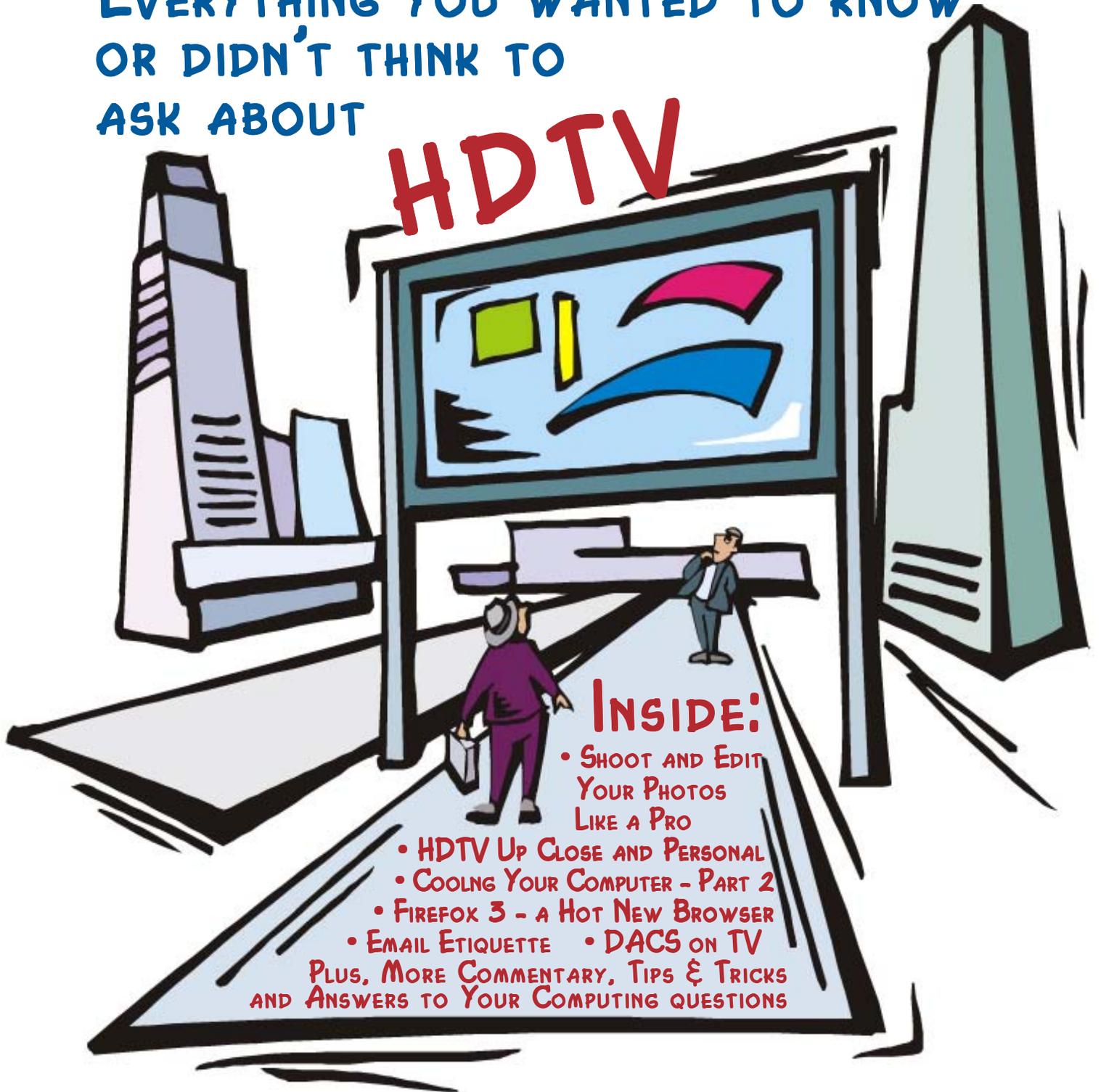


## NEXT MEETING:

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW  
OR DIDN'T THINK TO  
ASK ABOUT

# HDTV



## INSIDE:

- SHOOT AND EDIT YOUR PHOTOS LIKE A PRO
  - HDTV UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL
  - COOLING YOUR COMPUTER - PART 2
  - FIREFOX 3 - A HOT NEW BROWSER
  - EMAIL ETIQUETTE • DACS ON TV
- PLUS, MORE COMMENTARY, TIPS & TRICKS  
AND ANSWERS TO YOUR COMPUTING QUESTIONS

# President's File



A couple of months ago I started using Vista Ultimate. Outside of the fact AMD is refusing to update their TV tuner application for the video capture card I have, all has been well. There have been zero crashes. No hang-ups

of any kind. No horrible news to report. Matter of fact, I've concluded it is a suitable time to install Vista Ultimate on another machine, which is my Home Theater PC. This will allow me to check out more of the new Media Center Features. For those who don't know, I was running an HTPC built with Windows XP and running GB-PVR (<http://www.gbivr.com/>). I needed to find an alternative to GB-PVR anyway since the TV listings are no longer a free download.

I'm not going to get into all the details here, but let's just say I'm duly impressed with the changes from Windows MCE 2005. If anyone is interested in this for the August Windows SIG, please drop me a note in an email.

In case you missed it...

Thanks to Gary Spring's informative show-and-tell about the different classes and features of camera technology, I'm confident in my upcoming camera purchase. It looks like I'll be going for a digital SLR.

Now I know why I was having such trouble with my camera: I didn't buy what I really needed in the first place!

Lesia King's tips from her "How to Shoot and Edit Like a Pro" presentation have already served me well. While my camera limited me due to lack of features and capability, it was certainly clear that most of my problem with my pictures is, well, ME!

## Instant Replay

For the past couple of months I've been recording our General Meetings directly to a hard drive. This includes the July double-header. The process is simple and easy to duplicate. Is anyone interested in being able to view the video online? Would anyone be willing to champion the cause of digitizing the General Meetings so that absentee members can view them later? Please let us know by using the Feedback page (<http://www.dacs.org/feedback/suggestions.aspx>) from the DACS website.

## Keeping it short

There are some last minute things that require some urgent attention. Since we're heading out for vacation in a few days, I best get to them. We'll be back in plenty of time to catch the next SIG!

—Rob Limbaugh  
relimbaugh@dacs.org

### STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (required by 39 U.S.C. sec. 3685)

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Apple User Group

## IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S FILE	2
DIRECTORS' NOTES	3
HELP LINE	3
REVIEW - PHOTO TIPS & TRICKS	4
PREVIEW - HDTV DEFINED	5
SIGNIFICANT BITS	6
KEEPING COOL - PART 2	7
BUCKY MILAM CARTOON	7
SIG NEWS & NOTES	8
CALENDAR	9
FIREFOX 3 REVIEW	10
CIRCUIT RIDER	12
EMAIL ETIQUETTE	13
ASK DACS	14
FUTURE EVENTS	16

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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**

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## Directors' Notes

A regular meeting of your Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on Monday, July 14, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. Present were Sean Henderson, John Lansdale, Patrick Libert, Rob Limbaugh, Anna van Ommeren, Jeff Setaro, Jim Scheef. President Rob Limbaugh presided and Secretary Anna van Ommeren kept the record. Fran Ryan was also present. Minutes of the last meeting held June 9, 2008, were presented and approved. Jim abstained as he was not present at the June meeting.

Rob presented the Treasurer report as Charles Bovaird was absent. The report indicated cash assets of \$7,155.72, consisting of total bank and postal accounts in the amount of \$7,071.67 plus postage on hand of \$84.05. Subtracting a liability of prepaid dues in the amount of \$1,520.00 left a net equity of \$5,635.72. He also reported that the current membership is at 237 - 126 of which receive the mailed Dacs.doc newsletter. It was noted that the Dacs.Doc newsletter was mailed out to the subscribers on June 24.

A head-count of the June general meeting attendees added up to 73, 46 of which were members.

The subject of the General Meeting dates for February 2009 to June 2009 was brought up, regarding the conflict with the Hospital Auditorium availability. Conducting a survey of the members for a preferred day was discussed; however it was decided to pursue more date options with Danbury Hospital.

It was noted that John Gallichotte has resigned the DACS Board to pursue personal interests. His position needs to be filled, although the Board may decide to remove this position at a future time. Flo Ferrara will be leaving her position in September, however, she is still reaching out to potential speakers, and has General Meeting presenters lined up through March 2009. A discussion ensued about the pros and cons of having two separate presenters at a single general meeting and whether the subjects should be related or contrasting. Sean felt contrasting subjects would encourage a more divergent group of members to attend the meetings.

Anna mentioned that due to a scheduling conflict she may not be able to attend Board meetings and fulfill her secretarial duties for the months Sept-Dec 2008. Sean mentioned he will ask Lisa Leifels if she is willing to act as substitute during that time.

**DIRECTORS' NOTES, Cont. on page 4**

Sean suggested that the Board consider installing restricted access functionality to selected areas of the DACS web site, such as the PDF archives and newsletters. Members will be informed by email with the log-in information, and new members will receive the passwords when they sign up. The webmasters will consider the best way to implement this, while still keeping the pages search-engine friendly.

Regarding membership dues, the option of offering a senior citizen discount was brought up. Other possible membership discounts in return for volunteering or a member having contributed in some special way were discussed. Discounts by certain companies are available, and there is a need for a volunteer to keep track of benefits the members are entitled to. It was mentioned it would be helpful for the benefits be published in the newsletter and shown on the DACS web site.

Fran Ryan mentioned she spoke to Danbury City Hall about the Summer Youth Employment Program discussed at the June Board meeting. For now this appears to be on hold. Another Federally funded program may be offered which employs as well as trains adult participants, who do not require supervision. She is looking into collaboration with DACS, but no activity is likely until September.

Patrick mentioned he and Allan Ostergren are discussing a design for a "generic" poster to announce the general meetings.

—Annette van Ommeren



Do you have a burning computer question, but can't make it to the meeting or just never seem to get your hand up in time? Email your inquiry to Jim Scheef, the answer guy, at [askdacs@dacs.org](mailto:askdacs@dacs.org), and your question will be taken up at Ask DACS at the next meeting.

## Meeting Review

### How to Shoot & Edit Like A Pro, Camera Techniques & Adobe Elements

by Flo Ferrara

THE DACS JULY presentation combined consumer information with real life application. Gary Spring of Ritz Camera in Danbury gave a very thorough and informative 'show and tell' about the newest digital cameras on the market. These ranged from the small point and click variety to the larger SLR types.

After listening to Gary, I finally have an understanding of what the megapixel numbers mean. I can also speak more intelligently about things like aspect ratio, vibration reduction, optical versus digital lens, zoom, and view finder.

While Gary only spoke for about 30 minutes, I could have listened and learned for a much longer time. If you are thinking about buying a new digital camera, or if you have questions about the one you have, I urge you to contact Gary; his store is located at 61 Newtown Road in Danbury, CT.

After a brief respite, the learning continued with Lesa King and her 'How to Shoot & Edit Like a Pro' presentation. Lesa passed on to the audience, among other wonderful tidbits of information, 10 things one can do to take a better picture:

1. **Learn the settings on your camera** – know where the scene mode button is, especially, so you can choose one quickly (read the manual – gasp!);
2. **Composition** – the rule of thirds; put the focal point on one of the intersecting lines;
3. **Experiment** – take vertical shots; use burst mode to shoot as many quick shots as possible;
4. **Crop with your feet** – physically get closer to the subject and when you think you are close enough – take three more steps;
5. **Change perspective** – shoot at different angles – get down on your hands and knees;
6. **Look behind you** – you never know what you may see;

7. **Add depth** – foreground and background;

8. **Use image editing software** – play with color treatments;

9. **Use a card reader** – card readers are faster and more reliable;

10. **Naming and key wording** – give your pictures meaningful names and descriptions so they are easy for you to find.

Lesa also led the audience through a brief tutorial of Adobe Elements. One of the coolest features of this software, I think, is "merge photo". You can take a number of photos shot the same way; for example, a group shot of which you snapped four or five. And then, you can pick the best of each and merge them into one picture. It was very cool!

If you were unlucky enough to miss this presentation, you can still take advantage of some of Lesa's knowledge by visiting [www.graphicreporter.com](http://www.graphicreporter.com) and clicking on the Tutorials & QuickTips link. Of course you will not have the same experience we had on July 1 – Lesa's presentation style is very entertaining while being informative.

DACS was very lucky to have both Lesa and Gary share their expertise with us!

FLO FERRARA is acting program director

#### FREE CLASSIFIEDS

DACS members may publish noncommercial, computer-related classified ads in *dacs.doc* at no charge. Ads may be sent by e-mail to Charlie Bovaird at [aam@mags.net](mailto:aam@mags.net), or hard-copy may be submitted at our monthly general meeting.

# Meeting Preview

## Enhance Your Image Defining HDTV

By Flo Ferrara

**H**IGH DEFINITION Television has become a household term in recent years, but few of us seem able to define it. At our August Meeting, Mark Weiss, Director of Video Production, MWHD Professional Video Productions, will unlock the mystery of this new video technology and tell you what you always wanted to know about HDTV, but may be afraid to ask.

Mark Weiss is a veteran of the electronics industry, having held positions in the electro-optical, data communications and applications engineering fields. His experience ranges from working with various types of lasers, to early Peltier coolers for solid state lasers, on up to the design of broadcast audio processors, multiplexers and RF generators for broadcast use.

Bringing a wide range of related skills to the business, Mark is a perfectionist whose uncompromising standards produce some of the finest video out there. With experience dating back to the mid-1980s in video and the mid-1970s in the audio field, Mark has warmly embraced the digital era of video and sound and fully understands the mediums in such a manner as to be able to achieve stunning results that represent new benchmarks in the industry. He is the architect behind MW HD Pro Video and has also custom designed all the video editing workstations used to produce the voluminous amounts of video that we work with each week. His philosophy is simple: use the best equipment and software to ensure on-time delivery of the highest quality product. He constantly researches new ideas, drawing from the best all around the world, and bringing fresh ideas to our local clients—ideas which make our products unique and original.

During the early 1990s, Mark ran the Desktop Publishing SIG and was a DACS member.

After a slowdown in the DTP market in the late 1990s, he returned to the electronics engineering field, this time as a

broadcast engineer. As digital video technology became viable, Mark could realize his lifelong interest in cinematography.

So it is with great enthusiasm that we welcome Mark back to the DACS fold.

With this presentation Mark plans to clarify the various technologies involved in HDTV, HT and show us how to evaluate individual needs for equipment. Issues such as viewing distance versus visual acuity, the various resolutions offered by flat panel TVs, audio considerations, etc., will be given treatment

commensurate with the scope and available time.

Mark will give us answers to these questions and more:

- What are the different ways I can receive HDTV?
- Do I need to buy an HDTV with a built-in HDTV tuner?
- When is the deadline for cutover of broadcast TV to the new HDTV standard?
- Will my current TV still work?
- What resolutions does the HDTV standard support?
- If I buy an HDTV, what resolution should I look for?
- On what size TV will it matter?
- What is aspect ratio?
- How should I watch conventional 4:3 TV on my widescreen TV?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different TV technologies: LCD, plasma, DLP, projection?
- What new TV technologies are on the horizon?
- How should I connect my HDTV tuner or other sources to my HDTV?
- Should I pay extra for “higher quality” cables?
- What is deep color?
- What about DVD as a source on an HDTV? What is progressive scan?

- What should I know about frame rates in film versus TV? What is 3:2 pull down?

- What is an anamorphic DVD?

- What will the HDTV successor be for DVDs? Should I buy HD DVD or Blu-ray?

Mark also plans to speak briefly about the production angles as well as the distribution and end-user applications.

Mark also hosts a weekly music program, on Sunday evenings, on radio station WQQQ 103.3 FM in Lakeville, CT, featuring movie soundtrack music from Japan.

Mark has been an avid audiophile for more than three decades, has designed and constructed numerous tube amplifiers, multi-way speaker systems and crossover networks. His sophisticated sound system is featured at [www.basspig.com](http://www.basspig.com) and has drawn international attention with its ability to levitate objects with infrasound.

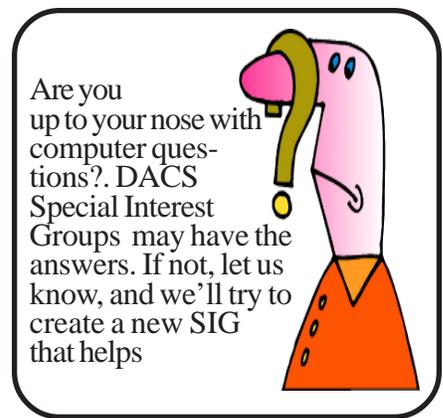
Mark currently resides in New Milford, CT, with his wife, Mary Ann and daughter, Amanda.

I would also like to add that Mark stepped up to the plate on very short notice, to fill-in for our scheduled presenter.

So come ask Mark your HDTV questions and show him how the DACS ‘family’ has remained a very curious and forward thinking bunch. We will all have to deal with the HDTV issue – if not now, certainly by February 2009. Don’t miss this opportunity to be the first on your block with the answers.

DACS meetings are held at the Danbury Hospital auditorium. Activities begin at 6:30 p.m. with registration and casual networking. The meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. with a question and answer period (Ask DACS), followed by announcements and a short break. The featured evening presentation begins 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.



## SIGNIFICANT BITS

August 2008

by Sean N. Henderson

**I**T SEEMS LIKE A good summer so far. For those traveling by car this season, there is a reminder on how to save some money at the pump:

- Slow acceleration to 15+ seconds
- Tires properly and evenly inflated
- Perform regular oil changes
- Use better gas

This last item alone saved me about 15% on fuel for my 2005 Ford Freestyle. The percentage increase in cost for better fuel of the same grade was less than the percentage increase mileage I experienced. No computer required.

Computers require the same type of care for increased mileage: regular cleaning and maintenance. DACS has several resources for helping with this, including newsletter archives, monthly workshops, and the ASK DACS portion of the monthly public meetings.

### SOFTWARE REVIEWS

Cyberlinks's Power2Go application (P2G) and its desktop widget Power2Go Express are nifty, both of which I used occasionally to rip audio CDs. Normally, I rip audio CDs using Creative's Zen Nano Plus Media Explorer which came with my Creative Zen Nano Plus. In this case, the Nano was busy ripping an LP from my home stereo and I wanted to rip an audio

CD at the same time on my laptop. Not surprisingly, I've done this scenario 20 times before. P2G barked and said it was time to upgrade – no more ripping. (And, yes, I have many LPs and CDs still to go through.)



Well, there just had to be a better tool to rip CDs. RealPlayer and Windows Media Player were no help because they create undesirable directories and filenames, and other parameters are not controllable. I came across AudioGrabber 1.83. This is an amazing piece of award-winning software, and freeware since 2004! Here are some of the features I liked about it:

- Can construct output directories and filenames with the song info in any order
- Spaces in filenames can be optionally replaced with underscores
- Can use nearly any audio encoder for mp3's, including presets for the lame encoder
- Seemingly DRM-free
- Can optionally access freedb service to acquire or submit album information (like P2G)

Unbelievable – this software had more and better features than P2G, and it was free! This is yet another case of freeware trumping most paid software in its class.

### TECH WISHLIST

I say PalmOne needs to make a portable version of their Palm Desktop PIM application. Currently, my calendar exists on 4 different applications (2 instances of 'pal', Lightning, and the Palm Desktop/PDA), and having the Palm Desktop run portably on a thumb drive would go a long way towards getting rid of the others.

Wouldn't it be a novel idea if Microsoft would publish the actual system requirements for their software? Merely listing hardware, OS, and RAM obviously isn't enough to guarantee an installation. I've been caught twice recently with their products not installing due to unlisted setup requirements, such as services or other software dependencies.

### FIELDREPORT

Recently on a trip to California for a family reunion, I declined to take my laptop. I knew my brother would probably have his on hand. Other reasons included weight, going over bag limits, potential damage to my flimsy laptop, or simply that I would have no time to use it (more likely), since I was traveling with small children.

My gear-list: an mp3 player, a USB thumb drive, a PDA, and a universal IR keyboard. It turns out there was one moment during the trip where there was time and need to check email. Putting the PDA into the IR keyboard and using the hotel Wi-Fi, the first thing was to fire up the Blazer browser (no pun intended) to configure and establish a connection. I then closed the browser and opened pssh and started an ssh session (a secure telnet session, basically) into my main account to check my primary email with 'pine'. Zero problems and lightweight. Nice! Since this worked out so well, this is likely how I'll travel the rest of the summer, kids or no.

### Terms and Related Links:

Pine Server-Side Email Client	<a href="http://www.washington.edu/pine">http://www.washington.edu/pine</a>
Secure Shell (ssh)	<a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secure_Shell">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secure_Shell</a>
AudioGrabber 1.83	<a href="http://www.audiograbber.com-us.net/">http://www.audiograbber.com-us.net/</a>
CyberLink Power2Go (currently version 6, version 4 mentioned herein)	<a href="http://www.cyberlink.com/Power2Go">http://www.cyberlink.com/Power2Go</a>
Palm SSH (pssh) for Palm OS 5.x	<a href="http://www.sealiesoftware.com/pssh/">http://www.sealiesoftware.com/pssh/</a>
Creative Zen Nano Plus	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/zen-nano-plus">http://tinyurl.com/zen-nano-plus</a>

### 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*.

## Tips & Tricks

# The Art of Keeping Cool

## Part 2: Non-fan Computer Cooling

By Jerry Goldstein

**L**AST MONTH WE WENT into how to cool off your desktop PC with fans. In Part 2 we look at alternative and leading edge ways to cool your computer. We also discuss how to keep your laptop from frying.

To reduce computer noise pollution computer designers have come up with many solutions to reduce the heat. Strangely, liquids have proven successful in cooling computers. Liquids provide two benefits over air cooling your computer. Liquid computers run quieter than fan cooled ones and water is better than drawing out heat than air. For complete submersion of computer parts manufacturers have immersed the computer in a variety of oil, synthetic motor oil works well but cooking oil is also used. The oil is low conducive so the electrical parts are not damaged. Complete submersion is typically only used on extreme density computers made for business purposes. One problem with oil is that it evaporates so proper maintenance of topping off the oil must be done.

You may say water and electronics don't mix (go ahead and say it, no ones around) but computer designers have worked out a way. The water flows inside tubes through the computer passively pulling the heat off the components of the computer. It works the same as your cooling system in your car. A number of computers hit the market last year using water cooling systems. The obvious problem is leaks but since water cooling has proven successful with gamers, due to waters increased heat absorbing ability over air cooling, you'll probably see more computers next year cooled by water. Just make sure you don't change a water cooled computers parts in excess of the manufacturer's parameters or you may overheat the computer and cause a pipe to leak or burst.

To assist in reducing CPU heat sinks are used. Heat sinks are the fins you see rising above the CPU. Often the CPU fan rests on top of the fins as well. The heat

sink works by giving additional square footage for the heat to dissipate. Kind of like when you spread out to cool off in a summer breeze. The extra space lets the air get to the heat.

Laptops pose a unique cooling problem as they are tightly packed and sit flat and horizontally and compared to the desktop's vertical tower. Heat likes to rise but, with the laptops configuration the heat gets trapped and needs to be blown out the bottom or sides. Laptops are more to user error as people tend to forget the laptop

sides need to be kept free of anything that could block the exhausts. No exhaust equals a fried computer.

When this happens it may be cheaper to buy new laptop than to try to fix the

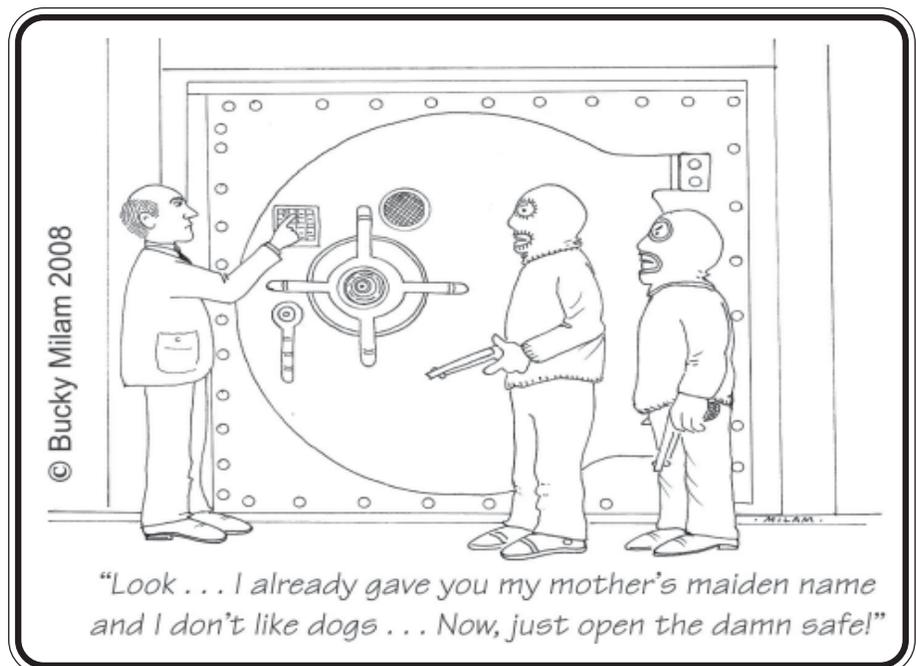
parts. Than again it may be better for you to avoid laptops if you can not remember to keep them clear of blockage.

A common mistake laptop users make is to use them in bed. The laptop sits ensconced in the bedding getting all nice, warm, and cozy. That is until they fry. If you want to use your laptop in bed buy a laptop writing pillow. These are pillows with a hard surface on one side to keep the laptop free to breathe. Than you only have to make sure you don't fall asleep with your finger on the delete key erasing your "great American novel".

To assist the cooling of laptops you can buy a laptop external fan. These are powered off the laptop's usb and some even come with additional usb ports so you don't lose the port. These fans blow cool air on the bottom of the laptop helping to drop the temperature. You can also try to save some money by buying a notebook stand that will raise your laptop a bit off the desk to give the laptop a bit more air space below it to cool off. I find that the stands are being penny wise and pound foolish though. The money you invest in the laptop fan will save you more in the long run giving your laptop added longevity.

**JERRY GOLDSTEIN** is vice president & newsletter editor, *The PC Users Group of Connecticut*; [www.tpcug-ct.org](http://www.tpcug-ct.org). He can be reached at [Attygoldstein\(at\)tiac.net](mailto:Attygoldstein(at)tiac.net)

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# Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: August 2008

**ASP.Net.** Focuses on Web site/server application development using Microsoft Visual Studio, C#, VB, Javascript and SQL Server programming tools. Starts with Random Access, followed by a programming discussion with examples.

**Contact:** Chuck Fizer [cfizer@snet.net](mailto:cfizer@snet.net).

Meets 1st Wednesday, 4-6 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** August 6

**Digital Imaging.** Digital cameras, retouching and printing.

**Contact:** Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 [graffic@bigfoot.com](mailto:graffic@bigfoot.com).

Meets last Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** August 27

**Jobs.** Networking and jobs search

**Contact:** Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 [aam@mags.net](mailto: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:** August 20

**Macintosh.** Focuses on all aspects of the Mac operating system.

**Contact:** Richard Corzo [macsig@dacs.org](mailto:macsig@dacs.org).

Meets 1st Thursday at DACS Resource Center at 7 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Aug 7

**Open Source Web Programming.** Focuses on open source tools for Windows and Linux.

**Contact:** John Lansdale, 914-533-2002.

Meets 3rd Monday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** August 18

**PC Maintenance.** Review of PC hardware and OpSys maintenance and use.

**Contact:** Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 [aam@mags.net](mailto:aam@mags.net).

Meets on 4th Thursday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next meeting:** August 28

**Server.** Explores Back Office server and client applications, including Win NT Servers and MS Outlook.

**Contact:** Jim Scheef [jscheef@telemarksys.com](mailto:jscheef@telemarksys.com)

Meets 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next meeting:** August 14

**Tech Projects.** This SIG Will work on DACS "Online Community projects as well as other areas from practical application solutions, to brainstorming and to tweeking Commercial products. All skill levels and backgrounds are welcome. The goal is to mix, match and customize technology to fit our needs.

Meets 1st Wednesday, 7p.m. at the DACS resource center.

**Contact:** Rob Limbaugh at (203)648-9176, [relimbaugh@dacs.org](mailto:relimbaugh@dacs.org)

**Next meeting:** August 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 accss session , followed by Object Oriented discussions and programming with examples.

**Contact:** Chuck Fizer, 203 798-9996 [cfizer@snet.net](mailto:cfizer@snet.net) or Greg Austin, 845 494-5095 [greg.austin@ryebrookpba.org](mailto:greg.austin@ryebrookpba.org).

Meets 1st Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, preceeded 1 hour with a shared cost pizza snack.

**Next Meeting:** August 6

**Virtual Computing.** This SIG will explore virtual computing technologies and how to leverage them as additional system resources. Our main focus will be on the free VMWare products, but we will also look at other technologies and tools.

Meets 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center

**Contact:** Rob Limbaugh [relimbaugh@dacs.org](mailto:relimbaugh@dacs.org), 203 648-9176

**Next Meeting:** August 26

**Web Design.** Applications for designing and creating Web sites.

**Contact:** Anna van Ommeren [avanommeren@dacs.org](mailto:avanommeren@dacs.org).

Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** August 19

**Windows.** This SIG will discuss ways to get the most out of your system and applications, how to do new things, and other options in terms of hardware and software to help make life easier. All skill levels are welcomed and encouraged to attend

**Contact:** Rob Limbaugh [relimbaugh@dacs.org](mailto:relimbaugh@dacs.org), (203 )648-9176

**Next Meeting:** August 21

## SIG News & Events

**Linux.** At the July Linux SIG we continued the General Meeting's concept of digital photography going over the popular applications F-Spot, digiKam and the GNU Image Manipulation Program or more commonly referred to as the GIMP.

We went over the features in digiKam for importing, managing albums and tags as well as the large selection of image editing tools. DigiKam is a KDE-based tool but like most Linux programs it works without issue in any environment.

We found digiKam's album is the folder directory which makes adding files as easy as copying files and folders into the /Pictures directory, or using the Import feature. It even grabbed the metadata and tags put on the picture from the system they came from.

Tags are easy to make and allow cross-album grouping while allowing you to set a picture on the tag for visual refer-

ence to the contents.

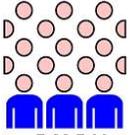
One of the great things about digiKam was the number of easy to use yet powerful editing tools. There is the expected red-eye remover, crop tool, color correction, black & white filter and rotation and many not-so-common ones. We spent some time really deforming the person whose picture was selected, good thing he wasn't there.

Next we moved to a Gnome based tool, F-Spot which in comparison seems behind digiKam on a number of items. When we imported the pictures it provides the opportunity to place a tag on them, but it grabbed all the pictures on the USB flash drive and not just the ones we wanted. When it imported the pictures, it organizes the pictures in the /Photos directory by a folder for the year, then a folder for the month, then the

*SIG News, Continued on page 11*

# August 2008

## Danbury Area Computer Society

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# Internet Navigation

## Firefox 3 – Hot New Browser

By Ira Wilsker,

**A**FTER A LENGTHY WAIT, Mozilla has released the latest and greatest release of the very popular web browser, Firefox 3. This new release, available for free download from [www.getfirefox.com](http://www.getfirefox.com), has many new features, making it a very strong competitor to Microsoft's ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer.

Firefox evolved from an earlier browser, Mozilla, which in turn grew out of the Netscape browser as AOL announced the cessation of Netscape development. Since its first release several years ago, Firefox in its current and previous versions has developed a wide following, with hundreds of millions of copies downloaded. The newly released version 3 has tentatively set a Guinness world record with over 8 million copies downloaded in its first 24 hours of public release, despite overloaded servers that discouraged countless people from downloading it the first day of issue. According to published reports, the number of copies of Firefox 3 downloaded surpassed 14 million downloads in the first 72 hours. Obviously, many people are using it.

Rhetorically, so why are so many using Firefox 3 rather than Internet Explorer (IE), which is installed by default on all contemporary Windows computers? There are several other fine browsers in circulation, such as the newly released update to Opera, and Apple's Safari (for both Windows and Mac), but for Windows computers, Firefox is firmly in second place, right behind Internet Explorer. If Internet Explorer was not preinstalled on Windows computers and integrated into the operating system, there is a good chance that Firefox 3 could surpass IE in a fair competitive market. Firefox 3 is faster rendering web pages than IE, has superior tabbed browsing, is written in tighter code taking fewer system resources, and has many advantages over IE. There is no reason why PC users should not download Firefox 3 for Windows (7.8mb download), and install it, as it runs happily

on computers that already have IE installed. On a fresh installation of Firefox on a Windows computer, Firefox will nondestructively import the favorites (bookmarks), cookies, and other informa-



tion from IE, without making any changes or impeding IE in any way. If Firefox 3 is installed on a computer that has an older version of Firefox installed, it will automatically install it as an upgrade, including all bookmarks, passwords, cookies, and other information. Once installed, many users, such as me, prefer to use Firefox instead of IE. In my case I would say that I use Firefox for 98% of my browsing tasks; it would be 100%, but I have IE setup to access another internet account that I have, but rarely use.

According to the Firefox 3 website at [www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox](http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox), over 15,000 improvements were made to version 3 over version 2. The newly released version 3 is

claimed to be faster, safer, and smarter than the previous version, and also IE! One of the new features, which I have personally verified, is the fact that web pages do indeed load faster than on IE and previous versions of Firefox. Firefox 3 also consumes less system memory and system resources, leading to improved computer performance when Firefox is loaded and running, compared to the previous version, or even IE. Firefox 3 is also more secure than previous browsers, and incorporates the latest technologies to help prevent phishing (identity theft), and other website forgeries. A neat new feature in Firefox 3 is "Instant Website ID", where clicking on the tiny website icon ("site favicon") at the left of the URL in the menu bar will display site information and identification, which will likely indicate if the site is as intended, or a web forgery. Firefox 3 has also been engineered to work smoothly and compliment Vista's parental controls, as well as most antivirus and other security programs.

Another interesting feature unique to Firefox 3 is the "Smart Location Bar" that shows detailed information on websites recently visited, and is accessed by clicking on the right side of the menu bar. This Smart Location Bar is intelligent, in that it adapts to persona preferences to locate better website matches. Typing a "tag" or keyword in the menu bar opens a detailed list of previously visited websites containing that keyword, making it very fast and easy to locate websites that have previously been visited. Another very useful feature is the integrated spell checker, which underlines any misspelled words typed in a browser window; right clicking on the word opens a list of suggested spellings, which a mouse click will instantly replace the incorrect word with the correctly spelled word.

Malware of various types, including worms, Trojans, viruses, and spyware is a growing menace to internet users. Firefox 3

### Top New Features



#### One-Click Bookmarking

Bookmark, search and organize Web sites quickly and easily.

#### Improved Performance

View Web pages faster, using less of your computer's memory.

#### Password Manager

Remember site passwords without ever seeing a pop-up.

#### Smart Location Bar

Find the sites you love in seconds —enter a term for instant matches that make sense.

#### Instant Web Site ID

Avoid online scams, unsafe transactions and forgeries with simple site identity.

#### Full Zoom

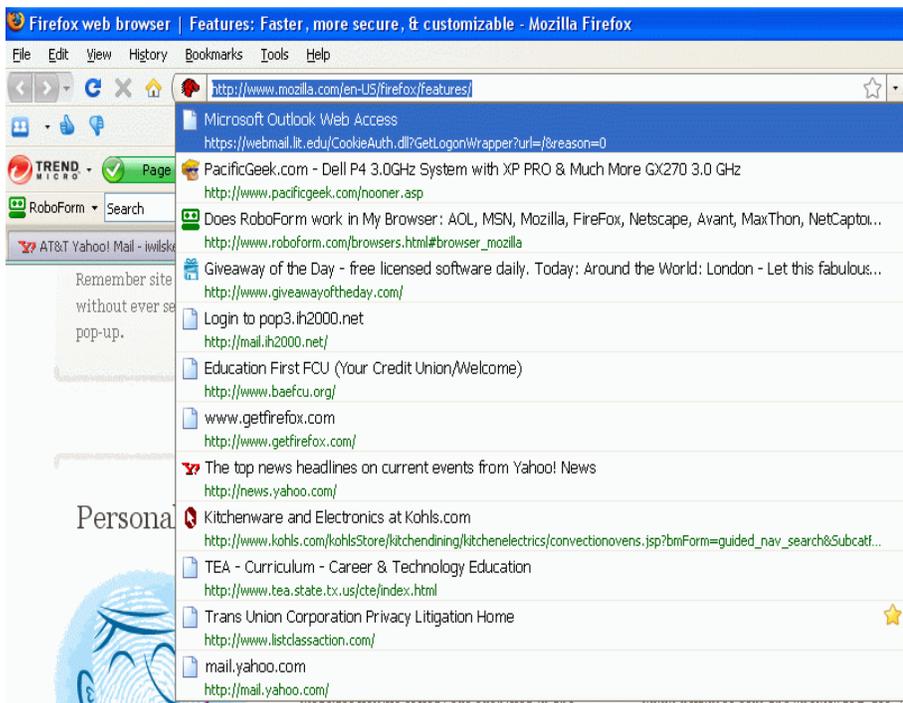
See any part of a Web page, up close and readable, in seconds.

#### Platform-Native Look & Feel

Browse with a Firefox that's integrated into your computer's operating system.

#### Browse By Category

- Personal
- Security & Privacy
- Customization
- Productivity
- Search
- Tabs
- Universal Access
- Performance
- Standards
- Help



integrates a sophisticated anti-malware feature that provides some protection if the user either intentionally or erroneously accesses a website that contains attack code. If such a dangerous website is accessed, a full screen (browser window) display will appear as a warning. Firefox, working with other organizations (including Google) maintains a continuously updated list of so called “attack sites”, so there is nothing for the user to update or maintain. In the event the user does happen to fall into a suspect site, such as a very freshly created phishing (identity theft) website, the forgery can be quickly reported by simply clicking on HELP–REPORTWEB FORGERY; this will connect to a Google service that collects such information on a real-time basis, verifies the forgery, and automatically adds it

to the malware list, as well as forwards the information to groups like Phish Tank ([www.phishtank.com](http://www.phishtank.com)) for further action.

Many of us use multiple passwords and user names on countless websites. Firefox 3 has an excellent integrated and secure password manager. When a password is first entered, Firefox 3 asks if you want it to remember that password and logon information, without any annoying pop-ups. Speaking of pop-ups, Firefox 3 incorporates a sophisticated and easily configurable pop-up blocker which can stop pop-ups and pop-unders, speeding and making more enjoyable the surfing experience. In some cases, pop-ups are not irritating advertisements, but instead contain important information; these can be easily allowed when desired.

Many of us choose to tweak the appearance and features of our browsers, and Firefox 3 happily obliges. Firefox has many themes and “personas” that can be selectively implemented to change the appearance of the browser to meet our individual tastes. For those of us who want additional features, Firefox offers over 5,000 free “add-ons” ([addons.mozilla.org/firefox/](http://addons.mozilla.org/firefox/)), which are easy to install devices to customize the browser to work as desired. I have installed about a dozen add-ons, including some security add-ons (PhishTank, McAfee SiteAdvisor, and others), as well as an enhanced download manager (the one integrated in Firefox 3 is very adequate for most users). I also have selected to use differently colored tabs on the top of the browser window, an add-on that can make a tab an IE window (for the rare cases when a website is intended for IE only), a PDF manager, and several other add-ons.

Firefox 3 is an outstanding and free product. It is a very worthwhile competitor to Internet Explorer, and users should try it to see if they like it. I like it, and use it almost exclusively on my desktop and notebook computers. That is the best recommendation I can give it.

#### WEBSITES:

<http://www.getfirefox.com> – Free Download  
<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/features/> - Features  
<https://addons.mozilla.org/firefox/> - Add ons

**IRA WILSKER is APCUG director; columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio and TV Show Host; [iwilsker\(at\)apcug.net](mailto:iwilsker(at)apcug.net).**

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#### **SIG NOTES, Cont. from page 8**

folder for the day. Handy for organizing, but a pain if you need to locate one specific picture to include in your blog, or an email, unless you know the date in which it was taken. F-spot does allow for tags for organizing and to add a picture to it, but it still seems a little less than optimal setup compared to digiKam.

F-Spot does include a small number of common editing tools but the rotation option does not include arbitrary degrees.

To do editing, it is best to move into the Photoshop challenger, the GIMP.

There are way too many filters and features to go over with the GIMP which can even open up Adobe Photoshop files. We played around with a few such as the magic lasso for selecting parts of the picture that are similar regardless of its shape like a cloud in the sky for example. Another selection tool we fiddled with is called “magic scissors” which allows you to go point-to-point and it will attempt to auto-

matically select along the edge of an object. You can go back and adjust the line where it doesn’t discover it correctly.

The other feature we spent some time on was the idea of layers and working with multiple or different layers.

#### **AUGUST 20, 2008, Next DACS Linux SIG Meeting**

Everybody knows you need to back up your files, and too many people (myself included) don’t backup nearly as often as we should. Either it becomes too tedious, or seems complicated.

For August, we will be enjoying a talk by David Mawdsley as he goes over the rsynch and using it as a powerful backup tool as well as the Grsynch user interface. He uses this both personally and professionally and sounds easy enough even I may be able to set it up.

Best of all, grsynch and rsynch are Free (as in ‘Freedom’ and as in “Free Beer”). So come to the meeting, learn how to use this powerful tool and have a good time!

**SIG NOTES, Cont. from page 10**

# Circuit Writer

## Version 6.0

by Jim Scheef

### Is Barack Obama good for Us?

**P**LEASE NOTE THAT I define “us” in this case as people who use computers both professionally and for pleasure, in other words, DACS members like you and me.

Much of Senator Obama’s success in the primaries has been attributed to his “use of the Internet”. So if he, or really his campaign, is so technically savvy, will he make the best President for us as computer users and consumers of online media? Will an Obama administration make policy favorable to “us”? So far we have several ways to look at this question.

The Obama campaign was derided by a Clinton campaign official for looking like Facebook. We know who won that battle, but many people feel that the social networking model has been a key factor in the Obama success. So let’s look at his Facebook page ([tinyurl.com/5986ou](http://tinyurl.com/5986ou)). You will need a Facebook account to view this. (Don’t lie when you sign up, it only causes problems later on. Use your real name and age.)

His Facebook page is typical for a politician (one of the page types you can select when opening an account). There is little real information about policies and it appears that the page is really just an anchor for Facebook members to become “supporters” and a convenient place to read news and comments. Becoming a supporter sends a notice to your Facebook friends that you have done so, which is how social networking works. For information, the Obama Facebook page has links to the official campaign Facebook group, to the campaign’s mySpace page ([myspace.com/barackobama](http://myspace.com/barackobama)), and to Michele Obama’s Facebook page. I suspect that all this is exactly what the typical obsessive Facebook user wants. To see more information as news clips, videos, etc., you can add Barack Obama to your Facebook page. Without extensive experimentation, I have no idea what this might entail.

The “Barack Obama (One Million Strong for Barack)” Facebook Group has more information; however most of it is about how to volunteer for the campaign at several levels. Again, this is what social networking is about but does not answer my question.

So back to the official campaign website ([barackobama.com](http://barackobama.com)) we go for a

quick dose of policy platitudes. There is a PDF, The Blueprint for Change, that has more detail than the website and I urge all of you to read it thoroughly.

From our standpoint he does address several issues:

- Net Neutrality – an open Internet. This is paramount and most of the right words are in the statement. As always, the devil is in the details, but at least he has it as the top technology issue.

- Patent Reform – Basically, he suggests giving the Patent Office the resources needed to do a better job. Nice, but how about eliminating trivial software patents?

- Copyright protection at home and abroad – Here he does a good job of defining some problems without much on the solutions side. He seems to be dancing on the fence here although at least he is not railing about digital downloads and trivial software piracy while ignoring the factories that pump out fakes in quantity.

- Protecting children versus the First Amendment – this has been a tricky issue since the nineties. The statement says Obama will “give parents the tools to prevent reception of programming that they find offensive on television and on digital media.” No one can be against this, but how to do it?

- Broader broadband – This is interesting. He notes that the FCC “defines ‘broadband’ as an astonishingly low 200 kbps. This distorts federal policy and hampers efforts to broaden broadband access. Obama will define ‘broadband’ for purposes of national policy at speeds demanded by twenty-first century business and communications.”

This is a very narrow look at some of the computer user issues I’ve talked about here over the months. Obviously there are many, many more issues that touch all of us like voting machine technology and immigration reform (H1B visas), to name just two. There are position statements on these and more, so I urge you to take a really good look.

Next month we will look at Senator McCain.

### WiMax is the Next Big Thing - maybe

You can think of WiMax as Wi-Fi on steroids with a potential range measured

in miles rather than feet. As the market for Wi-Fi subscription services like T-Mobile and Boingo disintegrates (have you noticed?), WiMax is a new way for an ISP to get you on the Internet. There are two forms – fixed and mobile. The mobile version works like a cell phone as you move about, transferring your session from one tower to the next. I see no reason for anyone to offer the fixed version. Sprint, the only cell phone provider without a “high” speed data plan, planned to implement WiMax, then backed down, then did a deal with Clearwire and WiMax is back on. Intel has been really pushing this for some time (they got the chips!) so it is bound to happen eventually, even here in the USofA.

### Another Next Big Thing

The SSD or solid state drive will become standard for laptops any day now. An SSD is essentially a really big flash drive that replaces the hard drive. Battery life gains will drive the change as costs for such devices drop. Capacities are already there with Dell offering a 128GB SSD in selected notebooks. Much smaller SSDs have been standard in ultra-mobile notebooks like the OLPC XO-1 ([laptop.org](http://laptop.org)), ASUS EeePC ([eeepc.asus.com](http://eeepc.asus.com)) from the beginning. The XO-1 used a SSD for durability as well as battery life. Many pundits predicted the technology in the XO-1 would become mainstream. It has begun.

### They Said It Couldn’t Be Done Department

Seagate has introduced a 1.5 terabyte hard drive. Just a few years ago, you bought this kind of capacity from one of the high-end enterprise storage specialists like EMC who sold you a cabinet full of drivers configured in an array. The new drive is the regular 3.5” size that has been standard now for about fifteen years. The new drive uses PMR (Perpendicular Magnetic Recording – not Pimp My Ride) to increase the areal density (bits per square inch) of the drive platter.

Equally amazing is a 500-gigabyte notebook drive. Yes, you can now walk around with one-half terabyte of whatever amuses you in your laptop. Soon it will be possible for one lost laptop to contain personal information about every person on earth.

As you can see from the version number, this begins my seventh year writing monthly for DACS. This column is available as a blog at [circuitwriter.spaces.live.com/Blog/](http://circuitwriter.spaces.live.com/Blog/). Comments welcome.

JIM SCHEEF is past president of DACS

# Communication

## Email Etiquette

By John Roy

**D**O YOU REALLY KNOW how to forward an e-mail? It is estimated that over fifty percent of email users do not know how to do it properly. Do you wonder why you get viruses or junk mail? Email messages get forwarded countless times without concern for the security of the previous sender's addresses.

Every time you forward an e-mail there is information left over from the people who got the message before you, namely their e-mail addresses and names. As the messages get forwarded along the list of addresses builds and builds creating a huge resource for spammers. All it takes is for someone to get a virus and the infected computer can send that virus to every e-mail address that has come across that computer. Even if the address collection doesn't result in a virus it surely will be harvested by spammers or someone looking to make a couple of cents for a listing of good email addresses. How do you stop or at least minimize the propagation of email addresses? There are several easy steps that we should all practice:

(1) Before you send out a forwarded e-mail, DELETE all of the other addresses that appear in the body of the message (at the top). That's right, DELETE them. Highlight them and delete them, backspace them, cut them, whatever it is you know how to do. It only takes a second You MUST click the 'Forward' button first and then you will have full editing capabilities against the body and headers of the message. If you don't click on 'Forward' first, you won't be able to edit the message at all.

(2) Whenever you send an e-mail to more than one person, do NOT use the To: or Cc: fields for adding e-mail addresses. Always use the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field for listing the e-mail addresses. This is the way the people you send to will only see their own e-mail address. If you don't see your BCC: option click on where it says To: and your address list will appear. Highlight the address and choose BCC: and that's it, it's that easy. When you send to BCC: your message will automatically say 'Undisclosed Recipients' in the 'TO:' field of the people who receive it.

(3) Remove any 'FW:' in the subject line. You can re-name the subject if you wish or even fix spelling.

(4) ALWAYS hit your Forward button from the actual e-mail you are reading. Ever get those e-mails that you have to open 10 pages to read the one page with the information on it? By forwarding from the actual page you wish someone to view, you stop them from having to open many e-mails just to see what you sent.

(5) Have you ever gotten an email that is a petition? It states a position and asks you to add your name and address and to forward it to 10 or 15 people or your entire address book. The email can be forwarded on and on and can collect thousands of names and email addresses. A FACT: The completed petition is actually worth a couple of bucks to a professional spammer because of the wealth of valid names and email addresses contained therein. If you want to support the petition, send it as your own personal letter to the intended recipient. Your position may carry more weight as a personal letter than a laundry list of names and email address on a petition. (Actually, if you think about it, who's supposed to send the petition in to whatever cause it supports? And don't believe the ones that say that the email is being traced, it just isn't so!)

(6) One of the main ones I hate is the ones that say that something like, 'Send this email to 10 people and you'll see something great run across your screen.' Or, sometimes they'll just tease you by saying something really cute will happen IT AIN'T GONNA HAPPEN!!!! (Trust me; I'm still seeing some of the same ones that I waited on 10 years ago!) I don't let the bad luck ones scare me either, they get trashed. (Could that be why I haven't won the lottery?)

(7) Before you forward an Amber Alert, or a Virus Alert, or some of the other ones floating around nowadays, check them out before you forward them. Most of them are junk mail that's been circling the net for Years! Just about everything you receive in an email that is in question can be checked out at Snopes. Just go to <http://www.snopes.com/>. It's really easy to find out if it's real or not. If it's not, please don't pass it on.

So, please, in the future, let's stop or at least minimize the junk mail and the viruses by taking the steps outlined above.

**JOHN ROY is president, The PC Users Group of Connecticut; John Roy, President, The PC Users Group of Connecticut; [www.tpcug-ct.org/](http://www.tpcug-ct.org/). He can be reached at [johnroy1@comcast.net](mailto:johnroy1@comcast.net).**

*Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.e).*

## DACS "on the air"

by William Manyin

**D**ID YOU KNOW THAT DACS monthly meetings have been announced on radio since January?

One can hear those announcements on the live broadcast of the PC Radio Show on WBAI 99.5 FM, Wednesdays 8-9 p.m. It is the longest continuously running computer show, having been on the air for over 24 years. This station is listener sponsored and there are no commercials.

The co-hosts are Hank Kee, Joe King, and Alfred Poor, who donate their time, and discuss mostly PC and a little Mac and Linux. During the first 30 minutes, they cover Computer News and sometimes have a special guest. During the second 30 minutes, they announce computer club meetings and then they let the public call in.

Their website is [www.pcradioshow.org](http://www.pcradioshow.org) from which the show can be heard streaming and their old shows can be downloaded in MP3 format from their archives. At least 4 times a year they devote about 3 shows to fundraising in order to support this publicly funded station.

They will try to answer computer questions posed via email on a "as time permits" basis. But, for a donation of \$150 to WBAI, the co-hosts offer priority "Gold Card" Technical Support for which they will answer personal computer questions for one year.

Alfred Poor's specialty is HDTV and his blog is found on [www.hdtvprofessor.com/HDTVAlmanac](http://www.hdtvprofessor.com/HDTVAlmanac).

**BILL MANYIN is an active DACS member and an avid Mac SIG attendee.**

# Ask DACS

July 2008

by Jim Scheef

**W**E 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](mailto: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.

*The July Ask DACS session was abbreviated to allow extra time for our double main presentations.*

**Q - (from the podium) How many people have applied XP Service Pack 3 (SP3)?**

A - A few people raised their hand.

**Q - (from the podium) So what has been your experience?**

A - Two members reported that it installed just fine and that they have had no problems attributable to the service pack. One member said the update took "nearly all day" because the update website wanted to "back up all of his data" so he allowed this to proceed to completion followed by the SP3 install.

Another member reported that according to the Windows Update website, SP3 does not add any critical updates to a machine that is current with all patches. SP3 does add some new functionality.

I asked if SP3 removes all the backup/uninstall files placed in hidden folders in the Windows directory. No one knew if it did or did not. I noted that I delete these directories periodically and keep only the most recent few to regain the space.

**Q - Does SP3 require that Windows Genuine Advantage be installed?**

A - The immediate answer from the floor was yes. My own experience with Microsoft Update (as opposed to Windows Update that only updates Windows) has been that a new version of the Genuine Advantage software is required for any updates over the last month when SP3 was one of the updates offered for installation. But, keep in mind that Microsoft Update, which provides updates for all Microsoft products (including server products), has always required installation of Genuine Advantage.

We did not know at the meeting if downloading the ISO image of the SP3 CD would allow one to bypass the Genuine Advantage check. Everyone at the meeting had installed SP3 from one of the Microsoft update sites. This is difficult to test definitively as one would need a machine that is clean of any prior Windows XP updates. (see sidebar)

Another concern mentioned with SP3 and Norton 360 involved registry corruption. If you use Norton 360, it might be wise to run Symantec Live Update before installing SP3 to be sure all patches are applied to the Norton product. A visit to the support pages of the Symantec website wouldn't hurt. Apparently, both Symantec and Microsoft have been pointing fingers at each other on this issue.

**Q - I accidentally allowed the Microsoft Malicious Software Removal Tool ("tool") to install with some other updates. I don't feel Microsoft is qualified to determine what is malicious. Is this a problem or is the tool ok?**

A - The consensus from the floor was that the tool is good and should be installed. My understanding is that the tool is run once when it is installed by Windows Update and each new version of the tool addresses different malicious software threats. I do not recall if Windows Update applies multiple tools to a completely unpatched machine. This is left as an exercise for the reader when you next install XP.

**Q - I'm using AVG Antivirus and it reports several locked files during a scan. What are these files and should I be concerned?**

A - No one in the audience offered experience with AVG. Windows and other applications running on the

machine will have files open and AVG may not be able to scan those files. On the other hand, if no applications like Microsoft Word or your email program are running, AVG should know what open files belong to Windows so files reported by AVG could belong to malicious software that is trying to hide from the antivirus scanner. If AVG reports the full path to these files, what other files are in that directory? The AVG website would be a good place to start investigating.

**Q - I get a message that "Internet Explorer (IE) can't open the Internet" [sic] when I try to open a page in Yahoo Financial. When I click OK, everything seems to be fine. I cannot find a fix.**

A - Firefox was suggested as a quip (in jest, but almost always a good choice). A member asked if this happens in other parts of Yahoo. The questioner said that it does not happen in other parts of Yahoo. Another member suggested that such an error could happen if Java is blocked (or Sun Java is not installed). Further discussion led to the Java settings on the advanced tab in the "Internet Options" applet in Control Panel (or the Tools menu of IE) and a discussion about Sun versus Microsoft Java. The latter is no longer available and should be replaced with the latest version of Java from Sun.

**Q - I tried to connect my MacBook Pro to the projector in the Resource Center and could not get it to work. I have used the projector with another laptop without problems. The MacBook has Windows installed and the projector would not cooperate even under Windows.**

A - Our (DACS) projector has a DVI connector but the cable has a VGA connector for the computer end. The questioner asked if s-video might be a solution. My experience with s-video (a composite video connector that supports more lines of resolution) is that the resolution is still conventional television (non-HD) quality and thus will not provide a picture of sufficient quality for this situation.

Further investigation (Wikipedia) finds that while the digital visual interface (DVI) was developed for digital displays, it can and does support analog signaling. Thus it is possible that even using a DVI-to-DVI cable would not work if one device

only supports digital and the other only analog.

A Yahoo search turned up a document ([tinyurl.com/6y8hoq](http://tinyurl.com/6y8hoq)) from the Wentworth Institute of Technology Help Desk that details how to do exactly what we want. It requires a VGA display adapter on the MacBook and setting the MacBook display preferences to "Display Mirroring" to turn on the external video. Our projector is generally limited to a maximum display resolution of 1024x768, so the MacBook should be set to this resolution. According to the document, if you do all this, it will work.

*Q – As Ask DACS moderator it is difficult for me to run the session and remember enough to write up the questions and answers each month. Also, I would prefer to devote the time it takes to write Ask DACS to my regular column, Circuit Writer. So, I make this offer: if you will take over writing the Q & A from Ask DACS each month, I will give you a brand new Olympus digital voice recorder to use in this endeavor. Contact me at [jscheef@dacs.org](mailto:jscheef@dacs.org).*

### More on Service Pack 3

To truly test if one can install SP3 without installing Genuine Advantage requires a clean, new install of XP. So I did that on a laptop I hope to convert into a picture frame and Internet radio. Installing XP3 from a CD is not a particularly quick experience. As a member reported at the meeting, the XP3 does a backup that appears to be close to a "system state" backup. While watching the progress window, I saw it report backing up the registry so a real uninstall might be possible.

Well, to the big question – the CD install did not ask for or even mention Genuine Advantage beyond the typical Microsoft-speak in the EULA. So, this is a way that one can install SP3 even if your system fails (or you don't want to try) the Genuine Advantage test for a "legitimate" copy of Windows XP. In fact, my test installation had not even been activated when I installed SP3.

Beyond this, since SP3 includes all prior security updates, I highly recommend this procedure if you are building a new PC or rebuilding your old one. Install SP3 immediately after you reboot from the XP installation. This will drastically reduce the number of updates when you go to Windows Update to bring the installation fully up to date.

### SIG NOTES, Cont. from page 11

**erver.** We did something entirely new at the July meeting. We recovered and did the initial configuration of a Cisco Catalyst 1900 switch. I found this enterprise-grade switch on the Danbury Freecycle list, so the price was right. The unit seems to work perfectly but has a noisy fan. The front panel has 24 RJ-45 sockets for the local network, plus two fiber connectors and one gigabit RJ-45 for "backbone" connections. The back panel has one RJ-45 connector for a direct serial connection to the device console.

To use the switch, it must be configured for the local network. Since I did not know anything about how it had been used, I could not telnet to access the console. This meant that we had to use the serial console. At this point I did not know if the device worked at all, so I connected a cable from the RS-232 port on my laptop to the console port on the switch and fired up HyperTerminal. HyperTerminal dates from Windows 9x and assumes you want to dial a modem. It took me a minute to stop the dialer and configure it for a direct connection. Then when I hit a CR, there was the console. Cool! There were two choices: Menu or Command line. Since I still know nothing about any Cisco devices, I hit 'm' for menu and was greeted by a prompt for the password. Since I did not have the password, we started to search for a procedure to recover the password or reset the device to factory defaults. The first PDF had nothing but vague references. On a whim, we unplugged the power cord to restart the switch. When I tried to reconnect, there was no console! This turned out to not be the tragedy we first assumed. After a couple more CR's new output appeared on the screen. We had discovered that when the switch first boots, it offers a prompt to reset the console password. After a brief timeout, the system continues to the initial con-

sole choice of menu or command line. On the first connect, we had missed this initial password reset option.

Once we had a new – known – password, we could use the console. The first job was to find the options to clear all settings to factory defaults. Remember, this is a Cisco device, so it is not so simple. I selected every menu option that seemed to apply. Next we gave it an IP address on the Resource Center network. Once that worked, we could telnet to the console.

The primary goal of the meeting was accomplished – we had access to the switch over the network. One of the features of an enterprise-grade switch is the ability to configure virtual networks or VLANs. The next step will be to RTFM (read the fabulous manual) and learn something about what this device can do.

Next month we'll look at the new version of the DD-WRT firmware for home wireless routers. Version 24 offers many new capabilities. DD-WRT supports many, many brands and models of home routers beyond the basic Linksys WRT54G. We'll upgrade one of my routers and apply the new version to the wireless router in the Resource Center. Bring your own Linksys wireless router and we'll see if we can upgrade it as well.

The next meeting of the Server and Networking SIG will be Thursday, August 14 at 7 p.m. in the DACS Resource Center.

**Web Design.** At the July meeting, we had an enjoyable discussion about RSS feeds. We took a look at the XML code necessary to set up a feed, and compared the different readers, browser-based as well as specific readers on a local machine. Some more advanced techniques and requirements were looked into, and we searched for suitable solutions. Setting up a basic feed is not hard, and the possibility of adding this feature to the DACS site was suggested. Look for RSS feed links to the meeting preview as well as other pages soon!

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# Future Events:

## August

Mark Weiss, of MWHD Professional Video Productions Answers Your Questions on HDTV

## September

Chuck Masi of Ergonomix Associates, LLC:  
*Ergonomic Solutions*

## October

Raymond Yost of Sybase: *Mobile iAnywhere Technology*

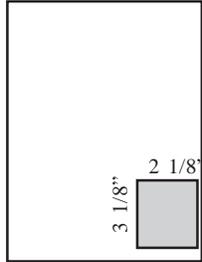
## November

Mark Britton of Media Stratego - Smart House Technology

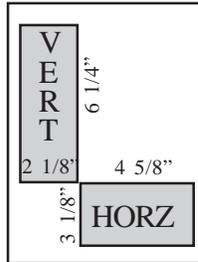
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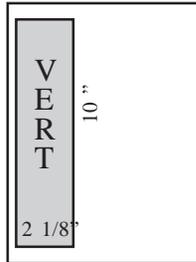
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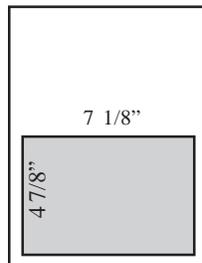
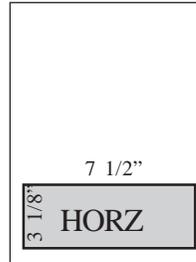
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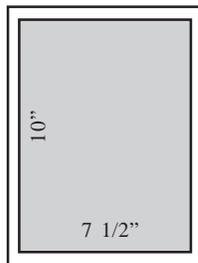
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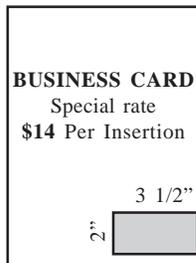
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We sponsor or participate in community support projects by collecting, repairing, and redistributing used computer equipment and software to community service providers such as schools, libraries, and patient/client support groups. DACS members provide 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](mailto: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.

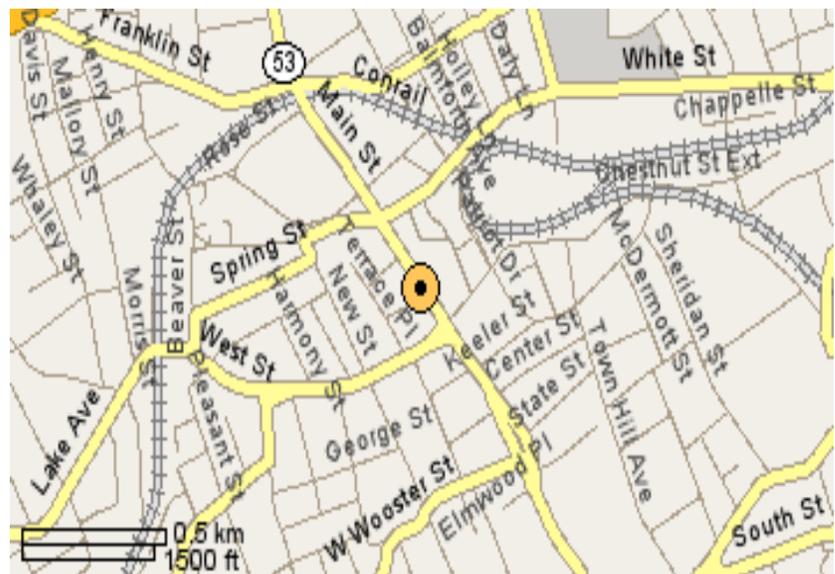
Our general meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month in the Danbury Hospital Auditorium at 7 p.m. These meetings are open to the public. The main presentation is scheduled from 8-9:30, preceded by casual networking, announcements and Random Access, an informal question and answer session.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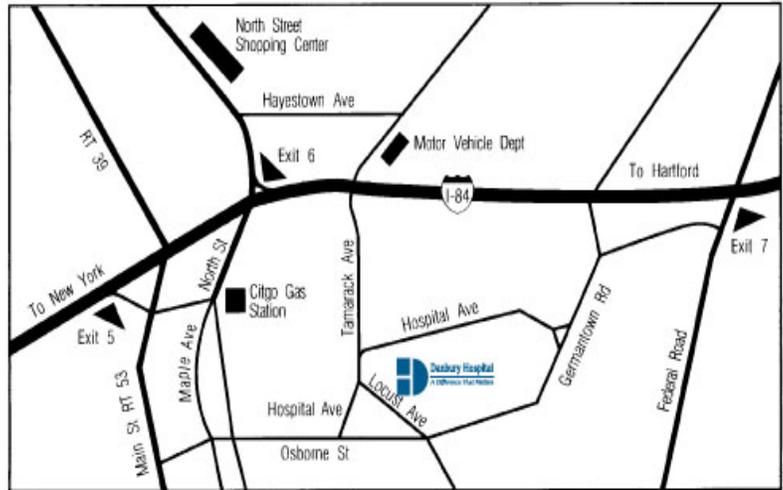
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