home in Monroe Town ship NJ, on Sat ur day, May 27 at the age of 75.

In ad di tion to his vol un teer ef ferts toward pub li ca tion of the ACGNJ News, Mr. Astroff held chief ex ec u tive and marketing positions in several prominent commu ni ca tions com pa nies, in clud ing Gellert Pub li ca tions, United Tech ni cal Pub li ca tions and Cap Cities/ABC, and was in vol ved with specialty trade newspaper publishing and mar ket ing con sult ing. He was the au thor, with Dr. James R. Ab bey of the Uni ver sity of Ne vada-Las Ve gas, of the text book en ti tled "Con ven tion Sales & Ser vices", now in its fifth edi tion.

Mr. Astroff was known through out the hos pi tal ity in dus try as the founder and first pub lisher of such pub li ca tions as Meet ings & Con ven tions, Travel Master, Training, among oth ers. He spoke at sem i nars and con ven tions for the hos pi tal ity in dus try, man age ment de vel op ment, sales train ing and meet ing plan ning.

He at tended Brook lyn Col lege, CCNY and John Hopkins Uni ver sity and served in the Sig nal Corps in the Pa cif ic dur ing World War II.

He is sur vived by his wife of 55 years, Mil licent, chil dren Ju dith of New York City, Roberta of State Col lege PA., and Mat thew of Bryn Mawr PA, daugh ter-in-law Su san, grand son Jeffrey and brother George of Oldbridge NJ.

Back is sues of ACGNJ News are avail able in PDF for mat at <http://lightning.prohosting.com/~acgnj/nl.htm>

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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. **All ways on firm 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 Charlie Huffsmith (chaz026@aol.com) and/or to his attention at the ACGNJ address above.

Membership, including subscription: 1 year \$25, 2 years \$40, 3 years \$55. Student or Senior Citizen (over 65): 1 year \$20, 3 years \$45. Family of member, without subscription, \$10 per year. Send name, address and payment to ACGNJ, PO Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076.

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The Internet Corner

Martin Rosenblum

Web News

Item: Assoc. of Yale Alumni, June 1: The old alma mater offers an upgraded “eProNet,” a confidential career service available on the Net at various universities to give grads an extra edge in their search for professional advancement.

Item: The Star-Ledger, June 10, “Congress to act soon on Internet Signature bill.”

Item: The Star-Ledger, June 16, Business: “Verizon deal propels Lucent.” “BusinessWeek’s online edition...” Here we have a print daily quoting from the online edition of a slick weekly to give us the latest news about a company that used to be called Bell Atlantic. Or was it NJ Bell? AT&T?

Item: The Star-Ledger, June 16, New Jersey: “Assembly clears plan to put sex offenders on Net.”

Item: The New York Times, Sunday, June 18 Front page: “Long F.A.A. delay before a warning about jet cables.” In this piece about whistle blowing: “On May 18, a day after a New York Times reporter called.....the FAA posted a notice about Strandflex on its Internet site.” (See www.faa.gov.)

Item: Reuters, June 30: “Clinton signs digital signature bill” “Philadelphia—President Clinton on Friday signed into law a bill that makes electronic signatures as valid as their ink counterparts. On the grounds where the Declaration of Independence was signed with a quill pen, Clinton used a more modern way of signing the ‘Digital Signature’ bill—a smart card encoded with numbers.

“The bill, officially known as the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act, gives electronic signatures and documents the same force in law as those done with ink on paper. The act eliminates legal barriers to using electronic technology to form and sign contracts, collect and store documents and send and receive notices and disclosures.

“‘Under this landmark legislation on-line contracts will now have the same legal force as equivalent paper contracts,’ Clinton said. In an effort to boost and broaden e-commerce, the law will allow consumers and businesses to sign checks, complete applications for loans or services without need for a paper signature.” Now the question is how much fraud will be introduced into commerce by the new technology.

Miscellany

Back in July, Maria and I went to the city to see an exhibit at the Morgan Library. First we had a bit of a snack in the garden and then went to see the exhibit: “Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur.” (On the way I noticed a row of work stations for students.) Ur was the birth place of Abraham, the progenitor of the Jews and Muslims, and lies in southern Iraq. See a bit at www.morganlibrary.org/exhibitions/current/html. They show just a half dozen of the artifacts on the Web site, a small tease for the main show which is stunning.

After we exhausted ourselves in the third millennium B.C., we strolled over to the main library and were delighted to discover an exhibit of the original manuscript and drawings

from “The Little Prince” in the corridor leading to the library. There is a gallery off the corridor where we found an amazing exhibit of twelfth century illuminated Choir Books. These sacred books were enormous, since they had to be seen and read by the whole choir at the same time, and the illumination was brilliant, elegant, and in pristine condition after 900 years. Samples of both these exhibits can be found on the Web site.

We then ambled slowly south on Madison Ave. What should pop up at number 95, but Ziff-Davis, itself. Further south, a more interesting building at number 51, the third home of New York Life Insurance Company, since 1928 (see www.newyorklife.com.) Before they built, the site first housed the New York, New Haven and Hartford depot, which later moved uptown to become Grand Central Station (see www.grandcentralterminal.com.) then P. T. Barnum’s hippodrome, then from 1890 to 1925, it was the original Madison Square Garden, (see www.madisonsquaregarden.com) designed by the noted architect, Sanford White. I’m writing this on my palm, sitting on a bench in Madison Sq. Park, looking southeast at the corner of 25th Street, where there are two beautiful buildings, the old surrogate court house and the Credit Suisse, First Boston, (see www.csfb.com.) originally one of two Met Life (see <http://metlife.com>) buildings facing each other across 24th St.

You may recall that I once worked at Brookhaven National Labs (www.bnl.gov.) So, it’s no surprise that we were interested in the Michael Frayn play, “Copenhagen,” a speculative piece about a strange meeting between Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg in Copenhagen early in WWII. The Nazis were occupying Denmark and Bohr had been Heisenberg’s teacher and then colleague. Bohr was part Jewish and Heisenberg was a high mucky-muck in the German scientific war effort. The uncertainty principle plays a symbolic role in the play and the writing and performances were brilliant and kept us glued to our seats. See the play’s Web site: www.copenhagenbroadway.com. You can read a blurb at www.theatermania.com/NY/shows/copenh and there’s a link to the reviews. In my rash youth I attended an international congress of mathematicians at Harvard around 1950. I was invited by a friend to bring along my tape recorder (they were still novelties then) and help to record the proceedings. One of the speakers I recorded was Werner Heisenberg!

We spent a good part of August at the Mostly Mozart festival www.lincolncenter.org/mostlymozart. One day, we got in early and checked out the Walter Reade cinema program. They were having a Philippine film festival, and one of our best friends is from the Philippines, so, of course, we had to take in at least one film. It was Sanda Wong, a Chinese cowboy epic with a distinct oriental flavor, but the actors were mostly Philippine. Great fun. Keep an eye on www.filmlinc.com. They have lots of interesting film festivals.

(A month later) Maria and I went to the city the other day for a treat. We had seen a group on PBS who seemed to really have a fun show. It’s made up of all male ballet dancers who each have two funny pseudonyms, one male and one female, and

continued

they dance all the roles, as the program demands. There is a small bit of horseplay in their performances, and it's all tongue in cheek, but the dancing is professional and something to be held. They call themselves *Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo* and you can get a sample of their madness at www.trockadero.org.

Survival

My notes on this subject didn't draw any e-mail, so I don't know how it grabbed you. The symposium has been completed and I have viewed the whole thing from Dr. Dobbs web site at www.technetcast.com, just click on the "Spiritual Robots" link under "special series." You can read or listen to or view the whole event.

The lecture by Bill Joy was scary, indeed. Hofstadter and Kurzweil's pieces were worth hearing, but Hans Moravec was a bit disappointing. Kurzweil wrote "The Age of Spiritual Machines" in 1998 and Moravec wrote "Robot: Mere Machine to Transcendent Mind" in 1998. Both are available in paperback, today. Their thesis is that computers are getting faster and cheaper and software isn't standing still. That all this happening at an accelerating rate and could get out of control. Kurzweil dictated his copy to his word processor, which a few years ago would not have produced recognizable copy. OCR software does a remarkable job with scanner output, including the separation of graphics and text. Classical AI may have been in a cul-de-sac, but genetic algorithms and neural net applications have been having very interesting results. They say we should simply be focusing on where we go from here and take the threat of mischiefs seriously.

Security

From ADH(?), August 14, by e-mail: "Quit bashing MSIE or equally bash.." followed by a quote of an article in Computerworld, August 9, concerning a newly discovered security problem in Netscape Navigator. "The problem results when a certain function of Sun Microsystems Inc.'s Java core is combined with a vulnerability in Netscape's implementation of Java that allows applets to access local files, said David Endler, an analyst at iDefense Intelligence Services, an Internet security services firm in Fairfax, VA." Apparently, Netscape violated one of Java's "sandbox" rules. Shame!

I'm sorry if I seem to be MS bashing from time to time, but they really have shown a blatant disregard for the perils introduced by their efforts to make all kinds of things work automatically and between applications. Email, for example, was originally designed to create, transmit, receive and read/print text files. Should be harmless. The original Internet Worm of Morris was caused by a feature of the mail program which allowed it to run other programs on the target machine. This feature was included for debugging and network maintenance purposes, and was never intended to be included in the client application, but it slipped through. There are many modern programmers who believe that simple text is too boring for words and that even your email should do some thing. The same holds for browsers like IE and NS. Open-ended glitz may sell a few more items, and

even give additional, useful activities, but can be very dangerous. In the same way, groupware may open holes as well as create useful sharing possibilities.

Hackers aren't just naughty kids. They perform the function of reminding programmers with big egos that their ideas can be turned against them and their clients. Without hackers, we would have only clandestine activities by professional spies, crooks and terrorists, and discover problems too late.

The New York Times, Sunday, June 18, Pg 22: "Hackers Break Into Some Accounts, AOL Reports." A couple hundred AOL user accounts were visited. The hackers sent AOL customer service reps e-mails with a trojan horse attachment that when opened, "created a connection to the sender's computer and allowed access to some AOL accounts."

From our friend J. D. Abolins, August 24: "Adobe Acrobat PDF vulnerability." Along the same lines as the above, "Panda Software reported last week that Adobe has issued a patch for its Acrobat software that is used to read PDF document files. Used to transmit high-quality reproductions of documents across the Internet, the format was thought to be secure. But with all things Internet, there must be a hole. It turns out code can be embedded in a PDF file, which could be used to deliver a virus, Trojan or other nasty tidbit. Adobe recommends users install the following patch for protection [ftp://ftp.adobe.com/pub/adobe/acrobat/win/4.x/ac405up2.exe](http://ftp.adobe.com/pub/adobe/acrobat/win/4.x/ac405up2.exe)."

From ZDNN, August 28: "A Trojan Horse — a program that poses as a beneficial application, yet does something completely different — is making its way through the underground circles of Palm users. The program, which poses as a 'crack' for the Game Boy emulator Liberty 1.1, is in reality a testing utility created by Swedish Palm developer and University of Gävle lecturer Aaron Ardori, but renamed to 'Crack 1.1'. The program deletes all programs from any Palm device on which it is installed. While an 'infected' Palm can be reset and the programs and data resynched from a PC, some data could be lost." And it's not even Windows!

MP3, eBooks & Copyrights

Not only do we have Napster and MP3.com to contend with, but the trickier artifacts like Gnutella are harder to deal with. ZDTV has been offering a free MP3 download (I'm sure it's legal!) every day, but now they have added a new half-hour segment called Audiofile at www.zdtv.com/zdtv/audiofile. (Also note that the "zdnet" in the URL has changed to "zdtv." I believe Ziff-Davis has sold off ZDTV and this is the first step in the name change to TechTV.) In their first program they announced the appearance of a new multimedia peer-to-peer file sharing product called Scour at www.scour.com, which purports to be respectful of copyright laws, will store no files or databases, but seems to be a Gnutella-like client program which will handle audio, graphic, and video file exchange. I have a cousin who was in the music CD business in California. He agrees with most pundits that the traditional record companies may be in for a rough ride. In the meantime, the bean counters report that (in spite of the mad rush by the kids to get their free music before the courts turned it off) sales of CDs are up!

continued on page 18

Ken's Korner: Adobe Acrobat Is It Changing Publishing as We Know It?

Ken Fermoye

Adobe Acrobat is more than just another software program. It didn't arrive with the instant impact of its ancestor, Adobe's PostScript, but it bids fair to make equally important changes in publishing as we know it. For user groups and other non-profit educational organizations, Adobe Acrobat(tm) is a tool that has special implications, not to mention benefits.

How can I claim that Acrobat may be more important than PostScript? Didn't PostScript help create a revolution in publishing back in the mid-1980s? Certainly! PostScript, combined with PageMaker from Aldus and the Apple LaserWriter printer created what John Warner of Aldus named "desktop publishing." Then Ventura Publisher came along and extended the new technology to PCs.

We're in a new era, however, with the Internet and World Wide Web, plus hardware and software more capable than anything we dreamed of 15 years ago. Adobe Acrobat, especially the current 4.0x versions, fits right into this new era. It's a unique publishing tool, more versatile than anything we've known in the past. Consider these points.

1. You can use Acrobat to publish a document from virtually any application in a Portable Document Format (PDF) file.
2. Acrobat is a true cross-platform application. Its PDF files can be created and read on both PC and Mac computers.
3. PDF files preserve the fonts, formatting, colors and graphics of the original source document, regardless of the application and platform used to create it.
4. Conversion of document files to PDF can be a simple drag-and-drop operation, but there are several other ways Acrobat can create PDF files, especially from within Windows Office applications such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint. The default installation in Windows includes macros that allow quick, easy creation of PDF files.
5. You don't have to be a publishing genius or understand how the program works to use it effectively for such chores as converting a PageMaker newsletter or Word document to PDF for distribution via e-mail. You do have to spend more time to learn the more sophisticated features of Acrobat.
6. Acrobat captures Web pages or entire sites and converts them to PDF files for offline viewing and printing.

That's just for starters. For more detailed information than I could possibly include here, including FAQs, User Forums and tutorials, go to

www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/main.html.

What I'd like to stress here is the important role Adobe Acrobat can play in the distribution of information by user groups and other educational or not-for-profit organizations that publish newsletters and journals.

For at least four years I've been arguing that distributing hardcopy newsletters via the U.S. Postal Service may not be the best choice for user groups. It's expensive, vying with meeting place rental as the major item in most groups' budgets. It's slow, especially if newsletters go out as third class mail. It also places major restrictions on editors.

I know, I know! Members resist receiving their newsletters via e-mail. "I want to get the news printed on paper so I can sit and enjoy it with a cup of coffee. I don't want to read it on a computer monitor!" Those are the comments I hear all too frequently.

But think about it for a minute. The newsletter you get via snail mail is printed in plain black and white, right? And it usually contains eight or 12 pages; more must be added in multiples of at least two pages, usually four.

Downloading a typical PDF newsletter takes only a few minutes, printing it just a few minutes more. And how many user group members don't have a color printer these days? Not many, so editors can add color to their pages, something too expensive even to consider for printed newsletters.

Acrobat eliminates page constraints, too. Editors don't have to worry about filling an extra page when they have only seven pages of material, or to trim a page when they can easily fill nine pages. There is no need to do the laborious task of collating, folding and/or stapling and sticking on stamps.

Deadlines become more elastic and more up-to-date news included. Once the newsletter has been thoroughly proofread, corrected and converted to a PDF file, it's ready to go out via e-mail without delay.

Many groups, recognizing the economic and other benefits of PDF, now use Acrobat to publish at least a portion of their newsletters each month. When I first started the Ken's Korner column three years ago, receiving a PDF newsletter was a rarity. Now I get two or three dozen each month.

What I recommend in my Media Workshops is that groups start by using Acrobat to create PDF newsletters for a portion of their subscription list (e.g. vendors, advertisers, exchange copies for other groups and members who volunteer to forego printed copies) as a pilot program. The list can be expanded as more people, particularly new members, agree to receive their newsletters in electronic form.

I realize this isn't your typical software application review—and it is n't meant to be! It's meant to be a thought-starter for groups (and individuals) who are willing to consider a new, effective and efficient means of publishing documents in the new millennium.

At \$249 for the full version of 4.0 (\$99 for update version), Adobe Acrobat may be pricey for the casual, occasional user but it makes sense for anyone who produces a lot of documents and needs to distribute them widely via e-mail or on CD. It makes a great dollars and cents value for any group.

I welcome comments about their experiences from groups and individuals that use Acrobat—and from those who find fault with my reasoning and suggestions. If response warrants, I will print replies in a future column.

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CoPilot 2000 GPS Navigation System

Arnold Milstein

As the name says CoPilot 2000 is a GPS navigation system, but what is a GPS navigation system? GPS is an aerospace technology that uses 24 satellites and ground equipment to determine position anywhere on Earth.

To determine your position the GPS receiver compares the time a signal was sent by a satellite and the time it was received by the GPS receiver. The time difference tells the GPS receiver how far away that particular satellite is from the receiver. With the information from three satellites, the GPS can triangulate your position and give you latitude and longitude, or a 2D position fix. If you receive a signal from four or more satellites, you have a 3D fix, with the addition of altitude. The more satellites the receiver can receive signals from, the more accurate your positional fix is. As the GPS continuously updates the data you can track your direction and speed.

What makes this a GPS navigation system is the way the software and hardware combination uses and processes the information.

Because the GPS system was originally devised by the military, the government added a random level of degradation, called Selective Availability (SA), to the signal for all non-governmental users. Starting at midnight May 1, 2000 the government turned off SA and made GPS up to 10 times more accurate. This has been a real asset to GPS users.

Hardware

The first part of the CoPilot 2000 system is the GPS receiver, a white 4-inch round device with rubber feet and a 6-foot serial cable attached. The serial connector has a 2-foot PS-2 cable that is used to power the receiver. The kit also includes a cigarette lighter adapter with a female PS-2 connector, which can be used to power the receiver if your laptop does not have a PS-2 port. The receiver is a 12-channel generic NMEA device and it gets good reception in the car.

Installation

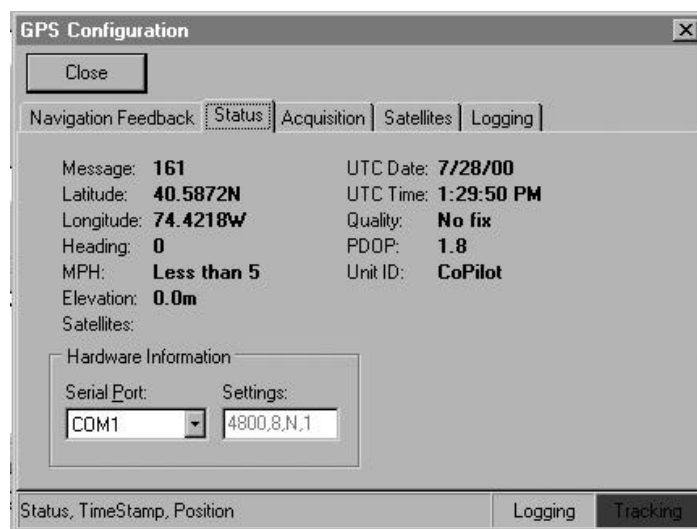
The installation is simple and straightforward. First you must connect the GPS receiver to your laptop by attaching the serial cable to the Com port (default is Com 1). Then you must connect the receiver's power supply to your PS-2 port or use the cigarette lighter adapter. If you choose to use the PS-2 connection and want to connect a mouse to the system, it will work with a splitter.

Once you have the GPS unit connected, you must then install the software. The installation of the basic program is as simple as inserting the CD and following the instructions. You choose either a Compact or Typical installation and the directory into which you will install. Once the basic program is installed you are prompted to install the speech program. You then can run the program or install the data CD to your hard drive by inserting the CD, going to the INSTALL directory and clicking on the SETUP file.

With the hardware attached and software installed, I started the program. The first time in you are prompted to register the

program and are given three choices: Internet, Phone, or Mail. You also have a check box to avoid seeing the registration screen again, which is helpful if you ever have to reinstall the software.

Once past the registration screen, you should take everything out side and check that the GPS receiver is working properly. If it is not, open the GPS dropdown and reconfigure it. You should also visit the TravRoute web page www.travroute.com and check for any patches or updates.



GPS Dropdown

The Software

The second part of the system is the software, and it has much the same appearance as most of the other mapping programs I have used. The difference with CoPilot 2000 is the routing and navigation.

The navigation feedback and displays are the most useful I have ever seen or used. There are two navigation modes, passenger and driver mode. When in driver mode above 5 m.p.h. the display hides the map as well as all other menus and presents the user with a black screen showing the next turn, navigation point, distance to it and the distance to the final destination in a large white font. The navigation display is matched with an excellent voice navigation system, and speech recognition with almost 20 commands. Speech recognition and vocal feedback turn CoPilot 2000 into a hands-free talking map and provides a relatively safe interface.

The route planning element has an optimization feature that will place up to 50 stops into the most efficient order. There is a data import feature that allows you to import entries from your address book to be used in planning your route. There is an extensive existing database with over 100 million addresses, 7 million miles of roads, and 3 million points of interest.

Trip Planning allows you to enter and save Favorites, making planning trips easier for some of your more frequent destinations or start up points. You can also choose specific roads

continued

you want to avoid. You can find places from a large list of categories. You can set your speed preferences based on the type of road as well as the type of road you prefer to use (free ways, toll roads, divided highways, ferries, etc.).

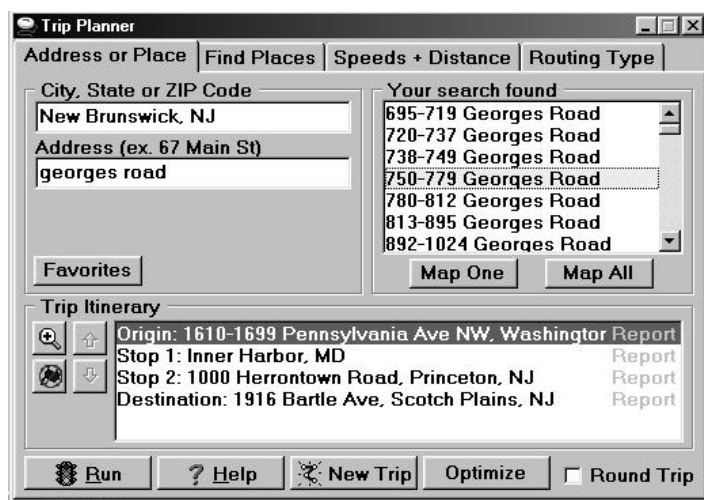
Once on the road, the navigation system does instant route corrections so if you miss a turn or deviate for any reason it recalculates the trip and gives you a new route. You can edit roads; choose the level of detail you want along with the type of features you want to see.

The normal map window is also very useful. It consists of two basic panels. The map panel uses about ¾ of the display, has 12 levels of magnification and will go down to street level.

The menu strip occupies the right side of the screen and is divided into two sections with lists of features you toggle on and off. Basic features are: Tracking, Navigating, Passenger, Destination, Status, and Shut down. There is also a detailed list of 23 navigational aids and routing tools.

The Test

Recently my niece in Richmond VA had a baby, so we decided to go see her. Since this would be my first visit since she moved, it was a good opportunity to test the system. I made hotel reservations and asked my niece for her address only. Armed with this information I entered the data into the Trip Planner window. This is a very simple affair.



Trip Planning Window

Type in the City and State or Zip Code, and press Enter

Enter the address, and press Enter

Once the location is found, press Enter

This will place the location into the Trip Itinerary portion of the window. The first entry becomes your origin and the last will be the destination. You can choose to make it a round trip. You can also change the order of your stops to suit your plans. When routing on the road, your current position as reported by the GPS becomes your origin.

Once all stops are entered, click the Run button and CoPilot will calculate your trip and bring up a Trip Summary window over a Driving Directions window and the Map window.

Then save the trip until you are ready to leave.

The directions were excellent as was the navigational feedback. The system even let me know when I passed my niece's house as we could not read the number and completely missed the big stork on the front lawn.

Along the way we threw a little kink into the plan by going out to dinner. We simply entered the address of the restaurant and added it to the trip, placed it in the right order and everything worked flawlessly.

Wish List

1. I would like the ability to use other GPS receivers and along with that, a lower-cost version without the GPS receiver. I have been interested in GPS for a while. After borrowing a friend's receiver three years ago, I decided I had to buy my own. I chose the Garmin GPS III, a stand-alone device with its own display so that it can be used with or without a laptop. It also has provisions for an external, powered antenna for better reception.

I can use my Garmin receiver with my other mapping software; I do not have their proprietary unit. I am also able to use the CoPilot 2000 receiver with the other software, but I am not able to use my Garmin with the CoPilot 2000 software. I think the functionality and marketability of CoPilot 2000 would be enhanced if it were compatible with other GPS receivers.

2. It would also be nice if the data CD was broken down by regions. If your laptop does not have CD drive, you must load the entire data CD (645 MB) to the hard drive instead of choosing only the regions you will be using. This functionality is available with other mapping programs I have used.

Final Thoughts and Evaluation

This application is one of the best I have ever used. It is also one of the more expensive consumer packages on the market (\$399 msrp). If you are a salesman on the road or need routing for business and travel with a laptop this is, without a doubt, the system for you. Don't think twice, buy it.

If you don't own a GPS unit, travel by car a lot, own a laptop and have thought about getting a GPS system, this is the one for you as well.

If you don't fit into either of the categories above, but want a great new "toy" this is the one to get. You will soon find out how truly useful it is, as the "toy" becomes a valuable "tool".

One last note: please use this and any other device in the car responsibly, and drive safely.

Company Information: TravRoute Software, 1000 Herrontown Road, Princeton, NJ 08540. Phone: (609) 252-8160. Internet: www.travroute.com

I would like to thank Mary Kelly, Media Relations Manager for TravRoute for making this product available to us for this evaluation. ☺



Welcome to H2K

The Third Hackers Conference

Cass & Ruth Lewart (rlewart@monmouth.com)

If you ever wondered about computer data security and access to databases by unauthorized people, then this convention was the place to be. The H2K (Hackers of Planet Earth 2000) convention took place in the Hotel Pennsylvania in NYC on July 14–16.

Background: You might ask what's the connection between hackers and computer users? For one, hackers are mostly enthusiastic computer users, though they may enthuse along roads that diverge from those the rest of us travel. For another, hacking, which originally started as attempts to penetrate the telephone network, is now more oriented toward computer networks and privacy protection.

The credo of a hacker is to penetrate the barriers of passwords and access restrictions, expose security flaws, and always do so without personal gain or harm to others. Still, there is an occasional clash between hackers and the powers-that-be, resulting in some hackers spending extended periods of time in Federal penitentiaries.

Cass has gone to the previous hackers' conferences, and updated me on the subject of *Social Engineering* and other quirks of hackerdom, so I had to see for myself. Son Dan, whose advice is always impeccable, suggested that we go to see Jello Biafra, who was the *scheduled* (this word was interpreted rather loosely) keynote speaker on Day II, so off we trotted to the Hotel Pennsylvania.

The convention drew roughly 2,300 mostly young and enthusiastic participants. In two large rooms there were simultaneous talks and panel discussions between 10 A.M. and midnight each day. The participants were warned not to mess with the hotel phone and computer systems. The advice was that if you want to cause chaos, do it somewhere else, there is a whole city out there.

Ambience: It was not altogether unexpected — gold nose rings (and cylinders) adorning facial features; at least one androgynous person; some (but not much) weird attire; extensive use of one particular four-letter word. Despite appearances, the participants as a group were incredibly well-behaved, even when faced with major schedule slippages due to technical glitches, room reassignments, confusion, and inevitable (and unnecessary) queues.

Day I. A panel discussion on the current controversy about restrictions caused by DVD encryption was hosted by Emmanuel Goldstein (editor of *2600 Magazine* and host of WBAI's *Off The Hook* radio show) the leading organizer of the convention, and Jon Johansen (the young man from Norway who first posted the cracked encryption code on the Internet). Encryption of DVD records prevents legitimate owners of DVDs from playing them on non-Windows computers or on DVD players from areas of the world other than the area where the DVD was distributed. Emmanuel, Jon and many others have been sued by the movie and music industries under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act for

distributing code that would allow consumers more freedom in using their DVDs.

Day II. The *Retro Computing* panel was led by Mr. Ohm, who looks to be about 12, is actually 15, and has poise and sense of humor not expected from a teen. He was accompanied by two old timers and another student, all of whom use (and wax enthusiastic about) Ataris, Commodore 64s, and TRS 80 Color Computers. Of course, they have modified their computers of choice to run through hoops never envisioned by the designers. The best part was Mr. Ohm as auctioneer of some of these retro devices — the absence of two key caps on a Radio Shack Model 100 was extolled. It brought \$50.

The Retro panel was to be followed in the same room on the 18th floor by Jello Biafra, former lead singer of the Dead Kennedys and recent Presidential candidate for the Green Party, a tickets-only event. Some one and a half hours later, the keynote took place via a video link from another room. Good sports that we were, we did n't complain much.

Somehow we did n't expect the lead singer of a rock group to give a provocative talk that held audience attention for ninety minutes. Jello Biafra's political antennae were well-tuned. He took on the powerful corporations and the state of news coverage — Mickey Mouse (owner of ABC) Über Alles — de-emphasis of real news, old-style Soviet censorship, and the corporate message: *Shop!* His message: "Don't hate the media, become them!" Thus *Hacktivism* would become the 4th branch of government. Examples of hacktivism are underground zines (online publications), pirate radio stations, and *camcorder jihad*, as in the Rodney King videotapes, which showed truths that the regular news media were avoiding. He allowed that he had a soft spot for *creative crime*, and that we have a patriotic duty to resist when we see society heading in the wrong direction. In retrospect, the talk had many quotable lines, but what made it stand out was the content — at some level you knew the truth of Jello Biafra's allegations, but nobody had ever said it quite that way. He also provided creative solutions to right the world.

The second ticketed event, *The Cult of the Dead Cow (cDc)* Extravaganza, played to an overflow crowd. To jog your memory, these are the folks who came out with *Back Orifice*, which caused Microsoft to see red. The performance was flashy and often raunchy. Some of the people who participated in the performance gave brief talks about their programming efforts. It was hard for the straight-laced among us to reconcile the cDc's considerable programming talent with the irreverent side shown here.

Day III. A member of the *social engineering* panel, posing as an AT&T employee, called AT&T headquarters in Basking Ridge and was connected to the security department. The caller was then warned by the real AT&T employee to be careful about divulging any sensitive information, as there was some *suspicious gathering* going on in New York this

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From the Dealsguy

Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer User Group

Please Take Note

In the five and a half years I have been writing this column, several unwritten guidelines have arisen that help include necessary information for all readers, locations and for all platforms. Always short of time, I sometimes fail to follow up on something, and I hear about it. For example, the Prambattery checker I included three months ago — I checked the URL to see if it worked, but didn't dig down or I would have noticed it was for Mac only. I'm still getting e-mail asking where to find it for a PC. Many people now are aware of that important battery and, I hope, found a program on a shareware Web site.

Paid Referrals

June's column became an education you should know about. When including reader's feedback, one item sounding interesting was a URL e-mailed to many members of the local UG, myself included, by another member. It was a glowing description of a Web site as a FREE Internet Service Provider with no advertising or floating banners, etc. He said it was stable and urged everyone to "go grab it," stating he didn't know how they could do it (not exactly true). He also urged people to check out the freeware there, which he said was excellent. I asked his permission to include this information in the June column, using his name, and was given the go-ahead, but no caveats. About a half-hour after e-mailing the column to my editor lists, I received e-mail from Ira Wilsker (a APCUG BoDA member) quoting the part with the URL. He said I might be interested to know that the URL was, in fact, a "paid multi level referral scheme" (his words) and suggested I leave off the number string at the end of the URL.

I was unaware I had unwittingly included something to provide income for the person e-mailing every one that URL. I phoned Ira in Texas who told me the number string at the end was probably the sender's registration number for that URL. He said not only would the author of the message receive money for each person clicking on the URL, but also any links clicked on within that Web site. Ira is a part time Justice Dept. employee who occasionally gives talks on Internet "situations." He also has a weekly radio program about computers that can be heard at <http://klvi.com> each Tuesday at 6 P.M. Central time.

I e-mailed Ira's message to the author whose response confirmed that it in deed was a "paid" referral, but he objected to the words "scheme" and "multi level." He then also suggested I omit the numbers at the end (too late since the column had already been released). I disagree with his ethics, unless I'm missing something here, even though there's nothing illegal about it. My opinion has nothing to do with user groups that make money for their treasury by having their members use certain "paying" URLs. In those situations, everybody knows the whole story right up front.

I decided to immediately send out a correction to editors asking them to remove the numbers from that URL. I then needed to change the file already posted on my Web site, and on the APCUG bbs. Another education! I opened the file in

MS Word and placed the cursor at the beginning of the numbers, deleting them one at a time (a mistake). It looked okay, so I replaced the files on the necessary Web sites. I resubmitted it to the local newsletter committee who called a couple days later telling me that when they placed the cursor on the URL hyper text in MS Word, the pop-out box still included the numbers, even though they were not showing in the URL. How could that be!!

The answer turned out to be that I should have used the often-neglected "right-click" and chosen Hyper text/Edit from that menu. At any rate, it was a very embarrassing and expediting experience. The crux of it all is for you to take a good look at any URL sent to you by anybody, even friends. If it sounds interesting, but has a number at the beginning or end, or even a combination of numbers and letters, leave them off and see if it works. Why unknowingly create income for people trying to make money from your lack of knowledge. Officers especially should be aware of people, including members, "exploiting" (my opinion) their membership in this manner.

PlanetWare Still Good

The PlanetWare travel planning offer is still good. E-mail info@planetware.com with the necessary information. Remember that e-mail is not a secure way to send credit card info to PlanetWare. The special-offer for the "Active Directory for Dummies" book is still good. Order at <http://www.fatbrain.com/shop/info/0764506595?from=XUU975>.

From Linda Barlow of User Group Connection

First, from "amazingmail.com", 5 free "real" post cards just for trying AmazingMail. Here's how you do it. Simply go to <http://www.amazingmail.com> and enter the following code at sign-up: h1132db38hhvdvd (the special user group code). Choose your image, enter your message, address the card and click "Send." In a few days, you and/or your friends will receive an actual postcard via US Mail. Great for birthdays, thank you notes, advertising, or just to let your friends know you've caught on to something! This special offer comes from User Group Relations (Gene and Linda Barlow), representing AmazingMail.

From PowerQuest Corporation, who just announced Drive Image Version 3: Special User Group Prices can be found at this hidden web site for user group members only: <http://www.ugr.com/order/>. Products are: Partition Magic v5, Drive Image v3, Data Keeper v3, Second Chance v2, Lost & Found v1, and Caldera Systems Open Linux eDesktop v2.4. The Special User Group Price Code is: UGDEALS00

Free Antivirus Protection

I mentioned F-Prot antivirus in June. An other free antivirus software is Computer Associates' Inoculate-IT. It works with Windows 95/98/NT. If you want brand name, it doesn't get much more brand name than CA. Inoculate-IT looks for and takes care of any file and boot sector viruses. It also works on those Macro viruses that are automatic unless you turn the macros off on Microsoft products, such as MS Word and

continued

Excel. You'll find information at <http://antivirus.cai.com>. You can register and download it.

Up date Your Web Site While On Line

Brad Williams (from a small company in southern California) sent me this and asked if I would put a link on our Web site (<http://www.OmniUpdate.com>). I visited the URL and tried its demo on my own Web site. It failed to finish loading my home page. I tried it twice, but to no avail, but that doesn't mean it won't work since I'm only using IE4. I've not had the time to download the software and give it a try. I noticed one place where they mention a small one-time fee. Here are excerpts from their Web site:

"OmniUpdate FREE(tm) puts you just one click away from directly updating your Web pages, right in your browser! View any page of your site and, with one click, you can update it right there, with WYSI WYG ease! Use OmniUpdate of ten to keep your Web site fresh and your visitors coming back."

"It's Free! Your use of OmniUpdate is completely free. No products to buy, download or install. OmniUpdate works right in the web browser you normally use and requires no plug-ins, Java, or server-side modifications."

"OmniUpdate is not a Web site hosting service but rather a quick way for you to make updates and changes to your existing Web pages wherever they are currently located. Your Web site may be hosted on your own server, on your ISP's server, on AOL(tm), Geocities(tm), or any where."

"How does it work? Start by signing up for a free account. Within minutes you'll be updating pages on your Web site in a word processor-like window. When you save the update, OmniUpdate places a small green button at the bottom of your page. Simply click this button to login and have this page automatically displayed and available for update. For a small one-time fee, you can customize the button using your own graphic, or choose no graphic at all. Seeing is believing." There's much more.

The Best Buy dispute is still on going, but I hope to have it concluded soon. The only thing we can't agree on is a new established purchase price for the new computer, which was what began this action in the first place. They are steadfastly refusing on that and we are about on the court house steps, but they'll find I am serious, win or lose.

Careful Clicking

In my discussion about being careful of clicking on attachments with a .EXE, a friend pointed out that there are also .COM .OVL .DLL, and now .VBS (visual basic script)! Besides all that, there are the macro viruses embedded in Microsoft docs, etc. I even read about JPEG files that it was said could hide a virus. Best policy, he said, is to always use your virus detector and update it every couple of days.

I thought I'd pass on this item that several people sent me. I have condensed it and left out the URLs with a number string:

Problems with Pentium IIIs

Intel has announced that Pentium III mother boards equipped with its "memory translator hub" (MTH) may be sensitive to system noise, and may even reboot or crash with no warning.

If your Pentium III (w/Intel motherboard purchased after Nov. '99) is affected, Intel will refund or replace both your motherboard and your RAM, replacing your current RAM with 128 Mb of RDRAM (very expensive RAM). If you think you have one of these, check with your dealer.

Only computers containing Intel's 820 chipset, a 133-MHz system bus and a Pentium III running at 533 MHz or greater are affected, and if yours has RamBus memory, you're OK. Intel has created a MTH Reboot Issue Page at <http://www.intel.com/support/mth>. Click on the "Am I Affected" link for an other page where you can download a free utility that will tell you if your Pentium III has an MTH controller. Also, go to <http://www.news.com> and search for MTH for more information (if its still on there).

Adobe Reminder

I publish these from time to time, mostly for members new to the user group community. These specials are on going but can end at any time. Adobe is one of our best supporters, hence the reminder. Check the Adobe Web site for descriptions if you don't know what it is.

Adobe PhotoDeluxe, Business Edition Windows/Macintosh, UG price \$69.00

Adobe PhotoDeluxe, Home Edition 4.0 for Windows, UG price \$39.00

Adobe PhotoDeluxe 2.0 Windows/Macintosh, UG price \$39.00

Adobe PageMill 3.0 Windows/Macintosh UG price \$69.00

Supplies are limited. Order by calling 1-800-888-6293. Be ready to provide your user group name and the offer #35701.

If you own Adobe Acrobat version 4.0, have you asked for the free update? It fixes a few problems discovered after its initial release and it includes a few enhancements. If you are a registered user, call 1-800-272-3623 to ask about the free version 4.05 update. Have the serial number for your Acrobat ready.

Magazines "On The Cheap."

Herb Goodman from the Boca Raton Computer Society tells me he has been offering discounted magazine subscriptions to many users groups for eight years. I asked him for more information and he is making the discount available for my users group readers only (**not** to the public). I only subscribe to free ones (mostly trade magazines) so I'm not an authority on subscription prices. I'm cheap, so be your own judge. In fact, I feel that with the amount of ads contained in most of these magazines, especially Computer Shopper, they should be free. However, that is not the case for most.

Here are the magazines Herb now offers: Computer Gaming World, Computer Shopper, Dr. Dobbs Journal, Family PC, Home Office Computing, Mac Home Journal, Mac World, Maximum PC, Microsoft System Journal, Mobile Computing, PC Computing (now named Smart Business), PC Portables, PC Magazine, PC World, Publish; Wired, and Yahoo! Internet Life.

An example is PC World for one year at \$14.95, three years for \$40.95. I did notice three magazines on that list that I happen to receive free, and I have no idea why, except that they

continued

may also be trade magazines. Print the list each month in your newsletter if you prefer, or save the space in the newsletter and make the information available on a printed sheet, but NOT on your Web site, because it is too easily accessible to the public.

If your user group is interested in offering this discount to your members, e-mail Herb (HGOODMAN@prodigy.net) for complete information. He will also send references if you want to know more about him. Who knows, with your help to improve his volume, he can probably work out more deals with publishers for discounts on other magazines (just my thought, but there's power in numbers).

An Old Company is Still Around

How many remember "Arts & Letters"? The newbies won't, I'm sure, but this company has been around for a long time. However they have never been all that aggressive. I received a solicitation call from them the other day to upgrade and convinced them to offer my readers a deal.

Arts & Letters "EXPRESS" is an excellent graphics program and I have an excellent price. Many of the new features in EXPRESS 7.0 facilitate the development and use of graphics on Web sites, and for interactive presentations. Also included is a CD containing 10,000 Web graphics and a convenient viewer/browser. Version 7.0 users can now connect directly to a special Arts & Letters Web site (access is limited to users of EXPRESS 7.0 and greater). From this site, users can download a variety of content and support materials including clip art, fonts, animated GIFs, sound effects, templates, utilities, news, special offers and documentation. There is even a message board for exchanging ideas and solutions with other users. Tech support is free and unlimited. How often do you get that these days!

There are too many features to include here so I suggest you visit their web site (<http://www.arts-letters.com>) for all the information. If you like what you see or want more info, call them at 1-972-661-8960, extension 15, and ask for Mel Calderon. Tell him you read it in Bob Click's Deals column, and you will be entitled to buy Arts & Letters version 7.0 (full version, two CDs) for just \$89.95 (regular \$139.95) + \$8.50 S&H. Canadian S&H is \$20 but there is a way Canadians won't pay tax. Ask Mel about that.

They have Windows 95/98/NT/2000 versions, but I saw nothing for the Mac. Mel noticed I hadn't received the free 6.2 update so he sent me that one and I will get 7.0 when it is introduced in July.

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

Going Global.

Evan Williams

If I was confused about Internet Telephone calls before, I'm even more confused now. Since I joined ACGNJ several years ago I have been hearing about placing telephone calls over the Internet, and I was aware that there are a number of products out there. I even attended a demo of a visual phone product at one of the ACGNJ meetings. However it was not until I purchased a shrink-wrapped parcel labeled Internet Phone 5 at the Flea Market of TCF 2000 for five clams that I began my adventure in internet telephony.

Installing the discontinued product was no problem. Sure I had a few minor hitches. Seems that computer people learn to overcome them. The sound card wouldn't listen so I replaced it with another. I had to get an IPS (Internet Phone Service), an installable service downloadable from a web provider, so I could make PC to Phone calls. Soon I was surprising friends and family with Internet Telephone calls.

Local calls were usually good. Long distance calls were sometimes choppy, sometimes good. On one international call my friend heard a low noise on the line, nothing more. An other time communication was fine. "It could just be the Internet Connection you have at the time," said a Truly Global support representative. It is true that I am using a plain old modem.

Internet Phone 5 came with a link to Truly Global's beta site, www.trulyglobal.com. You accept the agreement, log on, and voila you have an internet phone on your PC. You have gone global!

There's only one thing I can't figure out. This phone just makes calls to other Truly Global users (no I'm not being paid by them). So who else do I know using Truly Global??? ☐

Hackers Conference, *continued*

week. When finally the real AT&T employee realized the origin of the phone call, he abruptly hung up. The audience at the conference roared! A recently released hacker, Kevin Mitnick, who was not allowed by his parole officer to attend, participated in the panel via a phone hookup. He described his exploits and answered questions from the audience.

A talk was given by Barry of *The Key*, the Dutch lockpicking club. Such clubs have of ficial *sportgroup* status in Holland and in Germany. This designation makes it legal for them to possess lockpicking gear. Annual contests are held for the best lockpicker, including an under-water and an in-the-nude can test. During the talk Barry demonstrated how fast a lock can be opened, and he discussed even faster methods used by government security agencies.

There were discussion panels on European Internet experiences, protection from viruses, and even plans for demonstrating at the upcoming Democratic and Republican party conventions.

Reprise. The meeting was a lot of fun — we both really enjoyed it. If you want to find out more about hackers, listen to *Off the Hook* on WBAI-FM (99.5) Tuesdays at 8 P.M. or visit www.2600.com. Will we go again next year? You bet! ☐

Connecting the Palm Pilot to the Internet Cheaply

Cass Lewart (rlewart@monmouth.com)

On my recent birthday, one of those big ones with a 0 at the end, my wife Ruth, knowing that I am a gadget lover, gave me a Palm Pilot IIIxe as a gift. She bought it locally and told me that if I do not appreciate the gift I could return it. Well, on one hand I dislike the “to-do” lists for which the Palm Pilot is famous. My current “organizer” consists of a “week at-a-glance” pocket calendar, which I replace every year. On the other hand I was quite impressed by the clever design and multitude of software available for the Pilot. Then Ruth suggested I hook the Pilot to the Internet to read and receive email.

This sounded like an interesting application, so I started doing some research. I found that most Pilot owners use it exclusively as an organizer. Those with deep pockets, or with employers ready to pick up the tab, use a wireless modem or a cable to connect the Pilot to their cellular phone. Wireless services are quite expensive, typically \$30-\$50 per month. A special cable to connect the Pilot to a cellular phone costs over \$90 and Sprint charges 39 cents/minute for data calls. I decided that there has to be a better and less expensive way to connect to the Internet with an external modem and a phone line. After studying the Pilot manual (it comes as a book not on a CD!) I found that the Pilot has a built-in Internet capable TCP/IP dialer. It also has a Mail program for saving and composing emails. All I needed then was a mail client, something like Eudora, but for the Pilot. I did more research on Usenet, where there are two very active news groups dedicated to pocket organizers:

alt.comp.sys.palmtops.pilot and comp.sys.palmtops

Searching through these news groups I found a mention of a mail client program called ProxiMail. It is freeware and I downloaded it from <http://www.proxinet.com/>. To complete my hardware requirements, I still needed an external modem and a null modem. You can buy from 3Com a battery operated external 33.6 modem for \$169, but I found in my basement a small USR Sportster 33.6 external modem discarded a year ago, and a null modem plug bought at a computer show a couple of years ago for under \$5.

My hardware setup is now the Pilot in its cradle, the DB9 serial plug from the cradle connected to a DB9/DB25 adapter, which in turn is plugged into a null modem. The null modem plugs into my USR external modem. Finally a telephone cable connects the external modem to the phone jack.

For the Pilot software to operate properly, I still had to configure Connection and Network in the built-in Prefs and Mail programs and also configure the ProxiMail program.

I set up a new Connection calling it “Monmouth Internet” (my ISP), set the Connection Method as “Serial to Modem”, Dialing as “Touch Tone”, Volume as “Low”, Speed as “115,200 bps”, Flow Ctl as “Automatic”, Init String as “AT&F&B1” (restore factory configuration, set fixed DTE speed). Though this string is essential for my USR Sportster modem, you may need a different one for your modem. The


initialization string has to compensate for the lack of Data Terminal Ready (DTR) signal from the Pilot. Although the basic AT commands are the same for all modems, the extended AT commands starting with “&” vary from modem to modem. Check the modem manual.

In the Network section I set up a new Service “Monmouth”, filled out the User Name and Password, selected as Connection “Monmouth Internet” and gave it the local phone number to dial. I set Connection type to “PPP”, Idle timeout to “1 Minute”, I also checked Query DNS and Automatic IP Address. Though my modem would now dial and connect to my ISP, it still would not perform user/password authentication — a possible bug in the Pilot software. I therefore used a login script with “Wait For”, “Send CR” and “Send” commands selected from the Pilot menu. This worked!

Finally ProxiMail required entering SMTP and POP preferences. The SMTP server for outgoing mail is for me “smtp.monmouth.com”, the POP server for incoming mail is “mail.monmouth.com”. I also had to enter my email address and name, Username and Password. There were several more options to select. Paste extra headers “No”, Truncate messages “5 KB”, Delete from server “No”, Save “All messages” and Query for each message “No”.

With this software and hardware setup I now tap with the stylus the ProxiMail icon on my Pilot menu and then tap “Get Mail”, “Send Mail” or “Both”. The Pilot dials automatically through the external modem, connects to my ISP, authenticates user name and password, and a minute later all my incoming email is in my Pilot Inbox folder, all outgoing email, previously composed and saved in the Outbox folder, is on its way to Internet recipients. By this time my desktop computer just booted!

As there are minor differences between various releases of the Pilot OS, my “how to do it” for release 3.5.0 may not apply exactly to your organizer and you may have to modify it. However, the hardware setup should be the same as mine.

I have now an inexpensive way to “stay in touch” while on vacation. The only question is — do I want it? 



PC Expo 2000

Martin J. Rosenblum

Before the show I went through the usual on line press registration. I got email back, saying that I was n't eligible for press registration. I called and spoke to Randy Kane, the fellow who signed the email. He was quite of fensive, and I gathered they were only in ter ested in the ma jor press and not in user groups. I shrugged my shoul ders and gave up on talk ing to him. I emailed Rich Brill to ask what he knew about it, and he con firmed my impression, but hinted that he had ways around the ban. Not sur pris ing for such an en ter pris ing fel low.

Later, at Intergalactic 13, the Long Island Linkers were up-in-arms over the is sue and look ing to draw up an all-out at tack against the or gan izers, but I did n't see any re sults from this, though I did run into them later at the show.

Well, I reg istered on line for the free ex hibits pass and de cided to go only on the sec ond day. I went, armed with my ACGNJ business card and a sample of my last year's column on PCEXPO and went to the press registration booth. What-the-hell! Just sailed through. The press area was a bit smaller than usual — fewer PC stations, and all occupied most of the time. I was in time for a crois sant and cof fee and milled around a bit — fewer ta bles, too. I met Ken Werner, Nut meg Con sul tants, who was here to cover the show from the display side. We chatted about micro displays, which have applications to the eyeglass-mounted devices used in VR and wear able dis plays. He told me that plasma dis plays were get ting better and cheaper, but the high operating voltage is still a hur dle.

The show started at 10 and I vis ited with APC to ask about my UPS prob lem. Then I went to the day's key note — Jeff Bezos from Am a zon.com. Thanks to my press badge, I was speeded into the hall, past the wait ing throng. Met NY bu reau chief of Jap a nese ver sion of Busi ness Week. Bezos gave a stim u lat ing talk, centered around Am a zon's efforts in per son al iza tion of the Am a zon por tal. Along the lines of the Napster de bate, one author asked about problems getting small stuff pub lished. Bezos stressed that the Net made it pos si ble to pub lish even small num bers. He pointed out that you had to be in the top ten to get mar keted in your neigh bor hood news store and the top 10,000 for Barnes and Noble or Bor ders, but Am a zon could han dle the most ephem eral niche mar ket. Some of the more ve nial folks in the au di ence tried to dis cuss the drop in stock price, but Bezos was all op ti mism.

Had (free) lunch (sand wich+Coke) with a Brooklynite and a cou ple of folks from PCWorld. There were a num ber of ce lebrities visible; from ZDTV: Sumi Das, Jim Lauderbach, John Dvorak (who nodded at me as if he knew me) but no Kate or Leo. From Byte, Jerry Pournelle. Then I ran into a pro ducer from ZDNet in the area of new prod ucts who did n't know who Jim Lauderbach was, she said that in spite of com mon his tory, she did n't have much to do with the mag azines or ZDTV.

Af ter lunch, I wan dered to the man age ment area to in quire about the J. P. Da vis press event, which has al ways given me lots of qual ity copy as well as a nice sup per. A strange thing hap pened — Randy Kane ap proached, looked at my badge,

continued

USB Survival Guide

Making the most of USB peripherals while minimizing problems

Jan Axelson

So you're in the mar ket for a new pe riph eral. Maybe it's a printer, scan ner, ex ter nal drive, or cam era. If so, chances are good that many of the prod ucts you look at will have a USB port in place of the par al lel, se rial, SCSI, or other port used by pe riph er als in the past. In most cases, USB is the way to go. It's con ve nient, easy, and fast. But be cause it's a new in ter face, it's not yet foolproof, and a little pre ven tion can go a long way in sav ing you from pos si ble has sles. I'll show you how. But first, a lit tle back ground...

PC and pe riph eral mak ers are phas ing in the Uni ver sal Se rial Bus (USB) as a re place ment for the ports that have been with the PC since its be gin nings. If you're run ning Win dows 98 or Win dows 2000, you can use USB for your key board, mouse, mo dem, ex ter nal disk drives, printer, scan ner, cam eras, and more. Just about any pe riph eral that once used a par al lel port or RS-232 se rial port is likely to have a USB ver sion avail able now.

What's so great about USB? When you at tach a new de vice, Win dows de tects it and in stalls the driver soft ware for you. You don't have to worry about find ing a free IRQ (in ter rupt re quest line) be cause all de vices share one IRQ as signed to the USB host con trol ler. You don't have to find a free ex pan sion slot be cause USB de vices con nect out side the box. With in ex pen sive hubs, you can at tach pretty much as many de vices as you want (though there are practical lim its to how many de vices can com mu ni cate on the bus at the same time).

USB's speed is com parable to the par al lel port's fastest modes, and this will increase 40x with the introduction of hard ware that supports the new 2.0 spec i fi ca tion's fast mode. An other point in USB's fa vor is that the older ports are be ing elim i nated from new PCs and even tu ally won't be an op tion, while new in ter faces like IEEE-1394 (Firewire) aren't widely avail able yet. The only snag is that USB's sim plic ity for us ers means in creased com plex ity for the de vel op ers who de sign and pro gram USB de vices and and the soft ware driv ers that control them. Also, because USB is new, developers don't have a lot of ex pe ri ence with it. And al though Win dows 98 and 2000 have good low-level sup port for USB com mu ni ca tions, de vel op ers must still write de vice driv ers for the many periph erals that don't have class drivers provided by Win dows.

Of course, us ers don't care about any of this. You just want some thing that works! But the re al ity is that some USB de vices, on some machines, just don't work as advertised. If you're in the mar ket for a pe riph eral, fol low ing these rec om men da tions will save you pos si ble grief:

1. Be fore you buy, check the webboards for com ments and pos si ble fixes. Two ex cellent sources for user in for ma tion are the USB Imple menters Forum's Public Newsgroup (www.usb.org/forums/retail/webboard.html) and USBMan's USBTalk webboard (www.usbman.com). If you see a lot of

continued

Intergalactic 13

Martin J. Rosenblum

It almost didn't happen! The same disease that hit PCExpo seems to be infecting user group activities all around. A few brave souls managed to pull it together, however, and our core sponsors (Intuit, Borland, Adobe, and others) came through once more. I met the ACGNJ gang at registration and breakfast. The location was St. Ignatius Loyola School, 48 E 84 St. in the city. The meeting (class) rooms were not air conditioned and it was hot, but the everybody meetings were held in an air-conditioned room.

We split up into various workshops, and I picked "Regional Cooperation to Enhance Program Content." Some of the areas for suggested cooperation:

- Computer Training, focusing on member needs. Danbury Area Computer Society received more than three hundred 386 PCs from a hospital as a donation that was undergoing a major upgrade.
- A NYPC rep suggested we advertise their many courses. See current offerings at catalog.com/nypc/classes.htm.
- Long Island Computer User Group has started a program of encouraging the creation of senior citizen "memory books". Instructors are taken from the ranks of "at risk" middle school students. They offer two grades, and the mix of seniors and teens seems to work out just great.
- Hank Feinberg, who works with American Training Systems, Inc., suggested we could check out and use his Web-based training software at americasfirehouse.com.

We also talked about the cost of publishing a hard copy newsletter. One group charges members \$25 a year with the newsletter and \$18 a year without it. It is available online with no restrictions. Interestingly, most pay the extra \$7.

We then broke for the vendor fair where we picked up some nice give aways for future meetings, followed by a deli lunch where I learned from Arnold Milstein a few tricks for my new Palm Pilot, on which I took these notes. He beamed his copy of the PCExpo program to my Palm! Nifty!

After lunch I went to the Linux demo. Impressive! Ed Weinberg, even with mismatched display facilities, put Red Hat 6.2 Linux through its paces. One impressive feat was to run Windows under VMWare under Linux with very little performance hit. Ed has a Web site at www.linuxguy.net, which suffers from the common malady of not having been updated for some time. Gene Barlow from Caldera was there and said he will give talks on Linux, if asked nicely.

Then came "Planning for Regional Cooperation," attended by the whole crew. Jim Roy of NJPCUG at Bergen Community College in Paramus presented some ideas on a Regional Web Page, ListServe and Networking

He has registered "North East User Group Association" as www.neuga.org and www.neuga.net. So far it lists just his own NJPCUG and the Westchester PC User Group. We'll see if anything comes of this in the fall! It's meant to be patented after the Florida Association of Computer User Groups. Check them out at www.facug.org for a better idea of where we can go with this. The Linkers vented their wrath at PCExpo around this point, too, for seeming to boot out the user group community. ☹

USB Survival, *continued*

users tearing their hair out in frustration with a product you're thinking about buying, look elsewhere.

2. If you have a problem with a device, the first place to check is the manufacturer's website for updated drivers and other tips. Driver fixes are very common!

3. If you can't get something working, take or send it back and try something else. Don't spend a lot of time trying to get something going. Sometimes the problem is a flawed hardware design or software driver that the vendor is unwilling or unable to do anything about. In that case, there's really not anything you can do.

On a more positive note, vendors are becoming more diligent about testing their products rigorously before they're released. More and more devices undergo compliance tests that exercise not just data transfers but also things like what happens when a user yanks the cable unexpectedly. Many manufacturers also participate in Plugfests, where everyone hooks their devices to the same PC to find out if they all can co-exist. The short answer is that USB is the right choice most of the time. But for now, when selecting a peripheral, a little caution is prudent!

Jan Axelson (jan@lvr.com) is the author of USB Complete: Everything You Need to Develop Custom USB Peripherals. Jan grew up in North Plainfield and Plainfield, NJ and graduated from Plainfield High (class of '67). Her website is www.lvr.com. ☹

PC Expo, *continued*

and seemed quite agitated. He went off to consult his database and a colleague or two and came back to challenge my right to be there as a member of the fourth estate. First he asked for my business card, so I gave him my ACGNJ Internet SIG card. Not satisfied, he asked if I had any examples of my output. Of course, I had the two issues I had used to get in and showed them to him. He grumblingly assented to my legitimacy and wandered off, not too happy. Oh, well!

On the whole, there was not as much neat new stuff to see as we could have hoped.

Sony was showing a mockup of their PDA entry — no working version, just vaporware. In spite of all that happened in the mass storage market, there was not much fuss over new CD-R hardware or large, fast hard drives. I missed J. P. Davis, where I usually get some good information, because it was held on the previous evening. Sorry, but pickin's were thin this year, and they may succeed in shoving us out completely next year. I hear they're thinking of changing the name to TechExpo, or some such. ☹

Selecting a New Laptop Computer

Dick Freymoyer (dickfrey1@aol.com), Princeton PC Users

For some time I have been searching for a new, more powerful, laptop with some of the whistles and bells. I looked at Dell, and several of the other big names, but I really didn't want to pay the high price they were asking. I have settled on one made by ProStar since they seemed to have exactly what I wanted and the price was great. This 3100 series model has a 14.1" TFT (Active XGA) display, a 6GB hard drive, 8 MB ATI Video card, a 6X DVD drive, a 56K V90 PCMCIA modem, 128 MB PC100 Ram, a PIII-500 processor CPU, the usual built-in microphone, stereo speakers, a Lithium Battery and a 3½" floppy drive. All of the above for only \$2299 — not too shabby. A notebook configured like this from Dell would cost well over \$3000, and knowing this made the ProStar an easy choice. I usually only have about 3½ GB of disk space used on my computers, so I figured I really didn't need a larger hard drive. Maybe this will prove to be a mistake, but time will tell.

In the back of the laptop, there are two USB ports, a PS2 keyboard/mouse port, an Infrared port, TV/Video port, an S Video Jack (TV Connection), and a 1394 port. The 1394 port was important to me because I think we will soon see many pieces of hardware designed for this technology and I will be ready for it. I still have one more PCMCIA slot left for whatever I would want to add, like a network card or a SCSI card. The warranty is for one year and, of course, I could extend it for 2 or 3 years. It covers everything for \$149.95 and \$229.95. The good thing about the extended warranty from ProStar is that you have more than 10 months to make up your mind.

I didn't buy the laptop directly from ProStar, so they could only cover me for the first year. The reseller had a deal on an extended 3-year warranty for \$100 from Mack's Video from NJ and they told me that it's a good outfit that has been in business for over 20 some years. The warranty covers everything for the extended 3 years, giving me in reality a 4-year warranty (except for hard drive) after the ProStar's one-year warranty has expired.

The DVD drive is great and will come in handy for me. For example, if you are traveling, you can watch a DVD movie at night in your motel. I don't own a DVD drive for my TV-Audio Entertainment Center yet and so I can use the laptop's DVD Drive there for now. All I have to do is patch it into my system or to my 21" PC Monitor. The floppy drive can be changed to an LS-120 drive for around \$100, not bad price, but I decided not to go this route because I have a 2.2 GB USB ORB Drive. With the ORB drive, I have the storage available and a means to share data between my computers, without networking them. I contemplated changing the CPU to a 600, but the reseller, said with the 128 MB Ram the PIII 500 CPU would be fast enough. I have found this to be true. A carry case was part of the package, nothing fancy, but it does the job.


Another item incorporated into this notebook is a Security Connector. This Connection allows you to insert a steel cable into it while wrapping the other end around your desk. This is

designed to prevent someone from walking off with your laptop while you are out of your office, an all-too frequent occurrence.

One of the important reasons I like this notebook is that you can upgrade the CPU, and it is a very easy task to perform. On the underside of the case there are two screws to remove the fan and chip, then four more screws that hold the fan and heat sink to the motherboard, then you are home free. (Most laptop CPU's are soldered into the motherboard, so a CPU upgrade is out of the question.)

I can still add another 128 MB stick of memory — I only used one slot for the 128-MB stick I had installed. To install the memory, you simply pop the keyboard out by pushing on two clips on the top and you have access to the inside of the computer. My old notebook was a dead-end street — all I could do was upgrade the memory and the hard drive. The display was a 12" active screen display, a big mistake, but you live and learn. I purchased my new laptop from The Computer Wholealers located in Harrisburg (717-541-5075). I found them very accommodating and they took my old laptop in trade. I did have one problem with the laptop, a bad battery (it never charged fully). They gave me a new battery and that took care of the problem. I have the option of either dealing with the dealer or ProStar for any problems that may arise for this first year.

At this time, my new laptop is my fastest computer in the house and is a pleasure to use. My wife especially loves it, so buying this new toy was painless.

If you are thinking about a new laptop computer, check out ProStar's site (www.pro-star.com) and be surprised by the prices. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to email me. 

Classified

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

SIG News

Lotus Notes

<http://www.njlug.org>

Mike Barlow (mwb@infinet.com)

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

Random Access

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

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.

Main Meeting

http://www.acgnj.org/sig_mainmeeting.htm

Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)

2000-2001 Schedule of Meetings

September 8: (Combined with PC Symposium) Firewall presentation by AMDC. Details in Symposium section. Host John Raff.

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

November 3: Digital Photography. Host Joe Kennedy.

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

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

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

March 2: Building a Computer. Host Ted Martin.

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

May 4: No meeting due to TCF 2001.

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

Any changes/up dates will be posted to the website above. ☞

Layman's Forum

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

Matt Skoda (som359@aol.com)

We discuss issues of interest to novice users or persons who are just interested in getting started. Layman's Forum meets the second Monday of each month. Watch the ACGNJ Web page for updates. ☞

Multimedia & Mobile

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

Steven Rodriguez (cybertech72@bigfoot.com)

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

PC Users Group

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

Jo-Anne Head (tinarock@aol.com)

This group needs a leader. After the June PC User Group Meeting, Jo-Anne stepped down as the SIG leader. She had led the group for 6 years and felt she needed a change. If anyone would like to lead the group forward, please contact Jo-Anne at 908-769-7835 and she'll help you get it going. ☞

C/C++ Users Group

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

Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net)

At the June 2000 CSIG Meeting the subject was Cbcopy: Copying files from the clipboard. We discussed a program by Joey Rogers in this July's C/C++ Users Journal: Copying Files from the Clipboard to a Command Prompt. You can make DOS more of a first-class Windows citizen with this handy little clipboard utility. I wanted to be able to copy files from Windows Explorer to the Command Prompt's active directory via the Windows clipboard. This article provides a very simple utility, Cbcopy, that will paste files copied onto the Windows clipboard into a Command Prompt's active directory. Cbcopy works by opening the Windows clipboard and querying for a drop file handle (CF_HDROP), which points to a list of files currently on the clipboard. The functions `OpenClipboard`, `GetClipboardData`, `GetCurrentDirectory`, `Global Lock`, `DragQueryFile`, `GlobalUnlock`, and `CloseClipboard` are Win32-specific APIs.) For more information, visit the SIG Website above or email Bruce. ☞

MCP Study Group

(Preparing for Microsoft Certification Exams)

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

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 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 every one is expected to participate.

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

continued

Lunics (Linux/Unix)

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

Andreas Meyer (ahm@spies.com)

This is a group for those who share an interest in the Linux operating system and its relatives (UNIX, 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.

After many years of leadership, Peter Fillingham decided to step down as SIG leader. We'd like to thank Pete for his dedication, and hope that we can continue the same level of enthusiasm he has shown. Starting in May 2000, Andreas Meyer assumed leadership of the SIG. Andy has been involved with computers, both as a hobbyist and professionally, for over 25 years. He has owned a variety of strange systems, including an AT&T 3B2. His first Linux distribution was SLS 1.03 (SoftLanding System). He prefers vi, but he still knows what his name does in TECO. Andy is a Unix systems administrator at Lucent Technologies' Bell Labs in Murray Hill, NJ.

September 4: Labor Day - No meeting.

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

VBA & Excel

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

Jim Ditaranto (fryr92a@prodigy.com)

September: No meeting.

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

VBA (Visual Basic for Applications) 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. Any one 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. ☐

Genealogy

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

Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)

The Genealogy SIG is 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 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.

In addition to our Web page the SIG 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. ☐

June 2000

Symposium

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

John Raff (jraff@home.com)

September 8: Current plans are to have AMDC to discuss and demonstrate their firewall. They have offered a \$500 reward to any one who breaches their new application. I will keep you informed. Keep an eye on our Website for updates. ☐

Investing

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

Sheldon Koepf (sheldonk@intac.com)

There was no meeting in August, but put **September 14** on your calendar for our next meeting. We will not have a representative of Investor's Business Daily (IBD) at this meeting, but I expect to have copies of IBD for all that attend. Co-chairman Dick Boyd had a brilliant idea, and we are working on an Excel spreadsheet which will work with data from IBD to evaluate an overall portfolio and individual holdings to compare strength and risk against the overall market. You may find this very useful in making those important investment decisions. Come September 14 and bring a friend. You may learn something useful about investing.

I would like to extend an invitation to current and possible investors to attend our group. We welcome new members and ideas. Our group includes newcomers to investing and computing as well as those with 35 or more years of experience in both. We do not schedule a topic in advance, but try to react to market conditions and present ideas that are current, and (hopefully) profitable. Our emphasis is on investing, and using the computer to assist. ☐

Internet

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

Martin Rosenblum (m.rosenblum@ieee.org)

June 1: Phil King from INTAC gave the June talk and told us the news about their big move from their own plant to a larger facility with a NYSE-listed company. "Co-location" was the key, with this larger firm offering server services to a large number of clients and applications, with INTAC managing the ISP side of the combo.

September 7: There's been a lot of action over the summer, so we'll spend most of the time reviewing those events. Bring along your thoughts, and we should find lots to discuss. Don't forget that we'll start at 7:30 for newbies and the regular meeting will start at 8 PM. ☐

Macintosh Users Group

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

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. ☐

Finance

There are a number of services that offer online quotes, but one of the more interesting new products offered by one of the oldest services, quote.com, is online delayed transactions and charts on one screen. The transactions and charts are 15 minutes delayed, include multiple exchanges, and you can set the chart ticks to anything from one minute to three months. It's a day-trader's delight, but really useful to all kinds of investors for the variety of time-spans. Try it out at www.quote.com/quote.com/livecharts.

The Fed has jumped onto the wireless Internet. "If your PDA is equipped with a modem and has Internet access, you can log onto federalreserve.gov by pointing the PDA web browser software to www.federalreserve.gov/wireless/wireless.htm.

"If you have a Palm™ VII handheld device, download the federalreserve.gov Palm™ VII web-clipping application, and then use Hotsync® technology to transfer the application to your Palm™ VII handheld. Download the 5K ZIP file to get the federalreserve.gov Palm™ VII application. The application was compressed with PKZIP, and the software to expand it is available from PKWARE's Web site." (Poor old Phil Katz, the "PK" in PKZIP, died this past year. Had a brief chat with him at last year's PCExpo.)

Way back in their June 12 issue, Business Week's column, *The Barker Portfolio*, has a piece "Shedding some light on your risk." I would guess that all of us investors know something about asset allocation and diversification, but not too many of us pay much attention to measures of volatility of the items in our portfolio. We can now check the riskiness in our portfolio at www.riskgrade.com, a free (but you have to register) service of RiskMetrics, a spin-off of J.P. Morgan who used the techniques to help analyze the portfolios of big financial institutions. It's not exactly like beta which, I think, uses the S&P 500 as a baseline, but is based on a diversified basket of

stocks from around the world. I'm afraid it's still not my ideal instrument, since I don't think it pays attention to cross correlations of the issues in your portfolio. (Two stocks, both with high risk measures, can track together, fluctuate in opposite directions, or be completely independent. That knowledge would be really useful for portfolio design.)

ZDTV's *money machine* recommends a simpler approach. A bit less sophisticated is the asset allocator tool on the Wall Street Journal's www.smartmoney.com site. Click on tool tab, Asset Allocator link and let me know how it works for you.

Another product mentioned with some trepidation by *money machine* is Yodlee for the Web. It's not too easy to figure out exactly what it is, but it seems to offer the ability to coordinate information from many different institutions. It even manages all your passwords for you. Trust it? Try www.yodlee.com.

Science

When I was gathering material for last month's article, I was watching ZDTV one day and caught an announcement of some new, dramatic Mars photos, but I couldn't find a reference on their Web site. Bah! Then a few days later, while surfing around CNN, I found a reference! Hosted by Malin Space Science Systems is a growing collection of over 25,000 photos taken by the Mars Global Surveyor Satellite, launched in 1996. Check out a sampler at mars.jpl.nasa.gov/mgs and click on *Latest MGS Images*. Or visit the whole archive at www.msss.com/mars_images/moc and click on *Archive*. (Note: NS popped me over to *ex cite* when I tried this, yet worked with "index.html" tacked on the end. Then I could strip off the index.html and it still worked OK. Any one know what's going on here?

More next month. ☺

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

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

Date _____ New Member Address Change Renewal of (Membership #) _____

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ E-Mail _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____ URL _____

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

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

Other Local Computer Groups		
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 hot line. (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, Dickson Hall, Montclair State University, Montclair NJ. (973) 655-5274. http://www.njmug.org .
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 281, 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@jumo.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 Mid night on last Saturday of the month. First United Methodist Church, Church and Atlantic Streets (one mile from GSP exit 117A), Aberdeen NJ. Bring your project, computer and extension cord. For information call Burke Mawby, (908) 566-7445.		

Radio and TV Programs

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

Software Review TLC Sat. 10 p.m.

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

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

Free Help Line

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

KGP Computer Shows

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

Sep. 16-17: South Jersey Expo Center, Pennsauken NJ

Oct. 7-8: NJ Convention Center, Edison NJ (Raritan Center). Sat. 10-4 & Sun. 9 AM to 2 PM (Early close due to Jewish holiday)

ACGNJ Hot line

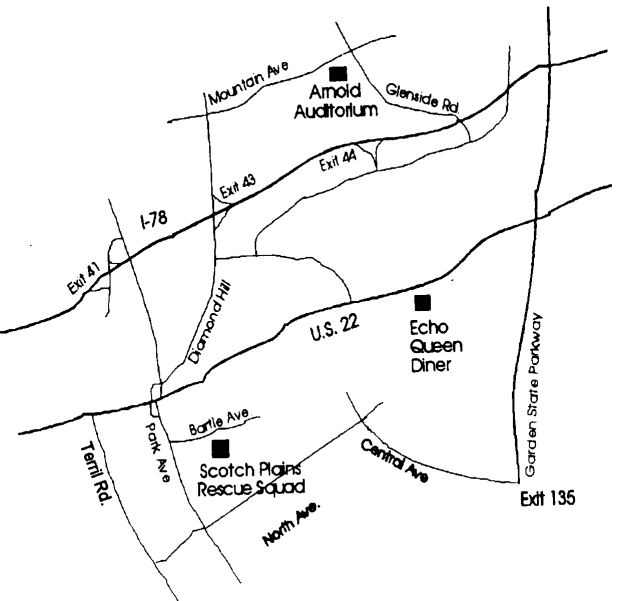
(908) 322-4654

ACGNJ Bulletin Boards

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

(732) 739-3693 Dave Wrobel

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



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

From New York City or Northern New Jersey

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

From Southern New Jersey

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

From I-78 (either direction)

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

From US 22 Westbound

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

From Western New Jersey

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

ACGNJ NEWS

AMATEUR COMPUTER GROUP OF NEW JERSEY, INC.
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ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Friday, September 1, 2000

Main Meeting has been rescheduled for September 8. Frank Warren, kb4cyc@webwarren.com, 908-756-1681

Monday, September 4, 2000

8 P.M. - Lunics, No Meeting this month. Andreas Meyer, ahm@spies.com, 908-382-4297

Wednesday, September 6

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, svincent@ix.netcom.com, 973-361-5793

Thursday, September 7

8 P.M. - Internet, Martin Rosenblum, m.rosenblum@ieee.org, 973-376-8965.

Friday, September 8

8 P.M. - Main Meeting & PC Symposium. John Raff, jraff@home.com, 973-533-0664

Monday, September 11

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

Wednesday, September 13

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, svincent@ix.netcom.com, 973-361-5793

Thursday, September 14

8 P.M. - Computerized Investing, Sheldon Koepf, sheldonk@intac.com, 973-740-2489.

Friday, September 15

7 P.M. - Multimedia & Mobile Computing, Steven Rodriguez, cybertech72@bigfoot.com.

8 P.M. - PC Users — Check ACGNJ Website.

Tuesday, September 19

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

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

Wednesday, September 20

7 P.M. - MCP Study Group, Scott Vincent, svincent@ix.netcom.com, 973-361-5793

Friday, September 22

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, svincent@ix.netcom.com, 973-361-5793

Monday, September 25

7 P.M. - VBA (Visual Basic, Excel) Meeting Canceled, James Ditaranto, fryr92a@prodigy.com, 973-772-7171.

Thursday, September 28

8 P.M. - Genealogy, Frank Warren, kb4cyc@webwarren.com, 908-756-1681. ☐

All club meetings, unless otherwise noted, are at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains, N.J.
Directions and map in side back cover.