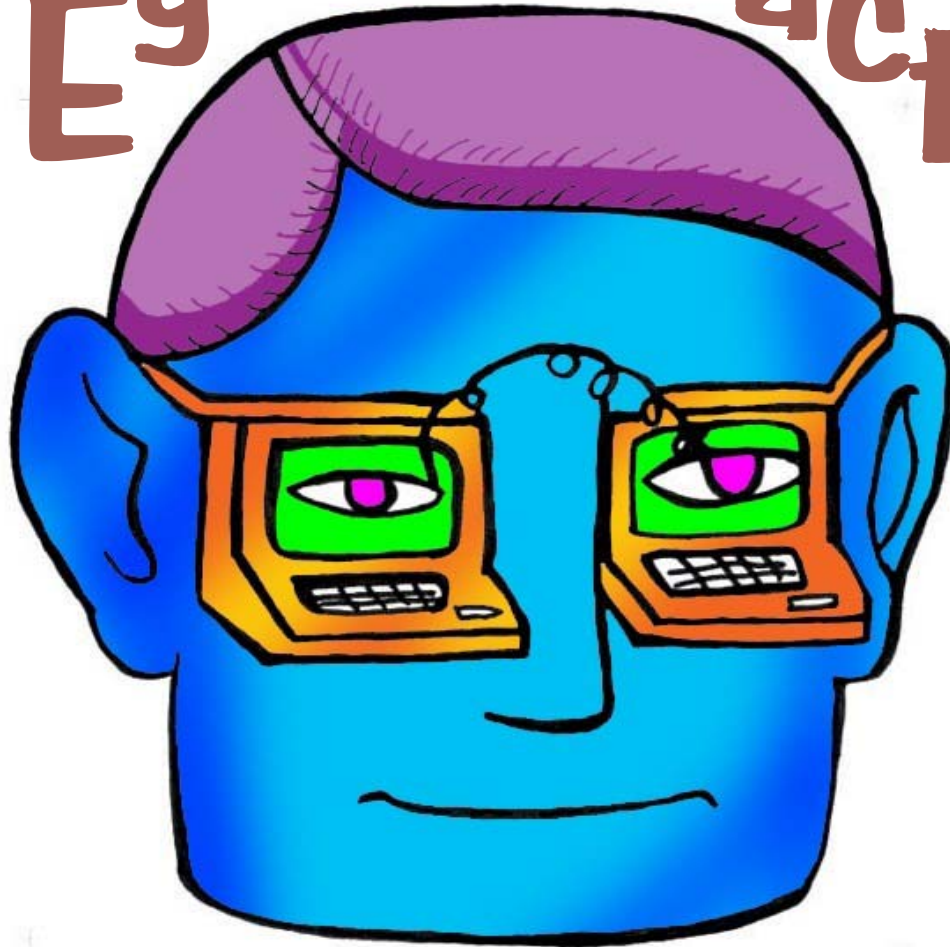


July 2006

Volume 17, Issue 7

Eye Contact



Assistive technology is enabling the paralyzed, using only their eyes, to operate a computer, communicate by voice, and extend their gaze across cyberspace or outer space. At our next meeting, David Goldberg, president of Health Science, will demonstrate the latest tools from Tobii Technology that convert eye movement to computer commands, and learn how Voice for Joanie is using AT systems to provide the gift of speech to victims of Lou Gehrig's disease.

President's File



PRESIDENTIAL RAMBLINGS

Before I dive into the month's column I'd like to take a moment to congratulate the 2006 U.S. Open champion Geoff Ogilvy... Congratulations Geoff.

Kudos for HP Customer Service...

It's a well kept secret that complex electronic equipment like computers run on smoke, and that if the smoke somehow escapes, the equipment stops working... Well, a few nights ago the smoke escaped from my flat panel monitor in spectacular fashion.

I'm a little fuzzy on all the details but I'm reasonably certain I mumbled at least one of George Carlin's 7 naughty words, then crawled under my desk, unplugged the monitor, made sure the smoke was completely out and called Hewlett-Packard's technical support department. I have to admit, I wasn't expecting much, not at 11:30 p.m. To my surprise my call was answered on the second ring and routed to a polite, professional customer service representative named Sol... Our conversation went something like this:

HP Support: Thank you for calling HP Support. This is Sol; can I have your name please?

Me: (With a smoke detector screeching in the background) Jeff.

HP: How can I help you, Jeff?

Me: (Being a little snarky) The smoke escaped from my monitor.

HP: That doesn't sound good.
Me: Nope.
HP: Were there any sparks coming from the monitor?

Me: No, just smoke and a small flame.

HP: That's not good.

Me: Umm... Nope.

HP: Can I have the part number and serial number of the monitor?

Me: Sure...

HP: Ok... That unit is in warranty. Can I have your address & telephone number, please?

Me: Sure...

HP: OK... You should be receiving a replacement monitor in 2-3 business days. Your case number is #####.

Me: Umm. Ok.

HP: Is there anything else I can do for you today?

Me: No I think we're good.

HP: Ok, Thank you for calling HP.

That was it... No fuss, no muss, problem handled. All told I think I was on the phone for all of five minutes. Not bad, not bad at all, not when you consider what passes for customer service these days...

(I received a replacement monitor, as promised, 3 days later.)

Upcoming Events

- "Patch Tuesday" – July 11. Don't forget to visit the Microsoft update site, <http://update.microsoft.com>.
- Interop New York – September 18- 22. Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York, <http://www.interop.com>.

If you know of any upcoming technology conferences please send me the details... I'll include them in my next column.

Web Site

Our webmaster, Scott Preston, is hard at work on a new and improved version of our Web site. Our redesigned site will be based on an open source content management system called Joomla.

Moving to a database-driven content management system will allow us to update the site faster and add new features, like message boards. If you'd like a sneak preview of the new site, drop me a note and I'll send you a link.

Windows 98 Sunset

Support for Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition and Windows Millennium Edition (Me) ends on Tuesday, July 11. Microsoft will no longer be offering paid incident technical support or providing

PRESIDENT'S FILE, Continued on page 4

Membership Information

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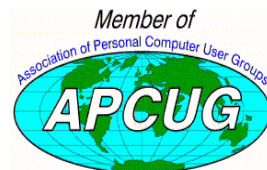
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Don Neary
APCUG Liaison
203-746-5538

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HelpLine

Volunteers have offered to field member questions by phone. Please limit calls to the hours indicated below. Days means 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; evening means 6 to 9:30 p.m. Please be considerate of the volunteer you are calling. HelpLine is a free service. If you are asked to pay for help or are solicited for sales, please contact the dacs.doc editor; the person requesting payment will be deleted from the listing. Can we add your name to the volunteer listing?

d = day **e** = evening

Program	Name	Phone #	
Alpha Four	Dick Gingras	(203) 775-1102	(d e)
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(e)
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DOS	John Gallichotte	(203) 426-0394	(d e)
Electronics	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	(d e)
Focus	Jim Scheef	(860) 355-0034	(e)
Hardware	John Gallichotte	(203) 426-0394	(d e)
Interface-Instrumentation	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	(d e)
Microsoft Access	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
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Directors' Notes

A regular meeting of your Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on Monday, June 12, 2006. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Corzo, Gallichotte, Leifels, Setaro and Yates. President Jeff Setaro presided and Secretary Lisa Leifels kept the record. Minutes of the last meeting held on May 8, 2006 were approved.

Treasurer Charles Bovaird reported current cash assets of \$11,794.33, consisting of total bank and postal accounts in the amount of \$11,715.47, plus postage on hand of \$78.86. Subtracting a liability of prepaid dues in the amount of \$5,529.00 left a net equity of \$6,265.33. He also reported that there are 327 members, of which 60 are electronic.

On July 11, David Goldberg and Shirley Fredlund will discuss the Voice for Joanie program and MyTobii Eye Control Assistive Technology. Jamie has a commitment from Best Buy to do a presentation at the August general meeting. Jamie requested that Best Buy discuss some of the newer technologies, such as TiVo and HDTV. He has not heard back from Microsoft, but will get in touch with them again. He also contacted the magazine Smart Computing about doing a presentation. Mike Kaltschnee has offered to do an updated presentation on blogging and podcasting. Jamie will look into finding a speaker to discuss some of the more popular non IE browsers, such as Firefox and Opera.

Charlie reported that the membership attendance at the June general meeting was five more than the previous meeting, with an additional eighteen visitors signing in. When Jeff asked the audience where they had heard about the meeting, most said they found out about the meeting from the DACS website. Jeff said that the winner of the Nano, read about the meeting in the Danbury News-Times. Charlie said three new people had signed up to become members.

Jamie noticed that many of the other computer user groups have switched to having only an electronic version of their newsletter. Jamie asked Charlie what percent of the membership he has email addresses for. Charlie said he has the email addresses for about 2/3 of the membership. Since printing the newsletter is one of the biggest expenses, Jamie thought we should review this matter again in the middle of next year.

At the last board meeting, Howie Berger recommended having less than twelve general meetings a year. Richard

DIRECTORS' NOTES, Continued on page 4

President's File, Continued from page 2

security updates for those operating systems after that date.

If you're still using Windows 98 or Windows Millennium Edition, I'd strongly suggest moving to Windows XP.

Now that Microsoft has officially put them out to pasture, third party developers will slowly start dropping support for Win 98 and Win ME as well. Most notably, ZoneLabs, the maker of the ZoneAlarm personal firewall, has dropped support for Win 98/Me from ZoneAlarm 6.5. Webroot Software's forthcoming SpySweeper 5 also will not work with Windows 98 or Windows Me. I suspect other anti-virus and/or anti-spyware software developers will drop support for Windows 98/Me over the next year also.

End Notes

Not much in the way of notes for this month... I'm currently reading *The Saboteurs*, by W.E.B Griffin and I have *Warlord: No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy*, by Ilario Pantano, Malcolm McConnell and *The Traitor*, by Stephen Coonts, on deck.

Well, that's it for this month. You can e-mail me with your comments, questions, criticisms or book recommendations at jasetaro@mags.net or jasetaro@yahoo.com.

Cheers;

—JEFF SETARO

Directors' Notes, Continued from page 3

Corzo thought having a general meeting every other month would not be a good idea. Jamie recommended we not have a general meeting during one of the summer months when the attendance usually decreases.

Jamie suggested that Sean Henderson get in touch with Ken Graff, who is the leader of the Digital Imaging SIG, to come up with a more innovative DACS sticker.

—LISA LEIFELS

Be Informed by E-mail

Members who wish to receive DACS email messages who have not received an email notice for the General Meeting should send a request to be put on the DACS email list to treasurer@dacs.org.

Meeting Review

Apple, Apple, Apple, Apple

By Jamie Yates



TOUR JUNE General Meeting, Dave Marra, Apple Senior Systems Engineer, treated us to a 90-minute whirlwind tour of Apple hardware and software products. He also managed to get in several short demos and still answer questions

First, for the hardware. Apple currently offers a number of different computers which support, for the first time, Intel Core Duo chips. Using these new chips has allowed for major performance increases over previous models. The iMac, MacBook, MacBook

Pro and the Mac Mini, using the Core Duo chips, perform from 2 to 6 times faster than their predecessors. All come with a remote control; all but the Mac Mini include a built-in video camera; and the MacBook and MacBook Pro laptops have the unique MagSafe power adapter. This adapter is magnetically attached to the unit, so that if the cord is accidentally hit it automatically disconnects, so the unit is not pulled from its location onto the floor. The built-in camera allows for integrated video conferencing, and the remote allows for control of the machine from up to 30 feet away for viewing photos, watching videos, playing music and giving presentations.

Software for Apple products contains a number of free applications that allow a user to do some great things in the multimedia area. Dave both discussed the product's features and gave a few demonstrations. The Apple software family includes iLife, which is a suite of programs including iMovie, iPhoto, iTunes, iDVD, iWeb and GarageBand.

iPhoto allows the user to take photos into the Mac and manipulate them in various ways to improve their appearance. It can handle up to 250,000 pictures and create albums for sharing with other people. Using Photocasting, other people will see your albums in their photo libraries just the way you do. And whenever you add or subtract to your Photocast

album, it will change in theirs. You can also create picture calendars and greeting cards, and using iWeb, create a picture page on your web site.

iMovie allows for the creation of HD (high definition) movies. It provides instant themes. Each

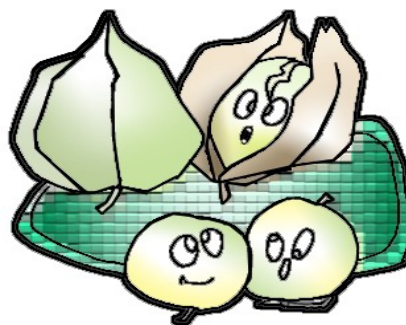
theme contains a collection of professionally designed scenes that give your movie a personality from start to finish—including video and graphic overlays and advanced transitions. It also provides video effects and a built-in sound studio. iMovie allows for multiple movies to be open at

the same time, so movie and audio clips can be taken from one movie and used in another. When your movie is done, it can be published as a video podcast using iWeb and added to the iTunes directory for others to see.

iDVD allows for creation of a professional DVD made up of movies and/or photos. It supports wide screen format and comes with a variety of themes. iDVD has built-in support for a wide variety of DVD media formats - including DVD-R, DVD-RW, DVD+R, DVD+RW, and DVD+R DL. So now you have more options than ever.

GarageBand, which provides the best way to record music on a Mac is now the best way to record podcasts. Podcasting in GarageBand puts you in the control room of your own full-featured radio station. You can add a podcast artwork track just by dragging in images from your iLife Media Browser. Drag in a title card with the name of your podcast and a picture of yourself. It has a built-in speech enhancer and dynamic "ducking" effect that automatically reduces music volume when you speak, so your listeners always hear the talk above the tunes. It can even record from iChat. From GarageBand, you can send your podcast to iWeb, where you can create a new podcast series or add to an existing series. Then click "Publish" to get your podcast on the Web. iWeb even lets

Apples, Continued on page 5



Meeting Preview

Communicating in the Blink of an Eye

By Jamie Yates

ON TUESDAY, JULY 11, DACS will be featuring a dual presentation on both the Voice For Joanie program and one of the assistive technologies that they use. Our guests for the evening will be Shirley Fredlund, who founded the Voice For Joanie program in 1990, and David Goldberg, president of Health Science.

What is Voice For Joanie?

Imagine being sick and unable to speak...or consumed by thoughts, but powerless to express them in words...Suppose you couldn't let anyone know that you were thirsty, cold or in pain. Imagine the creative adaptation of computer hardware and software to restore a paralyzed person's ability to "speak" by activating a voice synthesizer with the blink of an eye!

This is the Voice For Joanie program—a group of dedicated volunteers who research computer technology and adapt it to the needs of victims of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease). Voice For Joanie has furnished, at no charge, communicators to a total of 488 people, 459 in 139 Connecticut towns, 13 in New York State and 16 in various other states.

Clients are referred to Voice For Joanie after all other medical, therapeutic and rehabilitative services have been exhausted. Referrals come from doctors, health care agencies and support organizations, as well as other ALS victims and their families and friends. Once an inquiry is received, a Voice For Joanie volunteer talks with the client and family members to evaluate the need and to determine which equipment will help. Modifications are then made according to individual need.

Voice For Joanie communicators are used in various ways. Text is created by an infrared detector, which scans the eye

as it is opened and closed to select letters, words or phrases on the screen. Typed messages are then "spoken" by the voice synthesizer, read from a printer or screen

or transmitted via telephone through a computer modem. A blink of the eye can thus create artificial speech. Voice For Joanie frees people with the paralyzing, degenerative disease, ALS to operate a computer, troll the Internet,

communicate with others, or manage their affairs.

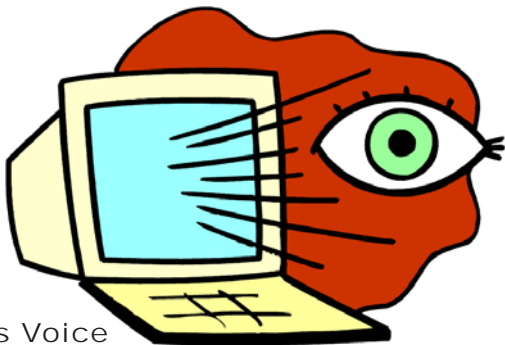
David Goldberg will present and demonstrate a new release of one of the products his company sells called My Tobii. My Tobii Eye Control System offers easy to use and truly effective communication for people with severely limited mobility. The MyTobii system consists of a specific computer display that can detect precisely where the user is looking on the screen, together with a suite of application software which allows the user to communicate and interact using only his or her eyes without any external devices

What can you do with My Tobii?

- Easily and effectively use eye gaze to control specially designed applications—for example, eye controlled e-mail, mouse moving and text editing. All programs from Tobii Technology.

- Use custom designed tools for eye controlled user input; for example, innovative eye controlled on-screen keyboards and an eye controlled version of the Dasher for high speed text input.

- Communicate using leading third party communication and interaction software, which have been specially modified to integrate with MyTobii. One example is The GRID from Sensory Software and communicator from Viking Software.



- Directly control the mouse pointer to use any Windows software.
- Control your environment by using other software

Come and learn about the Voice For Joanie Program and My Tobii. DACS has supported the Voice For Joanie program for years, and is always in need of volunteers.

DACS meetings are held at the Danbury Hospital auditorium. Activities begin at 7 p.m. with casual networking, a general question and answer period (Ask DACS) and a discussion of what's new in technology, followed by a short break and the featured evening presentation at 8:00. As a reminder, our General Meetings are free and open to the public so invite anyone you know who would be interested in this topic.

Apples, Continued from page 4

you submit your podcast to the iTunes Music Store, so you can attract new fans.

One of the most interesting new pieces of Apple software available is the beta version of Boot Camp. It allows you to run both the Mac operating system and Windows on the new Intel Mac machines.

After the hardware and software products were presented, Dave demoed several of the software products highlighting some of their more creative features.

The two most interesting demos showed new features of both iMovie and GarageBand. The first showed how you can have video play through the letters of a title just like the professionals. The second built a two-minute podcast about DACS, using pictures, voice and music. It was easy to do, took only five minutes and looked pretty good.

The audience learned a lot about Apple products and it was a most enjoyable evening.

Thanks, Dave....

Are you up to your nose with computer questions? DACS Special Interest Groups may have the answers. If not, let us know, and we'll try to create a new SIG that helps fulfill your special needs.



What's News

June, 2006

By Jamie Yates

The format of What's News is still evolving, so if you have any suggestions on changes or improvements please send an email to vpprograms@dacs.org. Topics should be related to computers or electronics in general, and include a brief description, along with a URL that provides further details. Past segments can be found in our Newsletter archives.

Description: Find me instantly pinpoints your location on a map. Location channels give one-click access to find the nearest hotspot, the coolest events and local traffic, weather, and news. Share your location with others and provide directions on how to find you or publish your location for friend finder. Provides browser toolbar. Currently supports Windows, IE, and Firefox; Linux and Mac support on the way.

Source: <http://www.loki.com/>.

Description: Samsung Readies Hybrid Hard Drive. Drive will include flash memory, allowing for better battery life and faster boot time. Flash memory acts as a storage buffer, holding data until it's full and only then writing the data to the disk. Cuts down on the amount of disk activity—typically the new drive spins only a few seconds every 10 or 20 minutes. Battery life is extended by between 8 percent and 10 percent. On boot-up a computer with a hybrid drive should start between 8 seconds and 25 seconds faster.

Source: <http://www.pcworld.com/resource/article/0,aid,125761,pg,1,RSS,RSS,00.asp>.

Description: Want to find the name of a font used in a publication? Upload scanned image of font to the web site below. Supports most common image formats, for example GIF, JPEG, TIFF, BMP. Maximum image size is around 360 x 275 pixels. Try to get the text horizontal, and make sure letters are not touching. MyFonts is an excellent site for seeing and buying new fonts.

Source: <http://www.myfonts.com/WhatTheFont/>.

Description: Want to see a site as it looked years ago? Or just yesterday? Or sites that no longer exist? Try the Way back Machine. 55 billion pages.

Source: <http://www.archive.org/index.php>.

Description: What are the hardware requirements for Vista? It depends... *Vista Capable* or *Premium Ready*? *Capable* supports most core functions. *Premium Ready* supports advanced functions such as the Aero GUI. See web site for specific details.

Source: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/default.mspx>.

Description: Have special health problems or know someone who does? Find a wealth of information about clinical research. Includes listings of more than 41,000 active industry and government-sponsored clinical trials. Also new drug therapies in research and those recently approved by the FDA. There are other sites that provide similar information.

Source: <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov/>; <http://www.centerwatch.com/>

Description: Detailed information on Browser Helper Objects and Toolbars. Also list of Active X objects. Tells which are legitimate and which are spyware, viruses, etc. Great for looking up all those unknowns that your computer may have acquired. Plus a lot of other great reference information.

Source: <http://castlecops.com/ActiveX.html> ; <http://castlecops.com/CLSID.html>.

Description: Want to listen to an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed on your iPod? Converts text only feeds to podcasts. Take it with you and listen to it on the road. Many high profile ones already converted for free. Fee required if more than 3 non-supported converted per month.

Source: <http://www.talkr.com/>.

Description: Motorola designs therapeutic vibrating cell phone. Have you ever wanted to put your cell phone on vibrate mode and give yourself a back massage? Motorola submitted a patent application on April 20 for a cell phone that can vibrate to alert you of an incoming call and/or "be used for therapeutic stimulation." You can set the time that your phone will vibrate and choose a pre-programmed vibration pattern. Alternatively, a pattern can be downloaded to the device...from, for example, a doctor's website or in-office computer by a therapist.

Source: <http://gearlog.com/blogs/gearlog/archive/2006/04/26/10319.aspx>.

Description: Finally, after many years, and many rumors, Dell to use AMD in servers by year end. Intel stranglehold broken.

Source: http://news.com.com/Dell+opts+for+AMDs+Opteron/2100-1006_3-6074059.html?tag=nfed.led.

Description: Microsoft Research Group Shot. Helps you create a perfect group photo out of a series of groups of photos. You can select your favorite parts (regions) in each shot of the series and Group Shot will automatically build a composite image. The photos must be of the same scene. Taken from the same point of view within a short period of time. Not a panorama.

Source: <http://research.microsoft.com/projects/GroupShot/>.

Description: Going to a US Disney park.? RideMax allows you to specify the attractions you wish to ride during your visit. Minimizes time spent in line. Uses historical wait time statistics for each attraction as a foundation. Schedule is tailored to the expected crowd patterns on the day of your visit—except Sundays—for the attractions you want to ride. Costs between \$17 and \$30, and runs on your computer.

Source: <http://www.ridemax.com/>.

Description: PawSense. When cats walk or climb on your keyboard, they can enter random commands and delete, damage your files, and even crash your computer. Starts automatically when system starts. Analyzes key press timings and combinations to distinguish cat typing from human typing and blocks input. It makes a sound that annoys cats. Cost about \$25

Source: <http://www.bitboost.com/pawsense/index.html>.

Troubleshooting

"Suddenly..." or "I didn't do anything!" Part 1

a month's log of a Sun City Anthem
Computer Club "house call" doctor

By Charles W. Davis

IN WORKING TO help Club members and others with their computer problems during the Thursday morning Computer Talk sessions, or more often when making "house calls," I often hear strange tales that usually involve acts of some gremlin like creature. However, gremlins are more closely related to mechanical problems in aircraft.

Generally the caller's comments start with "all of a sudden" or "suddenly" and end with "I didn't do anything." I can only surmise that it was probably one of cartoonist Bill Keane's ghostly imps "Not Me," "Nobody" or even "Ida Know."

Some recent examples:

"Suddenly..."

One morning a couple of weeks ago, I received a call and the person on the other end of the phone connection was obviously very upset. She exclaimed: "Suddenly all of my desktop icons are gone! I didn't do anything! Please help me!"

This situation seemed to be serious. I had never heard of this happening. I didn't have anything on the calendar for another two hours so I hopped in my 1999 "Sapphire Blue Mica" (marketing division color name of course) Miata for the short drive up the hill to her Tall Mesa Village home. She was right, the icons were indeed missing. A simple right click on the blank desktop, hover over Arrange Icons by: and then click on Show Desktop Icons. This was definitely an act by the "little people." As I said, I hadn't heard of this situation before. Therefore, it must have been "Not Me" wishing to get off the hook by whispering in my ear how I might arrive at the solution. Since the club member was in

the back room and the house girl had let me in, I quickly left the scene.



The next day the same lady called and said that her "My Computer" icon was missing from the desktop. Realizing that it wasn't the normal desktop shortcut icon, I was puzzled. Not thinking things through, I again slid onto the seat in the Miata and shortly arrived on the scene. Sure enough most icons were visible, but the "My Computer" icon was not in its

normal position. It wasn't immediately visible. I later noticed the top edge of the icon protruding just above the task bar. Once again, I moved the pointer to a blank spot on the desktop, right clicked on the mouse and chose Arrange Icons by and then Name. The My Desktop icon again assumed its prominence at the upper left. She said that she didn't drag and drop it down there. As I picked up a \$20 donation to the Club, I assumed that it must have been "Nobody" and left for home.

"Suddenly..."

Monday morning is usually the time for the phone calls to begin. On a recent Monday, the caller sheepishly states that "suddenly I can't access the Internet." I recognized that the person speaking to me is the same one whose 18 year old granddaughter had placed hundreds of malware programs on his laptop two weeks before. At that time I had suggested a router/firewall so that she could plug her laptop directly to the router with Internet access. He had immediately gone out and purchased and installed one. Oh yes, the granddaughter had been there over the weekend and had brought her own laptop computer.

The blue Miata once again headed up the hill (from our home in the Valley View Village all destinations seem to be "up the hill.") to their home in Arroyo Vista Village. In just a few minutes, I found that the dear child didn't plug the cable into the router as instructed, but had used grandpa's computer. Since she was an AOL user, she attempted to change Gramps' Accounts from Cox Cable to AOL dialup and failed. It would have been so easy for her to have just gone to AOL using Internet Explorer. She left for school Sunday evening and didn't mention a thing to Gramps. That way, she didn't have to tell on either "Ida Know" or "Not Me." I picked up the \$20 donation to the club and was soon on my way.

An admonition: Set up a Guest Account without Administrative rights. Place a User name and password on the Administrative (your's) account.

"All of a Sudden..."

"All of a sudden" turns up many times a month and in some unusual situations. Last week, I received a call from a member that was using Microsoft Office Outlook. It seems that she had been entering information into a new contact when "all of a sudden" she couldn't enter information. She explained that she had been using Outlook and contacts for years and had never had this problem. Since this didn't seem (to me) that this required immediate attention, I arranged an appointment for the next morning. My Miata and I arrived at her Golf Mesa Village home just as the Grandfather clock guarding the entry was announcing that it was 10:00. Grandfather clocks that I am aware of don't announce "a.m." or "p.m."

She met me at the door and we proceeded to the office and she took her place in front of her computer to show me what was happening. She began keying in the house number, using the numeric key pad and just as she had said, nothing worked as expected. I immediately saw why this had happened so "suddenly." Apparently "Nobody" had pressed the Num Lock key thereby turning it off. So as she would enter a house number, things went wild as the 2,4, 6, and 8 keys acted as direction keys, 7 & 9 were Home and Page Up respectively and 1 & 3 were End and Page down. I asked her to press the Num Lock key and "all of a sudden" the problem was resolved. I collected

"Suddenly," Continued on page 15

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: July 2006

Access. Designs and implements solutions using Microsoft Access, and with SQL Server as a back-end to the database program.
Contact: Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920 (*bpreston@mags.net*).
Meets on 2nd Tuesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.
Next meeting: Aug 8

Advanced Operating Systems. Explores OS/2, Linux, and NT operating systems. For info, follow link to Don's site on *dacs.org*.
Contact: Bill Keane (*wbk@mags.net*) 203-438-8032.
Meetings suspended until new SIG leader is chosen.
Next meeting: TBA

ASP.Net. Focuses on Web site/server application program development using Microsoft Visual Studio, C#, VB, Javascript and SQL Server programming tools. Session starts with a Random Access session, followed by a programming discussion with examples.
Contact: Chuck Fizer (*cfizer@snet.net*).
Meets 1st Wednesday, 4-6 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: July 5

Excel/Math. Review of mathematics with emphasis on programming spreadsheets for business applications.
Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 (*aam@mags.net*).
Meetings suspended until further notice.
Next meeting: TBA

Digital Imaging. All about digital cameras, retouching and printing.
Contact: Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 (*graffic@bigfoot.com*).
Meets last Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: July 26

Investment Strategies. Discusses various investment strategies to maximize profits and limit risk.
Contact: Paul Gehrett, 203 426-8436, (*pgehr4402@aol.com*).
Meets 3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Edmond Town Hall, Newtown.
Next Meeting: July 20

Jobs. Networking and discussion of the jobs search environment.
Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 (*aam@mags.net*).
Meets by e-mail.
Next meeting: TBA

Linux. Provides Help in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. Also of interest to Apple owners using OS X.
Contact: John Lansdale 914-533-2002
Meets 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 pm at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: July 19

Macintosh. Focuses on all aspects of the Mac operating system.
Contact: Richard Corzo (*macsig@dacs.org*)
Meets 1st Thursday at DACS Resource Center at 7 p.m.
Next Meeting: July 6

Microcontroller. Investigates microcontroller applications from theory to hands-on implementation and member projects.
Contact: John Gallichotte, 203 426-0394, (*tlclotus@ieee.org*).
Meets on 4th Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: In hiatus until further notice.

Open Source Web Programming. Focuses on open source tools for Windows and Linux.
Contact: John Lansdale, 914-533-2002.
Meets on 3rd Monday, 7:00 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: July 17

PC Maintenance. Review of PC hardware and OpSys maintenance and use.
Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 (*aam@mags.net*).
Meets on 4th Thursday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.
Next meeting: July 20

Server. Explores Back Office server and client applications, including Win NT Servers and MS Outlook.
Contact: Jim Scheef (*jscheef@telemarksys.com*)
Meets 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.
Next meeting: July 13

VB.Net, Visual Basic-6. Focuses on Smart Client Windows application development using Visual Studio, VB, C# and SQL Server programming tools. Starts with a Random Access session followed by Object Oriented discussions and programming with examples.
Contact: Chuck Fizer, 203 798-9996 (*cfizer@snet.net*) or Jim Scheef, 860 355-8001 (*JScheef@Telemarksys.com*).
Meets 1st Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, preceded 1 hour with a shared cost pizza snack.
Next Meeting: July 5

Wall Street. Examines Windows stock Market software.
Contact: Phil Dilloway, 203 367-1202 (*dilloway@ntplx.net*).
Meets on last Monday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: July 31

Web Design. Applications for designing and creating Web sites.
Contact: Anna Collens, 203-746-5922 (*acvo@annagraphics.com*).
Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

SIG News & Events

ASP.Net. The session commenced with our note taker and scribe Claude Prevots in control of the pen and pencil, even now in the 21st century. As usual we started with random access, our opening topic for random questions was Secure Socket Layer. A programmer had ticked this button in the Visual Studio IDE in error and then hence forth could no longer transfer files to the server because the system could not find a port. All IDE applications were blocked. This facility encrypts files in transit to the server, however that's not what the programmer wanted to do. For lack of an undo or happy solution otherwise, it was suggested to start anew with a clean slate of programs and reinstallation of Visual Studio.

Ever the innovator, Chuck explained his current coding effort for two applications, RemoveObsoleteFiles and ZipBack. An excess of backup files from SQL Server can be removed using only date of creation as a criterion for removal from a backup directory. Some swift coding does the trick. This program, in source form and as a .dll is available to anyone who wants it. Let Chuck Fizer, *cfizer@snet.net* you want a copy.

Chuck had more to tell us about recent developments for his ZipBack application that is displayed in the ToolBox of Visual Studio. It is a tool to help code a segment in the code behind logic to take action on something placed on the page

SIG Notes, Continued on page 14

July 2006

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div> <div> Jun 2006 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 </div> <div> Aug 2006 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 </div> </div>						1
2	3	 Independence Day	 4 PM Internet Prog. 7 PM Visual Basic Chuck Fizer 203 798-9996	 Macintosh 7:00 PM Richard Corzo maccsig@dacs.org	7	8
9	 7:00 PM Board of Directors	 7:00 P.M. GENERAL MTG	12	 7:00 PM Server Jim Scheef 860 355-0034	14	 DACS.DOC Deadline
16	 Opensource Web Program. 7:00 PM John Lansdale 914-533-2002	 Web Design Anna Collens 203 746-5922	 7:30 PM Linux John Lansdale 914 533-2002	7:00 PM PC Maintenance Charles Bovard 203 792-7881 7:30 PM Investment Paul Gehrett 203 426-8436	21	22
23	24	25	 7:00 PM Digital Imaging Ken Graff 203 775-6667	27	28	29
30	 7:00 PM WALL STREET Phil Dilloway 203 367-1202					

Texas Hold-Em an Evolutionary Approach, Part 7

By Richard Ten Dyke

SIX MONTHS AGO, we started an adventure in Poker, Darwinian Evolution, and Computer Programming. The adventure is now over, and it was a success. This is the final chapter and these are the results.

For programming, we used an object-oriented programming language called REALbasic, which contains all of the old capabilities of the BASIC language with object capability added. We created separate objects for the components of the game, including the deck, the deal, the player, and the game. The development environment that comes with the compiler already contained objects for building the human interface, including windows, buttons, and images.

We found that the built-in objects were essential to building the application, but the objects which we added were not. The logic of the game became cumbersome to debug, and we reverted to old habits. The deck, deal, player, and game objects were replaced with straight code, using properties (global variables) and methods (subroutines). Debugging the game logic became a challenging and time consuming part of the process, as expected. I do not rule out the use of adding one's own objects to the system, but they should not be done in small pieces, but rather in larger chunks, such as, by adding an entire poker simulation to the system as a single object. That is for the future.

As for the game, we chose Texas Hold-Em, a variation of poker which consists of two player cards and up to five community cards. This makes the game quite different from seven-card stud where the player holds four hidden cards and three of the hand are exposed. In Hold- em, a player has to assess his chances using the community cards as they support his own hand, contrasted to those of the other players.

The first challenge was to find a means to place a value on a particular hand. We solved the valuation problem by finding a means to create a probability that ranks the possibilities of any particular hand against a random opponent. If you start by holding a pair of aces, it might seem that you are a near-certain winner. You are not. If the community cards show four

spades, for example, and one of your aces is not the ace of spades, then another player with an ace, king, or queen or jack of spades is going to win the pot with a high flush and you end up with zilch. But if you hold those aces, and the community cards show a mixture of suits and ranks, you have a very high probability of winning the pot. So the lay of the community cards is essential to placing a value, and a probability on a particular hand.

The second challenge for the game is betting strategy, which should rather be called "betting policy." A policy is a set of guidelines that a player uses to decide when to raise, bet, call, or fold. This is partly based on the quality of the player's hand, those two cards, and how they mesh with the community cards as well as the current betting situation. The hand quality is easy to assess. The betting situation is not. One can identify clues which include the betting behavior of the other players, and things like how much money you have, how many players started and how many remain who have not folded, etc. But the player needs to generalize on all this information, to find patterns that can be used as templates for decision making. I have been less successful in this department, and will have to do more to analyze this game logic. I am uncertain how important this is, and it may be less important than other factors that we will see in a moment.

The third important part of the study was the use of Darwinian evolution to develop the betting policies. It is well known for poker that a conservative betting policy is "better." The question is whether there is a single "best" betting policy or whether there are several. The answer turns out to be more subtle than the question that was asked.

Before we answer that, we can report that the evolution process works well. To refresh your memory, players come and go in the game. Poorer players are replaced by near-clones of the better ones. Over time, the player pool evolves to conservative play. As the betting becomes more conservative, the games get shorter. Frequently the game is over before all of the community cards are shown, because

all players but one have folded. This process is confirmed by observation of real games with real players. The failure of aggressive players—those not playing conservatively—occurred consistently, although they were "tolerated" in some simulated tournaments before being eliminated.

An anticipated bifurcation of player's policies did not occur. We can't be too disappointed, however, because it probably points up an important truth: poker is a simple game. If the game were more complicated, for example by introducing a high-low split of the pot, then we could expect to see some players become adept going for the high hands, and others adept at going for the low. The players exist in an environment, and they respond to it. If the environment rewards one group of actions, then those are the actions which will evolve. In a real world, the environment is much more complex, and many survival strategies are possible, so there is more opportunity for bifurcation. We will need a more complex game than poker to test these theories.

But wait, there's more.

Let us get back to the question of whether there is a single *best* betting policy.

The environment in the game of poker consists of more than the hands that are dealt and the rules of the game. It also includes the actions of all of the players. And here is the subtle part. The environment is not stable, since it evolves along with the players as they themselves evolve. So a betting policy that is optimum playing with one set of players will not be optimum as opposing players change over time.

Here is the experiment that demonstrates that. After running a simulation, and after it has stabilized, we stop it. At that point, we pick a winning policy, and make it fixed. That is, you, as a player, stay with that particular policy in the game no matter what. Now let us start the simulation again with new players. Other players in the game come and go. They are not as good as you are, since you have already evolved. How will you do? The answer is that you will win—initially. However, the other players will evolve, and gradually you will win less. Then, the other players will evolve further and soon you will be eaten alive. This happens because you have become a fixed target in the environment and have become the food that the other players use to survive. This is remindful of the observations that led

Gerald M. Edelman to describe how the immune system works in the human body (and to win a Nobel Prize in the process). Consider that you, as a player, are a virus invading the host organism (the game) and that the antibodies (the other players) are waiting for something to happen. There is not much to do until you show up, but when you do they go into action. Over a period of time, the antibodies themselves evolve, using you as the target, until they find just the right combination of features to destroy you.

To what degree this analogy works I don't know; but it illustrates that while there may be a perfect policy for playing a game, it depends on how the other players are playing. Your policy must be flexible enough to take that into consideration. Like a virus, a policy must evolve along with the game itself or be destroyed. The fact that a virus can evolve and defeat an immune system, or that bacteria can evolve and defeat antibiotics, is well known in medicine. Similarly, in poker, a perfect policy is not determined by only the rules of the game, but also on how it is being played at the moment. A perfect policy is a flexible policy, tuned to the moment. I am sure that really good poker players know this instinctively. We learned it by Darwinian simulation.

RICHARD TEN DYKE has previously contributed to this newsletter on the topic of Digital Photography and computer creativity. He is retired from IBM and can be reached at tendyke@bedfordny.com. All opinions are his own, and he welcomes comments

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Wanted

Award-winning computer publication, *dacs.doc*, is seeking an editor. Candidates must only demonstrate a proficiency in the English language and a willingness to learn, and need not have prior publishing experience or advanced knowledge of computing. Attention to detail and a willingness to seek advice from others would be a strong plus.

This position will take effect in January, 2007. Current editorial staff will train successful candidate in applicable software and publishing tasks.

Different Keystrokes

Long Journey into Linux

by Rich DiFranco

FINALLY HAVE A GOOD version of Linux running on my laptop. It took me about two years and a good bit of trying. I have a Dell laptop with a forty Gig hard drive running Windows XP home edition. I wanted to install Linux as a dual boot. I felt that I needed about ten to fifteen Gigabytes for Linux to make it worthwhile. Please allow me to paraphrase the Late Senator Everett Dirksen as I may never have another chance. A few gigs here and a few gigs there and pretty soon your talking real memory.

Somehow I was able to find and establish a separate three gigabyte partition on the end of the the drive. Three gigabytes seemed too small. I wanted a larger area. I wanted to take some of the Windows NTFS partition. Over a span of about two years, I tried experimenting with Knoppix, which is a live CD-based Linux. At the Linux special interest group meetings, we tried using a utility called QtParted which was supposed to resize partitions. This never worked, because I couldn't mount the NTFS partition for reading and writing.

Red Hat Demo

The Linux SIG leader gave me a CD with a cut-down, demo version of RED Hat Linux. I was able to install this Red Hat Linux, but I wanted to have more disk space space for Linux. Also, the Red Hat version lacked a lot of applications. Everyone kept telling me to get Partition Magic to reallocate the partitions. I was reluctant to spend the \$35.00 for a program that I would use only once.

I tried to install Knoppix on the hard drive. Knoppix is Linux that runs from a CD. It is a good robust version but you can't save files, as everything is mounted for read only. There is a script on the Knoppix disk that installs Knoppix as a dual boot, through Grub, on the hard drive. However, I had trouble with the install. It wiped out my previous dual boot from Red Hat, so that I had to re-install the Red hat demo just to be able to log onto Windows XP.

QtParted

QtParted is a partitioning utility that comes with Knoppix. Whenever I tried using QtParted, I got the same message:

The NTFS partition is fragmented. I ran the defragment utility over and over. There is something in Windows XP, NTFS that stays permanently fragmented. Someone at the Linux SIG recommended deleting the Swap file, thinking this was the file that was fragmented but, it didn't help.

Partition Magic

After two years of trying, a friend told me about a web site offering Partition Magic for about \$11.00. So, after some hemming and hawing, I entered my credit card number and bought it. I hate to part with a buck. They are so hard to come by.

Partition Magic worked as advertised. I can now take some disk real estate from the NTFS partition and give it to my Linux partition. It is, sort of, computer eminent domain. I now have five gigabytes of disk dedicated to Linux. This seems adequate for now.

Ubuntu

I have installed The Ubuntu version of Linux. It appears to have more applications than the Red Hat demo, and I can download more. The install was not without its challenges. It wasn't obvious as to how to tell it where on the disk to install Linux—that is, in which partition. A little testing and clear thinking, and I was able to get the install to work.

Now the problem is learning Linux. A lot of it looks like Windows and some of it looks like DOS. I need to learn the culture and community, Such as where things are kept, how problems are fixed. This doesn't include finding printer drivers.

Thanks to all who helped

I want to thank all the people who helped and encouraged me on this endeavor. I don't want to name anyone for fear of missing some. Don't go too far, as I will need help in the future. As with any good tool, Linux has become a Journey, not a goal.

RICH DIFRANCO has been a DACS member since the Brookfield library days. Programmed in FORTRAN, COBOL, and Paradox Now learning the new platforms as well as producing an occasional essay.

Circuit Rider

Version 4.0

By Jim Scheef

Net Neutrality

★ IT'S TIME TO CALL your Congress people again. I've written about net neutrality several times, most recently this past March. This critical issue is three pages out of the 50-page Communications, Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement Act of 2006, the latest amendment to the Communications Act of 1934 (boy, they really had a command of language back in the 30's, eh?). Unfortunately, a win means that things stay the way they are, so it's difficult to get people excited about this. Plus those who want this passed have raised so much FUD that even the news media cannot define the issue. So I'll give you a couple of illustrations that might help us understand the problem.

In pre-revolutionary Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin was a printer and publisher. To distribute his newspaper, Franklin hired couriers to deliver the newspapers to subscriber's homes. Since these couriers would cover most of the city, he also started to deliver mail—the start of a postal service in that colony. When competing newspaper publishers asked that Franklin's couriers also deliver their newspapers, Franklin refused. The other publishers could deliver their own papers. This is possibly the first instance of a carrier exercising control over content, at least on this continent.

Let's apply this to the Internet. If you get your Internet access from AT&T and they offer a movies-on-demand service, should they be required to also carry a similar service from Sony? If Verizon were to partner with the CNN news service, are they required to allow you to read the Wall Street Journal web site or any other news source? What if they allow the packets to pass, but only if the WSJ pays an additional fee? What if they allow the packets to pass, but just slow them down a little so the WSJ service is harder to use? Is that fair?

Now, let's look at the cable industry. Historically, the cable industry decides what you can watch by determining what channels they carry and how

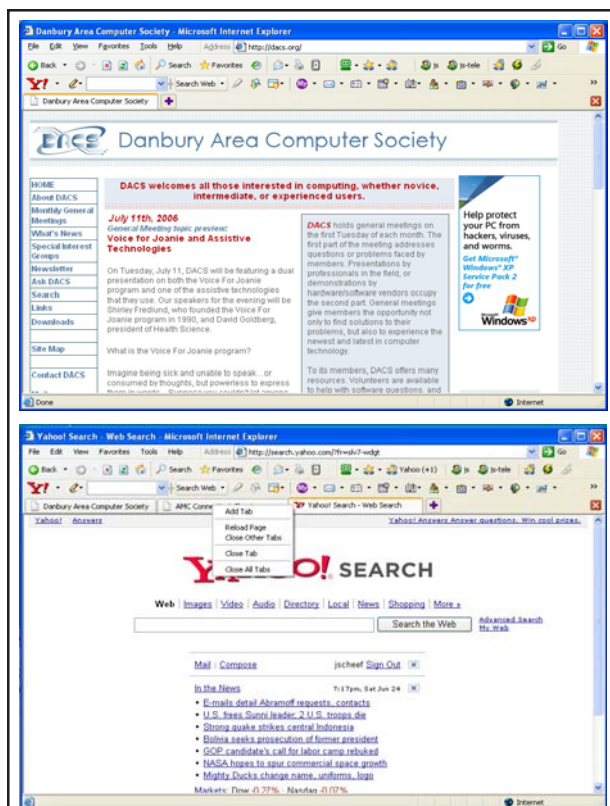
those channels will be bundled and priced. After all, they paid to put that wire on the poles running down your street; they provide the “head end” that puts the signals in the wire, so they can decide which signals reach your house. What if they applied this traditional business model to the Internet? “Basic Internet” would include the “major outlets” of MSN, AOL and Yahoo (does that include email?). Naturally you would be required to use their browser. For a slight extra charge you could add the “sports package” that includes selected sports sites like Major League Baseball. Of course, access to the special World Cup Soccer coverage would be extra. And the rest of the Internet? Well, since those sites don't pay an “access fee” to guarantee delivery of their packets . . . well, you get the idea.

Given some time, even my simple brain could develop these scenarios further. Just imagine what really smart people might come up with—you know, really smart people like the ones who ran Enron, or the people who brought you the Sony root kit. The telecom industry says that requiring them to play fair with everyone's content is unfair. Back in April, the Markey amendment would have fixed the issue but it was defeated. This is being decided by the clueless people we have elected to Congress. Call them, write to them, tell them that the Internet is important to you and must remain free and open as the unfettered conduit of democracy—not just for us, but for the entire world. If we don't require net neutrality, how

can we look Saudi Arabia or China in the eye? The really frightening part is that net neutrality is often seen as a simple issue about money and the moneyed interests are speaking as only they can. Remind your Congress-people (the issue is now in the Senate) who elected them, and how you feel on the issues that matter to you.

A Pleasant Surprise, I Think

A couple weeks ago, I opened Internet Explorer and discovered that it had tabs! You know, tabs like in Firefox, Mozilla, Netscape, Opera. It seems that every other browser on the planet offers tabbed browsing—except Internet Explorer. Unfortunately I did not recall installing anything to add these tabs. My first thought was that I had somehow installed some spyware



Note that I moved the IE Address bar up next to the menu items. This saves an entire “row” of screen real estate. The middle bar is the IE “Standard Buttons” tool bar edited to remove the less useful buttons, with the RoboForm toolbar docked on the remainder of that row. The third row is the Yahoo toolbar with buttons for the items I find most useful starting with My Yahoo, Mail, Address Book, etc. Also, I know that the proper spelling of Yahoo is Yahoo!, but I find the exclamation mark annoying and it really screws up the grammar checker in Microsoft Word.

add-in to IE like those search “toolbars,” but looking at the installed add-ons showed nothing unusual. Then I recalled that I had upgraded to a new version of the Yahoo toolbar. You know how an application will pop up a small window as it starts up, informing you that there is a new version and would you like to upgrade now? Most of the time I’m in a hurry and click “No” to get the #%^* window out of the way; but after two or three of these reminders, I figure that the new version is worth the trouble and click “Yes” to get the upgrade. The Yahoo Toolbar upgrade is quick and does not require a reboot or even a restart of IE. However, (there is always a however) the new features (and their defaults) do not take effect until you do close and reopen IE. For me that was at least a day later when I had forgotten all about the upgrade. So when I opened IE – SURPRISE!!

Once I found the setting in the Toolbar options to turn tabbed browsing on or off, I could relax and determine if this really is a good feature. Regular readers will recall that I am a big Yahoo fan and sang the praises of Yahoo and the toolbar back in January, '04. [I'd trade \$5 off the stock price if Yahoo would take a tougher stand with the Chinese government, but that's another issue.] Because the Yahoo Toolbar is an add-on (actually it shows as four items in the Manage Add-ons dialog) it

does not have the same control over events as the tabbed browsing built into Firefox and other browsers. This manifests itself when you try to middle-click (click the button under the scroll wheel) on a link. In most browsers, a middle-click on a link will open the target in a new tab. In the Yahoo Toolbar tabs this works only some of the time. Sometimes the toolbar gets the click event and it works properly; other times, you get that useless scrolling feature that IE has on the middle button. I've always wished I could turn that feature off (please let me know if you find the registry key to disable it).

The first screen shot shows a web site familiar to us all, open in a tab. If you click the plus button next to the tab, you get a new tab with the Yahoo search page. I would prefer an empty tab, but this opens quickly and is innocuous. The second screen shot shows IE with three tabs open plus I right-clicked on the middle tab to display the context menu that allows you to manage open tabs.

All-in-all, tabbed browsing is a pretty nifty addition to the Yahoo Toolbar that already offered pop-up blocking—an anti-spyware feature—along with quick access to all of your favorite Yahoo features. If you like Yahoo, you will like the new toolbar.

JIM SCHEEF is past president of DACS.

New Members

From 5/21/6 to 6/22/6

Rob Limbaugh

Charles & Dorothy Koenig

THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

**EXP4\2006
or earlier**

You need to renew your
DACS membership

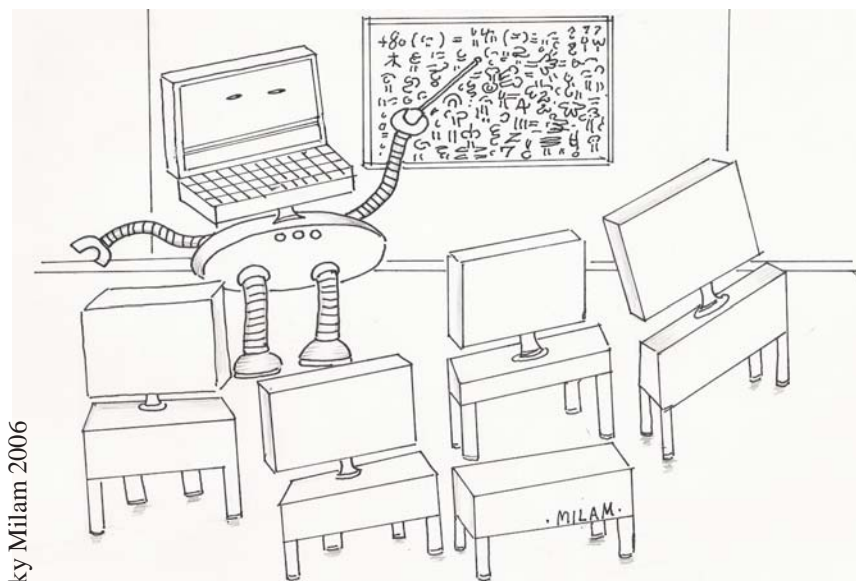
NOW

Let DACS Promote your Business

DACS is offering members free space to advertise their small businesses in the business card section of the colored insert in dacs.doc. This offer is being made subject to space available, and cards will be rotated each month to guarantee equal access.

Please send your cards to DACS at 4 Gregory Street, Danbury, CT 06810-4430, give to any board member, or e-mail graphic image to dacseditor@dacs.org.

Sorry, but postal regulations require that ads be computer related, and specifically forbid ads for Credit, Insurance or Travel Services.



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Now, class, This formula represents the universe in the first trillionths of a second of the Big Boot.

Ask DACS

June 2006

Bruce Preston, Moderator

WE WELCOME QUESTIONS FROM the floor at the start of our General Meetings. In addition, members who are not able to attend the General Meeting may submit questions to askdacs@dacs.org. We will ask the question for you and post the reply in *DACS.ORG*. Please provide as much information as possible since we can't probe during the session.

Q. I have a rather old computer (Pentium II era) that I'd like to dispose of. Are any organizations making use of such machines? Is there an environmentally-responsible way to dispose of it?

A. That machine's processor (and by implication, the other components) does not meet the minimum requirements for the machines that DACS recycles. There might be some salvageable components (modem, video card, network adapter, floppy drive, CD-ROM drive, etc.) but even those are probably very out-dated. It was suggested that you see Charlie out in the lobby at the registration desk as he runs the re-build program. While he may not be able to make use of the parts, he should be able to tell you how to dispose of them.

Q. Related question – How do I insure that the information on the hard drive can not be read?

A. We are going to guess that the hard drive is not worth installing in another machine because it is probably comparatively low capacity—today you would be hard-pressed to find a drive of less than 120 GB. So the best way to insure that it isn't read would be to remove it from the machine. Having done that, you could do several things: (a) drop it several stories onto a concrete slab; (b) get out your trusty 1/4" electric drill and drill through the drive a couple of times; (c) open up the drive and expose the platters. The drive is hermetically sealed, and normally opened only in clean-room conditions. Just opening it in a non-clean-room environment will probably introduce enough contamination to make the drive unusable. And if you ever took a clock apart, you might be interested in seeing the insides of a drive.

Q. I have a small business, three peer-to-peer networked machines – all Macs. One of the machines is run-

ning a File-Maker Pro database. I'd like to be able to share it with the other machines, and also back it up. Any suggestions?

A. After much discussion of alternatives, it was suggested that you get an external Firewire drive, and that you then mount it to mirror the drive in the machine that is currently hosting the database application. You can set up a RAID system where your primary drive is internal to the Mac, and the other drive in the RAID system is accessed via Firewire.

Q. I am using Pinnacle Studio 10.5. After about 40 minutes or so into the video, the audio is out-of-synch with the video. During preview it appears to be OK; only after I create the video does it go bad. Does anyone have any suggestions as to how to fix it?

A. It was suggested that you break the video into component 'clips' or 'chapters' so that each time a chapter starts the baseline of the audio is re-synchronized.

Q. Does anyone have any experience, good or bad, with data recovery services? I have a drive that the machine recognizes as being present, but Windows can not see the drive.

A. One of our members recommended OnTrack - <http://www.ontrack.com>. In some cases they are able to perform the recovery via a remote connection. If the machine can't be booted, etc., then the drive has to be sent for recovery. If the drive media hasn't been damaged (i.e. head crash which scored the platters) then data can usually be recovered by rebuilding the drive. Be aware that this can be a time-consuming and expensive proposition. Another member related that a drive was damaged by a severe power surge. Examination of the circuit board on the drive revealed a chip with a 'blister' on it. An identical drive was found on eBay (identical size and

firmware "Rev Level" markings on the circuit board.) The circuit board was removed from the eBay drive and placed on the damaged drive and the drive was brought back to operating condition. Data was immediately copied to a new drive.

BRUCE PRESTON is president of *West Mountain Systems*, a consultancy in Ridgefield, CT specializing in database applications. A DACS director, Bruce also leads the *Access SIG*. Members may send tech queries to Bruce at askdacs@dacs.org.

SIG Notes, Continued from page 8

that begins with a Windows web form. He illustrated its action with two events that are to occur on the server when these events are invoked. ZipBack is a Visual Studio IDE implementation that automatically generates browser javascript that the javascript programmer interfaces with to invoke the server for heavy lifting without incurring a browser postback and web page rewrite.

Our session was instructive and we look forward to further developments.

Server. The June meeting ran way overtime, as we dug into the features of DD-WRT, an open source replacement firmware for the Linksys WRT54G/GS wireless router. The advantage of using third-party firmware is all the additional features either unlocked or added to the router. An example of a very useful added feature is DHCP reservations. This allows you to assign an IP address to a computer or other device on your network, making it much easier to set up access to your computer from the outside. Have you ever wanted to set up a small web site for your family? These added features make this easier without sacrificing all of your security. Want to set up a wireless hotspot? DD-WRT includes the ability to authenticate users before granting them access to the Internet. Do you play X-Box games? There are special features for the X-Box that I do not understand. In July, we will continue to explore routers. I offered some possibilities for next month at the meeting, but no one jumped at any one option so we will discuss it on the SIG email list on Yahoo Groups. To join the list, send an email to backoffice_dacs-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and follow the instructions in the email response.

The next Server and Networking SIG meeting will be Thursday, July 13th at the DACS Resource Center.

“Suddenly,” *Continued from page 7*

the \$20 donation check to the club and was homeward bound — downhill of course.

“Suddenly...”

On another Monday, I received a call from a member stating that she had recently upgraded to MS Office 2003 and a short time later, suddenly she could no longer access MS Publisher files. This was the result of someone else messing with functions that they should have stayed away from. Support teams at Norton will vow “Not me.” But when the lady was directed to an article titled “How to use Office programs with the Norton Anti-Virus Office plug-in” she was able to resolve the problem as I watched. This article can help you extricate yourself and may be found at: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/329820/en-us>

It is maddening to think that one, nay thousands upon thousands, must jump through hoops because a bunch of programmers at Symantec (Norton) can’t get it right.

I have never understood their automatic plug-in installation. At least they should tell the user, including a list of possible problems and their resolution, and let them make a decision as to whether to install the plug in. Who needs viruses when “reputable” software manufacturers can do things like this to you?

A long time ago, in computer time, but actually just over a year ago, I stopped paying the extortion money for antivirus software and have used the free AVG antivirus, which is available from <http://free.grisoft.com/doc/1>.

“Suddenly...”

“Suddenly” you can’t open Word or most other Microsoft Office products. This happened because you owned a Hewlett Packard multi-function printer with a flash memory card reader. It seems that a security update messed with the logic for these systems and caused much havoc around the world. A follow-on update was released to affected computers during the 4th week in April. If you are still having the problem, go to Start then Windows Update, download and install all Critical updates. It seems that “Ida Know” visited Microsoft’s Redmond campus...

Suddenly...”

Last week, one of your neighbors in the Valley View Village went to his neighbors stating that his phone went “dead.” On investigation, it was learned that he had ordered and installed a new Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system.

Some of the equipment had arrived, but due to a transposition of digits when entering the credit card number, the important “Silver” box did not get shipped. “Ida Know” didn’t know how the mix up occurred. “Who Knows” stated that the customer probably discarded the silver box with the packaging. However, the land line telephone provider had been notified to discontinue the service. “Dead line!”

An admonition: Always check the contents of packages to make certain that all components are included before installing anything!

The Federal Communications Commission has a web site that explains most aspects of VoIP: <http://www.fcc.gov/voip/>.

Not so “Suddenly...”

This particular call arrived on a Tuesday, so I was surprised to hear: “Suddenly I can send e-mail but I can’t receive any messages. Everything times out. I’ve called Cox Communications and since I use Office Outlook 2003, they weren’t much help.” This phone call came in at a time that Vickie was out and wouldn’t return for a while, so I slid behind the wheel of the Miata and headed for Ridgecrest Village to see what had happened so “suddenly.”

It took several minutes of attempting to send messages to the owner’s e-mail address. Sure enough the message would be sent, but no incoming messages. After some time it would all time out. The first inbound message would never arrive. I found that there was no Internet access using Internet Explorer. I installed Firefox from my USB Flash memory and was then able to access the internet. At this time clues began to appear one-by-one.

Norton Internet Security was warning of Firefox accessing the Internet — twice!

ZoneAlarm was warning of Firefox accessing the Internet!

Oops! Only one program firewall at a time is allowed. Since the member’s Norton subscription was about to expire, I downloaded AVG antivirus to his desktop (free at <http://free.grisoft.com>), shut off the cable modem, went to uninstall Norton SystemWorks and discovered two versions. I uninstalled both. When I attempted to install AVG antivirus, the program indicated that the version of the Roxio CD creator contained code that was incompatible with AVG, and it provided a link for an update. I installed the update and then successfully installed the AVG antivirus. Then I turned on the cable modem and downloaded updates. I was grateful to the AVG programmers to make that test and inform the user. Suddenly, I decided that I

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Leave your hard-copy classifieds with Charlie, Marc, or whoever is tending the members’ table at the meeting.

like the AVG antivirus program and its creators even more than in the past.

Now I felt that I could address the original problem. I opened Office Outlook, and it proceeded to download a monstrous movie clip — 9.87MB! It was able to complete the download due to the fact that Norton wasn’t scanning inbound e-mail messages.

“Suddenly” wasn’t really all that sudden. The second and third firewall programs were installed over a period of time, but the problem didn’t manifest itself until the arrival of the large file. As an aside, it was a clip from a newscast relating the story of an autistic youth that had been the go-fer for a high school basketball team. On the last game of his senior year, the coach (dad) suited him up and put him in to play. I believe that I saw through the tears that welled up in my eyes over 21 points racked up — all three pointers. I’m not a sports fan, but am a fan of the underdog! \$20 more for the Club’s treasury.

CHARLES W. DAVIS is newsletter editor & Webmaster, Sun City Anthem Computer Club, Henderson, NV. Chas@anthemwebs.com; www.myscacc.org.

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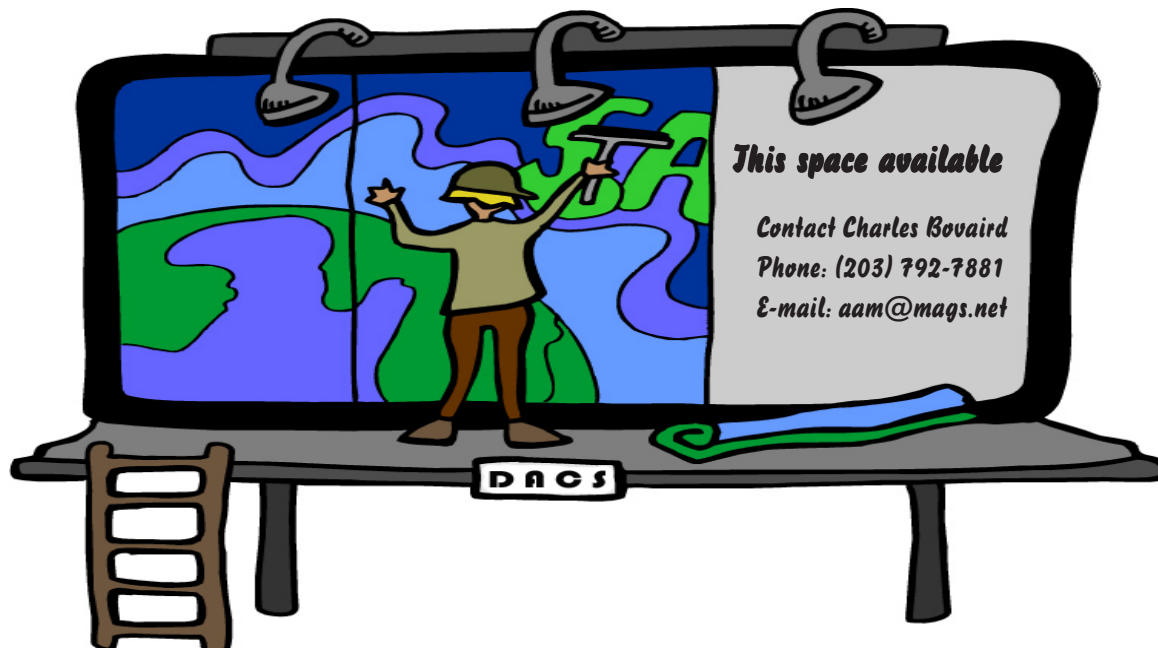
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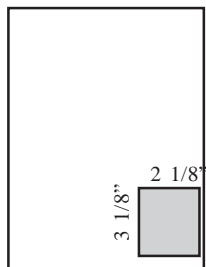
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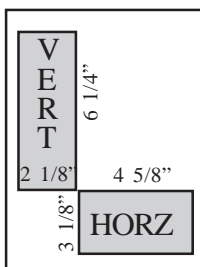
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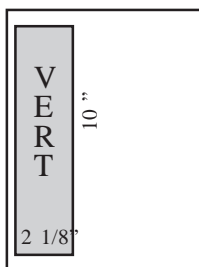
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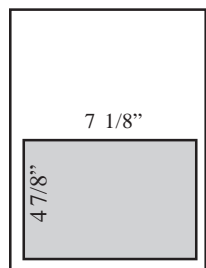
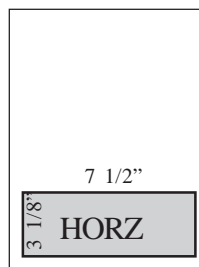
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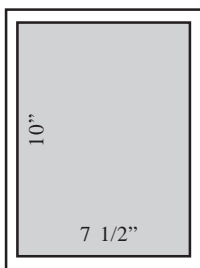
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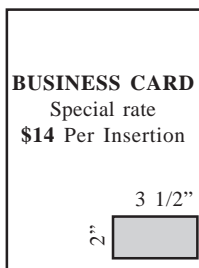
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We sponsor or participate in community support projects by collecting, repairing, and redistributing used computer equipment and software to community service providers such as schools, libraries, and patient/client support groups. DACS members provide pickup, refurbishing, installation, and training assistance as needed. Firms or individuals with equipment to donate should leave a message on the DACS Infoline (203-748-4330). or send an email to recycling@dacs.org.

The Voice for Joanie program was created in 1992 through the initiative of DACS member, Shirley Fredlund. This program provides computer-assisted speech for victims of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis ("Lou Gehrig's Disease"). DACS members have contributed volunteer time and technical assistance since the program began. Voice for Joanie and DACS have earned national computer industry recognition and financial assistance for this vital collaboration.

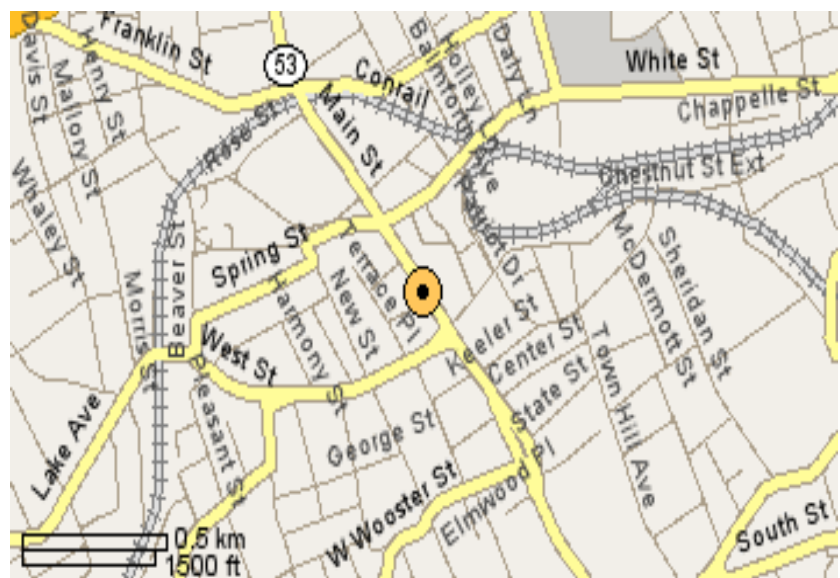
Our general meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month in the Danbury Hospital Auditorium at 7 p.m. These meetings are open to the public. The main presentation is scheduled from 8-9:30, preceded by casual networking, announcements and Random Access, an informal question and answer session. A free product raffle is often held at the conclusion of the main presentation.

In addition to the general meeting, DACS sponsors many special interest groups (SIGs) where members can learn and share information about a specific topic. Each SIG plans its own meeting schedule and program topics.

Our newsletter, *dacs.doc* is published monthly for our members, and mailed to arrive before the general meeting. It features articles written by members and others on timely topics including product and software reviews, issues and trends in personal computing and "how-to" articles on sound, video, digital photography, etc. In addition, each issues includes the calendar of meetings, announcements on SIGs and other DACS events. *dacs.doc* has won numerous prizes over the years for its design and content.

Through its activities, DACS offers numerous opportunities to network both professionals and computer hobbyists. Our Special Interest Groups are an excellent way for members to both learn and share application or hardware knowledge. Any DACS member can form a special interest group on any topic where there is interest. Most SIGs meet in our Resource Center in downtown Danbury.

If you have concerns, requests, or suggestions regarding DACS or its programs, please contact dacsprez@dacs.org. DACS officers and board members' phone numbers are listed on page 3 of *dacs.doc*.



The DACS Resource Center is in Ives Manor, Lower Level, 198 Main Street, Danbury, CT 06810 (203-748-4330).



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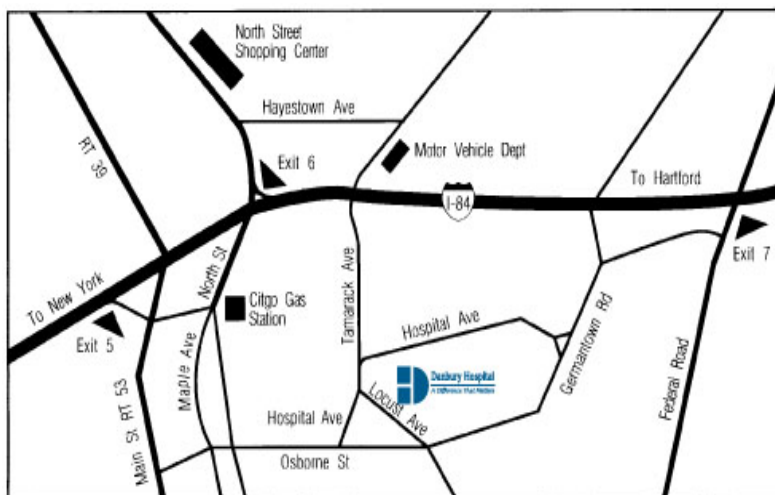
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