



December 2000

Volume 11, Issue 12

Ride hard...surf right Patrick rules the Web

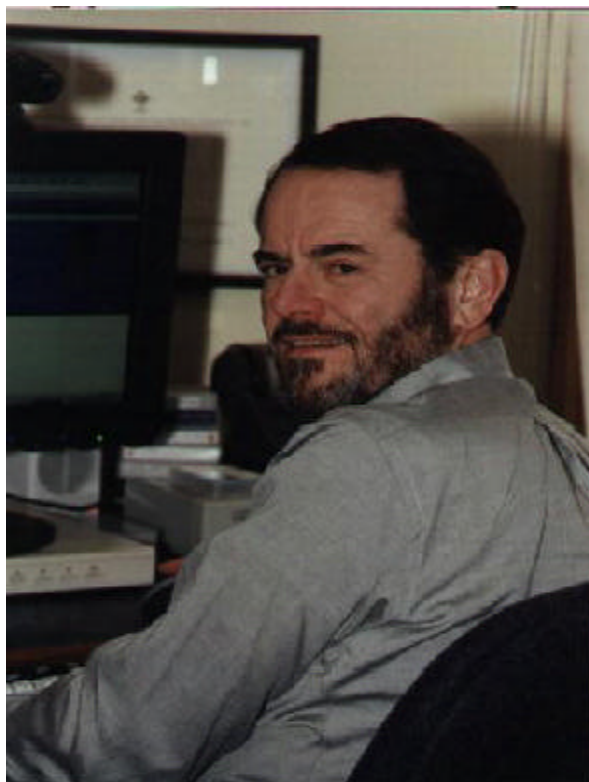
This year again DACS welcomes John Patrick, IBM Vice President of Internet Technology, for the December general meeting. DACS members tremendously appreciate his insight and vision of the Internet. John is DACS members' favorite guest speaker. In December, for a number of years now, John Patrick has shared his outlook on the Internet with members. What seems like science fiction at the time of his talk comes to reality in the short term of fast paced technology. There are good reasons that John Patrick is called an Internet guru in the press. He is, without question, a leading Internet technology expert.

John Patrick travels all over the world giving speeches about the future of the Internet to a diverse

audience. DACS members are fortunate to have the opportunity to hear this very charismatic speaker once again at our December meeting.

DACS December meeting promises to be a very entertaining and information-filled evening, members will leave the meeting with impressive details about what we do not know yet about the Internet but that will be reality soon.

Mark-up your calendar for December 6th, a Wednesday, for the general meeting at Danbury Hospital Auditorium at 7 p.m. Please secure your seat early, as this is a very well attended event. Members will also vote before the main presentation for the new Board members. Over all, an important meeting not to be missed.



A Reminder

The next General Meeting has been changed to
Wednesday, December 6th, at Danbury Hospital Auditorium

President's File



If it's December, it must be John Patrick—that new media Merlin, whose magic wand conjures up visions of the future of the Internet and whose message each year seems fresher than the one before. Some people need no introduction, so I'll cut mine short with: "try him, you'll love him!"

Six for the board

For those whose interest in politics may have been jump-started by the recent presidential election, DACS has an encore—a contested race for the Board of Directors. For the first time in several years, we will have six candidates running for five seats on the Board at our annual meeting in December. Three of those seats are open due to the retirement of senior board members Wally David, Ed Heere and Dick Gingras, all of whom will continue serving in other capacities. Joining incumbents Charlie Bovaird and Marlène Gaberel will be four new contestants: Don Neary, Matthew Greger, Don Pearson and Andy Woods.

Board elections are conducted at the annual membership meeting held at the beginning of the regularly scheduled December General Meeting. Ballots will be counted by hand, and preliminary results should be announced by the end of Pig SIG following the General Meeting. By tradition, candidates not elected will be invited to participate in Board meetings and given

special consideration for appointment as officers in April.

Editorial doings

Please welcome Ted Rowland as Associate Editor. Ted will be responsible for copy editing, and will help with final review of the publication prior to sending it to the printer. He brings to this position a solid background in copy editing and a commitment to our high standards for dacs.doc that are reflected in the numerous awards we have received from the user group community.

Frances Owles remains as Executive Editor, and will continue to give direction to the style and content of our publication. Although Ted will be relieving her from some of the more time consuming hum-drum, I am sure Frances will quickly exhaust her day with other unpaid volunteer activities.

Speaking of awards . . .

I have just learned that DACS is one of the twelve winners nationwide of the third annual Jerry Award for community service, sponsored by the Association of PC User Groups at Fall COMDEX in Las Vegas. This is the second time DACS has received the award, named for APCUG founder Jerry Schneider, which includes a grant of \$750 to help further the user group's community activities. The funds for the Jerry's are donated by Microsoft, Oracle, Adobe and MGI Software.

Many APCUG groups are involved in community service projects of all sizes and scope. The purpose of the Jerry Awards is to recognize and reward these projects and to encourage new and expanded involvement. These projects exemplify how the mottoes of "users helping users" and "user groups helping user groups" have evolved into "user groups helping the community."

Joan Dineen, Treasurer of APCUG, and a DACS member, will be on hand at the December General Meeting to present the prize, which is being given in recognition of our partnership program with area corporations to recondition recycled computers and donate them to needy organizations. Microsoft Corporation has contributed user licenses for Windows and MS Works for each of the donated PCs. The first annual Jerry Award was presented to DACS for its work on behalf of Voice for Joanie.

Continued from page 4

Membership Information

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The editors welcome submissions from DACS members. Contact Frances Owles (860) 868-0077 (jones@ct1.nai.net) or Allan Ostergren at 860-210-0047 (dacseditor@aol.com). Advertisers, contact Charles Bovaird at (203) 792-7881 (aam@mags.net).

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Applications & Hardware to enhance dacs.doc are welcome.

IN THIS ISSUE

HOME NETWORKING	1
PRESIDENT'S FILE	2
DIRECTORS' NOTES	3
MEETING REVIEW—NETWORKING	4
NETWORK PRIVACY	5
INTERNET PROVIDERS	5
NEW MEMBERS	5
RANDOM VECTORS	6
SIG NOTES & NEWS	8
CALENDAR	9
WINDOWS ME — REVIEW	10
RANDOM ACCESS	12
STOCKING STUFFERS	13
CANDIDATES	14
BALLOT	15



Jeff Setaro
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WEB SITE: <http://www.dacs.org>

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) 426-0484	(e)
AOL	Marc Cohen	(203) 775-1102	(d e)
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(e)
AutoCAD	Peter Hylenski	(203) 797-1042	(e)
C/UNIX/ObjC	Kenneth Lerman	(203) 426-4430	(d e)
Clipper	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
COBOL	Charles Godfrey	(203) 775-3543	(e)
Dbase/DOS	Alan Boba	(203) 264-1753	(e)
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)
Internet	Nick Percival	(203) 438-9307	(d)
Macintosh OS	Chris Salaz	(203) 798-6417	(d e)
Microsoft Access	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
Multimedia	Ed Fitzgerald	(203) 222-9253	(d e)
Newdeal	Marc Cohen	(203) 775-1102	(d e)
OS/2	Rich Chernock	(203) 270-0224	(e)
Paradox	Alan Boba	(203) 264-1753	(e)
PASCAL	Duane Moser	(203) 797-2716	(d)
Q&A ver 3/4	Anthony Telesha	(203) 748-4478	
QuickBooks	Bill Sears	(203) 743-3367	(e)
Statistics/Data Analysis	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(d e)
SQL Server	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9998	(d)
Viruses	Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748	(d)
Visual Basic	Nick Percival	(203) 438-9307	(d)
HTML/Java	James Costello	(203) 426-0097	(e)
Windows 3.1	Nick Strother	(203) 743-5667	(e)

Directors' Notes

A Regular Meeting of the DACS Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on November 13, 2000. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Buoy, Cohen, Gingras, Heere, Ostergren and Setaro. President Allan Ostergren presided, Secretary Larry Buoy kept the record of the meeting. The minutes of the October 9th meeting were approved.

Treasurer Charlie Bovaird reported combined checking and postal balances of \$21,196.38 plus postage on hand of \$120.81, a total of \$21,317.19, less pre-paid dues of \$7,331.25 for a net cash position of \$13,985.94. He also reported current membership of 541.

Continuing consideration of the upgrading or renewal of the computer at the Resource Center, Jeff Setaro presented a price breakdown of a major vendor's equipment meeting the proposed specifications, including 5-year service contract, as a point of reference for further discussion. Such further discussion focused, in addition to the preparation of the newsletter, on preferred media for backup and archiving, as well as convenience of the various SIGs expected to use the equipment. With Messrs. Heere and Setaro abstaining, it was agreed that a quotation be prepared by Amsys Computer for further consideration.

Following a report by the nominating committee, several suggestions were made for nominees for election as Director to fill vacancies that will exist as of the Annual Meeting of the Membership to be held at the December General Meeting.

Potentials for the distribution and use of the CD-ROMs obtained from APCUG, some of which are at hand and have been screened for viruses, were discussed. It was agreed that these CDs be offered for sale to members at \$5.00, as incentive to any member renewing membership, any new membership or any other promotional purpose deemed appropriate by this Board or, when expedient, any officer of DACS.

President Ostergren announced that the planned presentation for the February General Meeting was Assistive Technology and that special effort should be made to promote same with regional educational and special needs services such as Datahr, hospitals, SeniorNet, etc.

President Ostergren also advised the meeting that, in addition to a revival of the Mac SIG, he had received a proposal for a possible "Women in Computing" SIG.

LARRY BUOY

Continued from page 2

Volunteers from DACS are continuing to work on the more than 300 computer systems that have been donated to the project by Danbury Hospital, Cendant Mobility and Raytheon Corporation. So far, 162 refurbished PCs have been turned over to 26 area non profits.

Prestondigitation

Many thanks to Bruce Preston, whose brilliantly orchestrated presentation on setting up a local network was no sleight achievement. Jim Scheef has written a great review of the presentation, along with a companion piece on home networking issues. In the meantime, I am trying to persuade Bruce to re-do his presentation as a written series for dacs.doc make his charts and graphics available for download from our Web site.

Of course, sometimes the best information on how to simplify a task is that which convinces us that the task may be not be that simple. I asked a member leaving the meeting if the presentation taught her how to set up a home network. She replied: "It taught me that I should hire someone to do it for me."

ALLAN OSTERGREN
DACPRESZ@AOL.COM



Voice for Joanie

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Meeting Review

Bruce Preston on Home Networking

By Jim Scheef

Do you have more than one PC at home or in the office? Tired of sneaker net? have a tough time transferring files bigger than a floppy disk? Like to share that nice high-speed cable modem or DSL Internet connection? Do the kids keep sneaking the new color printer up to their room? Is that what's troubling you? Well, Bruce Preston showed us all the solution at the November meeting - you network!

Our own *Random Access* host, Bruce Preston, did an excellent job presenting what most people find to be a complex and confusing topic. His presentation made basic networking concepts understandable and then used that understanding to assemble a working network right there in front of our very eyes! Helping to make all this possible in the limited time available was Bruce's able assistant, his son Scott. To say that Scott is computer literate gives the phrase an entirely new meaning and enthusiastic is another word that seems totally inadequate around Scott yet he gives the outward appearance of a normal 9-year old.

Bruce prepared PowerPoint slides to illustrate his presentation. You can download the slides from http://people.mags.net/bpreston/dacs_ppt.html. The file you download will be 'DACS_Network_Presentation.zip'. When you open the zip-file, you will find 'DACS Network Presentation.ppt'. If you do not have Microsoft PowerPoint 97 (or 2000), Bruce's web page has links to download the free viewer. By the time you read this there should be a link to Bruce's page from the DACS web site, www.dacs.org. If this will be your first experience with networking, I suggest a quick review of Bruce's slides to help make up your shopping list.

While networking is not really an inherently difficult subject (after all, it's just a few computers talking to each other), there are several decisions to be made when you first start down the path to home networking. First, there are several types of network interface cards (NICs) and cables. Bruce covered the differences between 10Base-2 (coax) and 10Base-T (twisted pair)

cards and cabling. Both work but have advantages and liabilities. Another important point is inspecting your PC to be sure there is an available slot for the NIC and whether that slot is PCI or ISA. See Bruce's slides for pictures to help identifying a slot. After installing an NIC in one of the computers on stage (its cover conveniently removed), Bruce proceeded to the software setup in Windows.

Networking software setup inevitably leads to a discussion of Internet protocol (IP) addresses. Bruce talked about the available 'private network' addresses and why you want to use these. Again, see Bruce's slides.

As 9:00 pm came and passed, Bruce had not covered all of his material. However only a few minutes later he had all three of the computers on stage networked and sharing a single modem to access the Internet. So what did Bruce leave out? The last part of his presentation was to have covered software to allow all of the computers on the network to access the Internet over a common connection. The key to this is something called "network address translation". The easiest solution to this is probably the Modem Sharing feature built into MS Windows 98 Second Edition and Millennium Edition. While this does not provide any firewall protection, it should be just fine for a dial-up (modem) connection.

Bruce touched on the need to protect your network from intrusion by nasty people on the Internet. This is the purpose of a firewall and is probably not really necessary if you are using a dialup connection to your Internet service provider (ISP). However, once you have a full-time high-speed connection such as a "cable modem" or DSL connection, protection becomes important. Bruce suggests a product from Sygate Technologies, Inc. (www.sygate.com). See my sidebar for more suggestions.

All in all, Bruce and Scott did an excellent job presenting home networking. Perhaps the best part was watching Scott struggle to get his hands on the microphone. After the meeting, Scott ran the best - and fastest moving - raffle we've ever had!

Home Networking and Your Privacy

By Jim Scheef

The main reason behind the growth of home networking is the need to share a high-speed Internet connection such as a cable modem (Charter Pipeline and Comcast@Home) or a DSL connection (SNET and many Internet service providers). Both of these technologies provide a fast connection to the Internet that is always on. That last part is a very important point – these connections do not disconnect when you close your browser. And since they are always available as soon as you turn on your computer, they make it much easier for the nefarious and nasty people of the Internet fringe (I hate to call them hackers) to do bad things to your computer. This is not really an issue about home networking as such, as it is about these faster Internet connections. If you have networked several computers to a cable or DSL modem, you simply have more to lose.

Protecting your computer is the job of your firewall. As Bruce said at the end of his presentation, selecting a firewall and making sure it is working is more than enough for another presentation. In fact, there is a growing section in the bookstores devoted to this very subject, along with many, many products intended to protect your computer while connected to the Internet.

A firewall is a device or software or both that controls access to and from your computer and the outside world. Rather than try to review products here I will simply list some of the products available.

Some of these are hardware solutions. What are the advantages? I prefer a dedicated router – the hardware solution – primarily because it's **not** a computer. Hackers attack computers, a dedicated router is simpler and "less intelligent" than a computer. It has a few simple tasks to perform and that's all it knows how to do. There simply is less for a hacker to attack. The disadvantage to the hardware router is cost, although the ones with a built-in switch (a switch is basically a faster hub) are great deals. Personally I chose the SMC Barricade 8-port Cable/DSL Router because I needed more than four ports and it has several other features that fit my needs. So far it's working quite well with a cable modem connection.

Ed.note: Next month Jim continues with the Wife Factor in networking.

Jim Scheef is President of TelemarkSystems, Inc, a provider of custom software design and development and Windows NT Networking Services. He has been with DACS longer than anyone can remember. You can reach Jim at jscheef@telemarksys.com.

Product	Type	Cost	Source
ZoneAlarm 2.1.44	Software	Free for personal use	Zone Labs www.zonelabs.com
ZoneAlarm Pro 1.0	Software	\$39.95	Zone Labs www.zonelabs.com
Norton Internet Security 2000	Software	\$59.95	Symantec, Inc. www.symantec.com
BlackICE Defender	Software	\$39.95	Network Ice Corp. www.networkice.co
Instant Broadband EtherFast Cable/DSL Router	Hardware (includes 4-port switch)	\$159.95 (Tiger Direct)	LinkSys, Inc.
Instant Broadband EtherFast Cable/DSL Router	Hardware	\$109.95 (Tiger Direct)	LinkSys, Inc.
SMC Barricade Cable/DSL Router with 100/10Base-T Switch	Hardware	\$169.45 with 4-port switch or \$228.51 with 8-port switch (CDW)	SMC Networks, Inc.

New Members

10/23/2000 thru 11/19/2000

- 1) Laura L. Freeman and Donald Gumm
- 2) Steve Harvey
- 3) William J. Mannhaupt
- 4) Bil Mikulewicz
- 5) Sandra and Jeffrey Prendergast
- 6) Joseph P. Scinto

THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

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EARTHLINK	800-395-8425
MAGS-NET	203-207-5695
EROL'S	888-463-7657
GTE INTERNETWORKING	800-927-3000
IBM/ADVANTIS	800-888-4103
INTERNET84	203-830-2122
INTERRAMP/PSI	800-827-7482
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LOCALNET / FAIRFIELD CTY	203-425-3535
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List for informational purposes only, not an endorsement of any service.

Further information?
Call Jim Finch @ 203 790-3654

Random Vectors

The On/Off Switch Must Go

by Virtual_Jack

It's bad. Ugly appearance, poor system design, negative functionality. It's bad for users, bad for operating system designers, bad for the PC itself. The single greatest obstacle to the evolution of the Personal Computer is that On/Off switch blatantly protruding from the front or side of every PC manufactured today. Ugly, dysfunctional, an impediment to progress, a relic of the past, wrong, it has to go.

Let's consider what the On/Off switch is used for. Some people turn their PC off to save on the electricity bill. The internal electronics of the machine pull about the same current as a 100-watt light bulb. With CL&P charging about a dime a kilowatt-hour that's a quarter a day. The thermal and electrical shock to the electronic components from the on/off voltage surge jeopardizes a thousand dollars of hardware. Will leaving it on wear out the computer before it becomes obsolete? That one doesn't even deserve an answer. The only even remotely useful purpose the On/Off switch serves is as the method of last resort when the user manages to hopelessly hang up the operating system.

So it should not be there, not even hidden on the back panel, not even as an emergency cut-off switch. There are far better protection measures than depending on the user to see smoke coming out.

So what's all this ranting and raving about a triviality like the On/Off switch? Triviality NOT! Let's see what would happen if a PC did not have any such component.

First of all the PC would no longer clutter up the living area of the house. It would become a utility, like the heating or hot water system, always functioning. It moves down into the basement (where it belongs) alongside the furnace and the sump pump. It necessarily has cables and USB-type connection devices in the various rooms of the house where conventional computer applications go on. The home office has only a flat screen and either keyboard or voice input. The kitchen has an electronic bulletin board. The family room has the HDTV screen and home theater sound system. Printers are wherever convenient. The hallways have the security and outside monitor screens. The basement computer processes it all.

Now what we have known as a personal computer takes a giant leap. It becomes primarily a controller rather than just a calculation machine and since it is always on, it can continuously monitor the household functions that provide heating/cooling, security, lighting, and maintenance schedules. Even more meaningful, continuous monitoring means the family schedules, activities, and whereabouts are always available and current. Assigned Internet agents can flash important news and announcements at any time to electronic bulletin boards in the kitchen or other rooms of the house and relay the information to family members where ever they might be. Information processing is both ubiquitous and integrated into all the family activities.

Since the machine is always on, it can be accessed at any time from remote service bureaus. Now we have a completely new environment. System maintenance and diagnostics are done from the remote service bureau and eliminates all hands-on fooling around with the operating system and data storage by system-challenged users. Data is stored at the service bureau, encrypted, backed up, and safer than it ever was at 29 Wistful Vista. Software applications finally get sensible. The apps reside at the service bureau and are downloaded to the home system when called for. No more accumulation of unused, obsolete, unwanted garbage. For the software house, direct dealing with responsible professional service bureaus reduces support staffs and software piracy. For users, lower cost and competitive support sources.

What has happened is that the Personal Computer has evolved to the HomeComputer. Cool. Bill Gates' dream.

Now we have unlimited control potential in every house that has a PC. This turns loose the entrepreneurs. Suppliers of everything that is used in the house, which is just about everything, have opportunities limited only by their imaginations. And then we would have the wild, ingenious, and profit-making binge that characterized early PC development, only on an already existing, vastly larger platform that boggles the imagination.

But aren't we overlooking one small technical detail like reliability? Would you trust your life, fortune, and sacred honor to the grandson of Windows? No way, San Jose.

Does Virtual_Jack have an answer to that one?

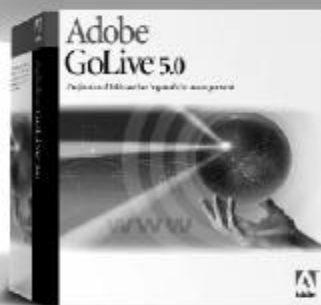
Of course he does, for that, and any other technical trivia. We need the reliability of the strategic military systems, the high-finance money transfers, the operating room monitors. In other words we need what already exists, but not presently for PC's.

It would require a bundle of money to develop such capabilities, but a billion dollars in research and development spread over one hundred million PCs is a measly ten bucks a machine. Doable. Now the next question. Would people pay for all this external service that they now do themselves? As the functionality expands, people will accept it the way they do cable TV costs and cellular phone costs. Gradually, all the information costs currently coming in from cable, phone, and other companies will converge just as the services will.

Now we have a new era in PC's. And just think, we could have all this if it weren't for that lousy little On/Off switch.

Virtual_Jack is an old, retired, computer programmer who seems to be Off more than he is On.

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Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: November 2000

ACCESS. Designs and implements solutions using Microsoft Access database management software.

Contact: Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920 (bpreston@mags.net). Meets on 2nd Tuesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next meeting: December 12

ADVANCED OPERATING SYSTEMS. Explores and develops OS/2, Linux, and NT operating systems. For meeting notes and notices, follow link to Don's site on dacs.org.

Contact: Don Pearson, 914 669-9622 (pearson@attglobal.net). Meets on Wednesday of the week following the general meeting, 7:30 p.m., at Don Pearson's office, North Salem, NY.

Next meeting: December 13

BACK OFFICE. Explores Back Office server and client applications, including Win NT Servers and MS Outlook. The SIG meets 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Contact: Jim Scheef (jscheef@telemarksys.com)

Next meeting: December 7

GRAPHICS. Create/print high-quality graphics and images.

Contact: Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 (graffic@ntplx.net). Meets on last Wednesday, 7p.m., at Best Photo Imaging, Brookfield.

Next Meeting: December 27

INTERNET. Acquaints DACS members with the Internet.

Contact: Larry Stevens (LStevens@usa.net) or Richard Koser (rkoser@worldnet.att.net). Meets on 3rd Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center. Members' suggestions are welcome.

Next Meeting: December 20

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., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: December 21

MACINTOSH. Discusses Macintosh hardware and software.

Contact: Chris Salaz, 203 798-6417, (crsalaz@kami.com). Meets on 3rd Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Suspended until further notice

VISUAL BASIC. Develops Windows apps with Visual Basic.

Contact: Chuck Fizer, 203 798-9996 (CFizer@compuserve.com) or Jim Scheef, 860 355-8001 (JScheef@Telemarksys.com). Meets on 1st Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: January 3

VOICE FOR JOANIE. Provides and supports people with Lou Gehrig's disease with special PC computer equipment.

Contact: Shirley Fredlund, 860 355-2611 ext. 4517 (voiceforjoanie@juno.com).

Meets on last Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., at Datahr, Brookfield.

Next Meeting: January 30

WALL STREET. Examines new 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: January 29

WEB SITE DESIGN. Fundamentals of design for the Internet.

Contact: Matthew Greger, 203 748-2919 (matthew@thebuisenesshelper.com)

Meets second Wednesday at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: December 13

SIG News & Other Events

BACK OFFICE At the October meeting we started to install the Duwamish Bookstore sample application. We'll continue the process in December. This is a sample application provided by Microsoft as an example of good development practices. There are five versions. We are starting with version three which is a multi-tier client-server application that uses SQL Server, COM objects, MTS, Visual Basic and probably more stuff I haven't found. After dissecting this version, we will move to one with a web-based user interface.

The next meeting will be December 14th at 7pm in DACS Resource Center. The program will be to set up the Duwamish database in SQL Server and then learn the Duwamish application and how the components interact.

The guest speaker from Component One has been re-scheduled to January 9th at the Access SIG meeting. Component One is the merger of Videosoft and Apex Software. The guest speaker will demonstrate some of their controls such as True Db Grid and vsView.

VISUAL BASIC meeting had a rather lengthy Random Access session. First we discussed Java scripting vs VB scripting. The primary concern had to do with syntactical differences between the languages. But we avoided trying to declare a winner. Another Random Access issue had to do with backing up a client on to its networked server. Should this be the client's responsibility? How could it be automated and made transparent to the client user.

The main part of the meeting returned to a familiar topic, objects. We discussed a new application which needs to interface with an existing application. The questions revolved around how to implement the interface. One possibility is to modify the existing application so that it would provide an object with methods and properties that the new application could instantiate and use. The upside to this approach is a more rapid deployment, but the downside creates difficult programming issues when the user is closing applications.

The other technique discussed implements a message-front analysis and perhaps more lines of program code, but overcomes application-closing issues. Another downside with the API approach that we discussed is that implementation is more proprietary in nature, although for custom programs this is less of an issue than it might be for a general purpose application.

As usual, we used every minute of our allotted time, with continuing discussion spilling over in the parking lot. Object can do that to you!

NOTE: The VB SIG will skip the December meeting due to the general meeting on December 6th. VB SIG members are invited to the Back Office SIG on Thursday, December 14th. The guest speaker from Component One has been postponed to Tuesday, January 9th, at the regular meeting of the Access SIG. The Access SIG will hold its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, December 12th.

WEB DESIGN. For the December SIG meeting, we will be dividing the Main Topic into two: "Creating images for the web" and "Finding a Host."

December 2000

Danbury Area Computer Society

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Windows Millennium Edition – Review

by Richard Corzo

Windows Millennium Edition (Me) is the latest in the pantheon of Microsoft Windows operating systems. Though its name may not make it clear, it follows in the line from Windows 95 and 98, which emphasized usage for game playing and other non-critical applications. Windows 2000, released earlier this year, was the successor to Windows NT, which put its emphasis on security and stability.

Microsoft had planned to merge the code base for the consumer and business versions of Windows by this point in time, but this won't occur until the next release. This will allow consumers to enjoy the stability that Windows NT and especially Windows 2000 users experience. In the meantime Microsoft offers Windows Me as a transition to that promised day.

Windows Me can be viewed in two ways—what it offers the consumer and how it promotes Microsoft's agenda. The advertised features are in the areas of digital media, home networking, and the latest Windows Internet and email clients. The unadvertised agenda is further weaning of users from DOS programs, and the promotion of Windows-only media formats.

What's New

Windows Me is, in part, a convenience package that includes the latest versions of Internet Explorer and Windows' email and newsgroup client Outlook Express (both now version 5.5). The only difference from IE 5.0 that a user might discern is the addition of a print preview function that Netscape has had for years. You may also notice minor bugs such as a tendency for IE 5.5 to march across the screen on subsequent invocations instead of staying put where you like it.

A major update that users will notice is in Windows Media Player. What used

to be a utilitarian application for playing audio and video files is now a kitchen sink application that also plays CDs, maintains libraries of music files, displays visual effects, enables listening to Internet radio stations, accesses an online music guide for finding music downloads, and can even burn compilation CDs from music files on your hard drive. Note that it can't



encode music into the Internet's and portable devices' most popular music format, MP3 files, but instead locks you into Windows media formats. Fortunately there are alternatives such as the excellent Music Match Jukebox (<http://www.musicmatch.com>).

Another touted addition is Windows Movie Maker. Although I don't have a video camera, I do have a TV tuner in my PC, so I tried doing a video capture with Movie Maker, which saves the data in a Windows media format. The results were less than impressive with the sound out of sync with the video.

Perhaps I need one of those 1GHz processors to replace my 266 MHz Pentium II.) I also didn't find the application as easy to use, for things like adding a musical soundtrack, as in Apple's iMovie application, available on their iMac models. I didn't stumble across any way to add movie titles, another iMovie feature. And you won't be able to transfer your edited Movie Maker movie back out to your video camera. It's only designed to create small, low-quality movies for posting on a Web site or perhaps emailing to someone. Your Mac-using friends won't be able to view the Windows-only format though. If you don't already have a late model PC, and are interested in home movie editing, you're more likely to be pleased with the results you get on a new Mac, which has Firewire ports built in to connect to a digital video camera. And iMovie movies can

be saved as QuickTime files which both Windows and Mac users can view.

There is an updated Home Networking Wizard that's supposed to make it easier to set up a home network. I personally find Windows 2000 easier for setting up Internet Connection Sharing, where I only have to check one box on a page of the Network control panel, rather than going through several screens of a wizard.

Windows Me has one feature that battle-scarred Windows users may find attractive, called System Restore. About once a day the system will save your configuration of program files and registry settings, or you can manually save a restore point before installing a program or driver. This feature takes up quite a bit of space on your hard drive in a hidden folder, but this may be reasonable in an era of huge hard drives. Be careful, though, if you restore to an earlier configuration, because program files will be restored to earlier versions, or may be deleted if the program file was installed after the time of the restore point. So, for example, that large installation file you recently downloaded may be deleted if it's not kept in a "safe" place, such as the My Documents folder.

What's Missing

Budding Webmasters will probably miss the Personal Web Server that was included in Windows 98 but is absent in Me. Many users have reported problems installing or fully using PWS from other sources (such as the NT 4.0 Option Pack) on Windows Me. People in this category should take a look at Windows 2000 Professional, which does include a Web server.

The Microsoft Backup function is no longer part of the Windows installation, but can be found in the \add-ons\MSBackup folder on the Windows Me CD. Microsoft Fax is gone altogether.

There is no Plus! Pack specifically for Windows Me, although Me includes a few of the Plus! 98 features such as compressed (a.k.a Zip) folders and the Spider solitaire game. The extra desktop themes from Plus! 98 and the deluxe CD player are not included, and you won't be able to install the Plus! 98 Pack without hacking the registry. You can, however, upgrade from Windows 98 with the Plus! 98 pack installed.

Bootting into DOS mode from Windows is no longer available. If you need to run DOS games or other DOS programs that require direct access to the hardware, stick to Windows 95 or 98. Note that there is

still a 16-bit code base in Windows Me, so don't expect increased stability over Windows 9x, it's just user access to the DOS code that has been removed. There is still a DOS prompt available, which may be suitable for running DOS programs that don't require direct access to hardware. As an experiment I started up an old DOS game. My screen went black, the game didn't come up, and Windows disappeared. All I could do to recover was hit the reset button. The CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files have essentially been eliminated. If you had statements in these startup files to help run your old software, there may be equivalents that go into the SYSTEM.INI file.

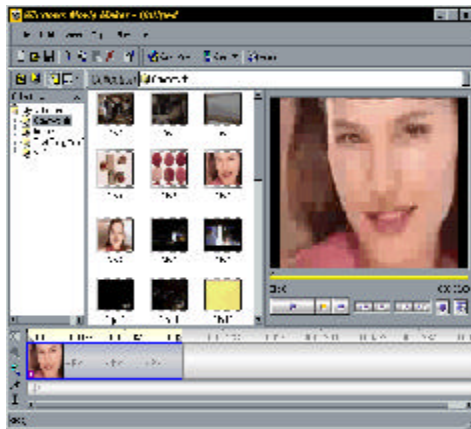
The Ugly

I'm no great fan of Windows 98, but Windows Me seems a step backward in some respects. After first installing Windows Me, I tried opening the Help. It seemed to take forever to come up. When I timed it later, I found it took an unacceptable 45 seconds! I later accidentally found a way to speed it up. I had read on one of the newsgroups that the Disk Defragmenter had been speeded up in Windows Me, so I tried it. It turns out that it cut my Help start time down to 15 seconds, which is tolerable, but nothing to brag about.

I also find the system to be jerky in operation on a machine where I have plenty of RAM (192 MB). By contrast, when I run Windows 2000 on the same machine, I find the system to be very smooth and responsive. I usually idle somewhere near 0% CPU under Windows 2000 when I'm not doing much. Mysteriously, with Windows Me I idle between 25 to 75% CPU, according to System Monitor even after closing down as many tasks as possible.

Windows Me's one great improvement is in boot time, which on my machine takes only 30 seconds to get to a functional desktop. This is fortunate because Windows Me seems to prompt you to reboot for even the smallest configuration changes. This is the opposite strategy of Windows 2000, which rarely requires you to reboot, but takes much longer to boot than Windows Me.

One thing that you used to be able to count on with Windows 95 and 98 is essentially universal hardware driver support. If a piece of hardware existed, it almost by definition was supported under Windows 9x. It was Windows NT where you had to be careful to find out if a piece of hardware was supported. Now the tables are starting to turn. When I installed Windows 2000 earlier this year, I found every piece of hardware I had was supported with a built-in driver. I was shocked to find out that when I installed Windows



Me, there were no built-in drivers for my video card, network card, or laser printer. I had or was able to download drivers for each of these, but I don't consider that user-friendly for an operating system marketed to home users. I also found it odd that I first had to install a generic modem driver before I could later

select a driver for my specific modem. Why not show the complete selection list up front?

System Requirements and Pricing

Microsoft states that you need at least a 150 MHz Pentium processor and 32 MB of RAM to run Windows Me. I suspect 64 MB is a more realistic minimum, and

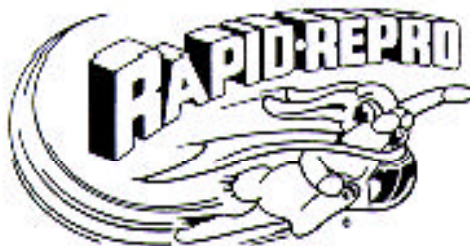
you may not be really happy with less than 128 MB. The upgrade list price for Windows 95 and 98 users is \$109. There is also a special "limited-time" upgrade edition just for Windows 98 users priced at \$59.95.

Recommendation

This is not Microsoft's shining hour in operating system releases. It's especially disappointing after the release of Windows 2000 earlier this year, which is easily the best operating system Microsoft has ever released. Windows Me is not so bad that I would recommend it over Windows 98 on a new computer, but I can't recommend that anyone spend good money on upgrading from Windows 95 or 98. Remember that the latest Internet Explorer and Windows Media Player can be downloaded for free or ordered on CD-ROM and installed on your existing Windows system (although Windows Media Player requires at least Windows 98).

Microsoft is targeting Windows Me towards home users, and Windows 2000 towards business users. While I agree that companies should steer clear of Windows Me, I don't agree that Windows Me is the best solution for all home users. Windows 2000 is far more stable, and if a home user is willing to do a little research to see if his/her favorite hardware and peripherals are supported, it may be a better option for some.

RICHARD CORZO is a computer programmer currently working for Apelon, Inc. in Ridgefield, CT. He has contributed past articles on PC operating systems and utilities.



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RandomAccess

November 2000

By Bruce Preston, Moderator

Q. Is there a point after which adding more RAM doesn't help performance on a machine?

A. Much depends upon what you are doing, as memory intensive applications such as CAD, graphics, etc. need more memory. For a general purpose machine, web browsing, word processing, etc., Windows 95/98/ME like 128MB after which more RAM isn't going to do much. Additionally, if you keep multiple programs running at the same time, you will do well to have more memory, or at least a larger virtual memory defined.

Q. Can I connect a parallel printer to a USB port?

A. Yes, if you have a USB to Parallel Port converter. Belkin make one, as does Epson and IBM, and there are others as well. They typically draw power from the USB port. Note that you might also be able to add a parallel port to your machine, but doing so will consume an interrupt, where a USB port can support several devices on the same interrupt.

Q. I switched from dial-up to DSL. When I double-click on a URL, it tries to connect via the dial-up circuit rather than via the already connected DSL link.

A. Take a look in Windows Explorer, VIEW, Folder Settings, File Types and see what application "owns" the .HTM and .HTML file extension. Then go to this application, such as IE, and make sure that it is set to use your DSL connection by default.

Q. Is anyone here using a cable modem connection? How does it work?

A. We had one "past tense" user, and several active users. In general they were favorable as it was considerably faster than dial-up, but several reported that it got sluggish at certain times of day due to sharing the bandwidth, where DSL is a fixed bandwidth connection.

Q. Can I encrypt the contents of a hard disk, or at a minimum just certain files?

A. Various word processors have built in encryption capabilities. Another way is to use a virtual drive under File Crypto, or Pretty Good Privacy. These drives are similar to the "compressed drives" such as Stacker or DriveSpace - except that they are encrypted. You essentially reserve a large block of your disk space for encryption, and it gets assigned a drive letter. From then on, you can use any program to read or write to that drive, but must provide a password to be able to do so.

Q. Can I remove the encryption later?

A. Yes, if you provide the password. You can then just drag and drop the files from the encrypted drive to some other partition. Once empty, delete the encrypted partition, and then re-define it as a normal partition and the encryption will be gone.

Q. I want to be able to use OS/2 and Windows 2000 on the same machine. After installation, I no longer can select the OS when I boot, unless I re-install the boot manager. Then things work fine until I use Windows 2000, then OS/2 is unavailable until I re-install the boot manager again. Isn't there a way to do this without the hassle?

A. According to the "Getting Started" manual that came with Windows 2000 Professional (page 36) "If you install Windows 2000 on a computer that dual boots OS/2 and MS-DOS, Windows 2000 Setup configures your system so you can dual boot between Windows 2000 Professional and the operating system (MS-DOS or OS/2) you most recently used before running Windows 2000 Setup. You might be better off with a boot manager such as available from PowerQuest. Check also the "ReadMe" file on the Windows 2000 Professional CD.

Q. Last month I heard reference to "Slide Scanners". Can't I use a flatbed scanner?

A. There are two things going against a flatbed scanner - resolution and illumination. A flat bed scanner has perhaps 600dpi (dots per inch) resolution before it resorts to interpolation (estimation) For a 35mm slide, that means that you may only get 900 true dots across the image, and maybe 600 down the image before it starts estimating. The other problem is that you need to have a consistently color correct light source behind the slide, since the light must go through the slide rather than be reflected off the image as is the case when scanning a page or photo. Slide scanners have a much smaller scanning "eye" but it only looks at the area of a single slide. It thus can deliver (typically) 2,700 dpi or better, and they have a light source that is color balanced for scanning slides. The better scanners use a SCSI connection, which gives you better throughput. Some brands to look at: Nikon Cool Pix is very well rated, as are the SprintScan units from Polaroid. Polaroid has just introduced a new model, you can get a very good deal on refurbished or surplus units on eBay. If you are going to be doing high volumes, you might want to consider a SCSI CD-RW drive so that you can save your scans to a CD, as a high-detail scan of a slide will generate a file of about 27MB.

Q. Every time I start my internet connection, it insists on going to the Zone Alarm page, even though this not my "start page" in Internet Explorer. What's going on.

A. It is possible that when you installed ZoneAlarm that it changed your default page - take a look in Tools / Options and see if the start page has been changed.

Q. When I installed a second network card (for cable modem) into a machine, it doubled up on the same IRQ as the video card. Things seem to work, but I do get a hung machine from time to time. Could this be the problem?

A. Yes. Network cards don't like sharing IRQs with anybody. See if you can free up an IRQ by removing a comm port or printer port.

Q. Could someone compare Norton's Ghost versus PowerQuest's Drive Image.

A. PowerQuest answers the phone when you call for support. We know of Fortune 500 companies that use Ghost - it is considered to be more reliable, but note that there is a professional version for each. The professional version does not require the source image to be local, it can be on a network drive.

Q. I used Partition Magic to repartition my hard drive. I read somewhere that once that has been done, I shouldn't change my operating system. Any comments?

A. As long as the new OS can recognize the format of the partition, i.e. NTFS, HPFS, FAT-32, etc., there shouldn't be a problem. However be aware that changing operating systems on an existing system is always somewhat risky, especially in that you may "inherit" faulty

settings from the previous installation. This was much more common in converting from 16-bit Windows (Windows 3.11, Windows for Workgroups) to 32-bit Windows (Windows 95, 98, SE, etc.)

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@aol.com

Stocking Stuffers

The Annual Holiday Geek Shopping List

By Mike Kaltschnee

It's THAT time of year again. I can hear the holiday sounds now, clearly as I heard them last year's Honking horns, horrible Muzak renditions of seasonal favorites, and people complaining about lines at the mall. My goal this month is to put together a list of cool things you lust after, so you can leave it for your spouse, significant other, parents or friends to "find." This is a customizable column, so be sure to fill in the blanks with your selections (it helps to write in a red pen so it's easier to see).

One of my favorite online stores is ThinkGeek.com. You'll find the incredibly useful Cybertool (a Swiss-Army knife for geeks), Eclipse Monitor light, and tons of cool t-shirts, mugs and other geek toys. Be careful ordering beverages from them - some of them have enough caffeine to launch a space shuttle. Prices range from \$5 to several hundred, so you can find something to fit almost any budget. If you find something you desire, write it here: _____.

There are several great new games for you to spend the week after Christmas. If you haven't played Age of Empires II, Diablo II, Links 2001, realMyst, or

_____ (fill in your choice here or circle your desired game), then you've spent too much time in Microsoft Word or Excel. Games are a great way to reduce the holiday shopping stress (not medically proven).

Flat-screen displays have dropped drastically in price, and are now in the range of most people that stare at a computer screen for hours. I've been using notebook computers for a long time, and I have grown to love the sharp, clear colors on the new 15" displays. You can get a new display for as little as \$600 - and you'll be able to reclaim about half of your desk.

I'm getting a bit too old for laser tag, but a game of Laser Tennis may be the thing I need. You can get this \$59 exercise-free marvel online at www.sharperimage.com, along with a lot of other cool gadgets, such as _____ (put your choice here).

If you don't have a Palm computer or Pocket PC yet, now is the time to ask. Prices couldn't be better - you can get the entry-level Palm m100 for \$149. I've used an early Palm model for several

years to help me stay organized, and now you can get an equivalent device for the price of a paper planner that can get lost - and you'll always have a backup on your computer. The hottest model is the iPaq by Compaq, but it'll run you around \$499. You obviously want the _____ model, of course.

If you have rich parents, just won the lottery, or found \$1,500 in unexpected money from the state's unclaimed property Web site (www.state.ct.us/ott) you definitely need an Aibo. Sony has created the ultimate dog - no cleanup, artificial intelligence, and a computer interface. I got a chance to spend some time with the "1999" edition and it is everything you love about a pet, without the mess or hair on your furniture. However, they haven't perfected the "love" thing, so don't expect much affection from Aibo. Aibo, about \$1,500, from www.sony.com/aibo.

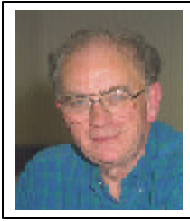
When all else fails, it can't hurt to get an Amazon.com gift certificate (or one from your favorite online retailer: _____). Amazon sells everything you could want: software, books, electronics, music, movies, and more.

Now that you've circled or filled in your choices, leave this article in a conspicuous place where your intended victim will find it. Happy holidays!

MIKE is a DACS member who hopes somebody sends a copy of this to his wife. You can contact him by e-mail: mikek@demorgan.com.



Candidates



Charlie Bovaird — Danbury (Incumbent) — is a consultant and retired IBMer. A long time DACS member, a board member for over 8 years and serves as treasurer. He brings to DACS over 40 years of experience with hardware and software. He prepares the monthly *dacs.doc* mailings and has chaired DACS' participation at the PC EXPO. He developed the membership survey, and along with Jim Ragsdale maintains the membership database. He also coordinates the activities of the education committee, scheduling and assigning classes.



Marlène Gaberel — (Incumbent) — For the last couple of years, Marlène has spread the word about DACS by sending press releases to the local and not so local media. Marlène has been a resident of Sandy Hook since 1982. During the day she works as an International Relations for a Bethel-based manufacturing firm. At home, Marlène shares her computer with sons Joshua, a 9th grader in Newtown High School, and Zachary, a 5th grade at Sandy Hook school. Both kids are game enthusiasts and Marlène plays technical adviser when the games do not perform to the kids' expectation.



Matthew Greger — Danbury — Is currently co-owner of The Business Helper, Inc. in Danbury, a provider of small business solutions in Database Programming, Web Site Design and Stationery Printing. He has previously owned two graphic design firms and was a partner in a printing company, and has held positions ranging from Production Manager to IT Manager to Director of Creative Services. Matthew's computer career started in the 1980s with an 8088 IBM clone. Since then he has owned and worked on a diverse selection of platforms. Currently, he is an Apple Solutions Expert and a member of FileMaker Solution Alliance. Matthew's goal as a board member is to see the membership grow, with more participation regardless of platform. He would also like to see more youth participation or a Youth DACS program involving local area schools.



Don Neary — New Fairfield — Retired since 1998, Don's last job was Aerospace Field Sales Manager for PTI Technologies (Purolator Filter Company). He is currently running my own company, Mobile Computers. He is a past President of a 325-member community association and was a board member of a Danbury computer club that merged to become DACS. He has been interested in computers since 1975, starting with a remote mainframe to help design and patent an Angle of Attack system for Rosemount Aerospace. As a board member, Don would help share the workload of a growing and remarkable organization and attempt to give back and some of what he has enjoyed and learned as a member.

Photo not
available

Don Pearson— North Salem, NY. — Don Pearson has been a member of DACS for more than ten years, and is presently a private consultant, specializing in Linux. A veteran of IBM, he has always taken an active interest in non-Windows operating systems, and has organized and led SIGS on OS/2 and more recently on Advanced Operating Systems.

Don would like to apply his extensive technical skills to DACS, and feels his unique perspectives on computing would be an asset to the board.



Andrew Woods — Andy Woods is a resident of Newtown and has been a DACS member since 1995. A former Marine Sergeant and Staff Sergeant in the Army Reserves, he has received numerous awards, including the Medal of Valor, Silver Star Award and Policeman of the Year Award. He served 28 years as a police officer in the City of Danbury, rising to title of Police Captain. Andy holds an MS degree with a concentration Forensic Science and Advanced Investigation. Now retired, Andy has an active interest in computing. He would like to apply his technical skills and experience in public service to DACS as a member of the board and as a volunteer.

Ballot

1. Select five (5) of the candidates for director of the Corporation,
as indicated by my check mark:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| — Charlie Bovaird | — Don Neary |
| — Marlene Gaberel | — Don Pearson |
| — Matthew Greger | — Andy Woods |

2. Such other business as may properly come before the meeting

____ Yes

____ No

I appoint Larry Buoy, Secretary as my agent to vote in my place and stead at
the annual meeting of members on December 6, 2000 as follows:

Signed _____

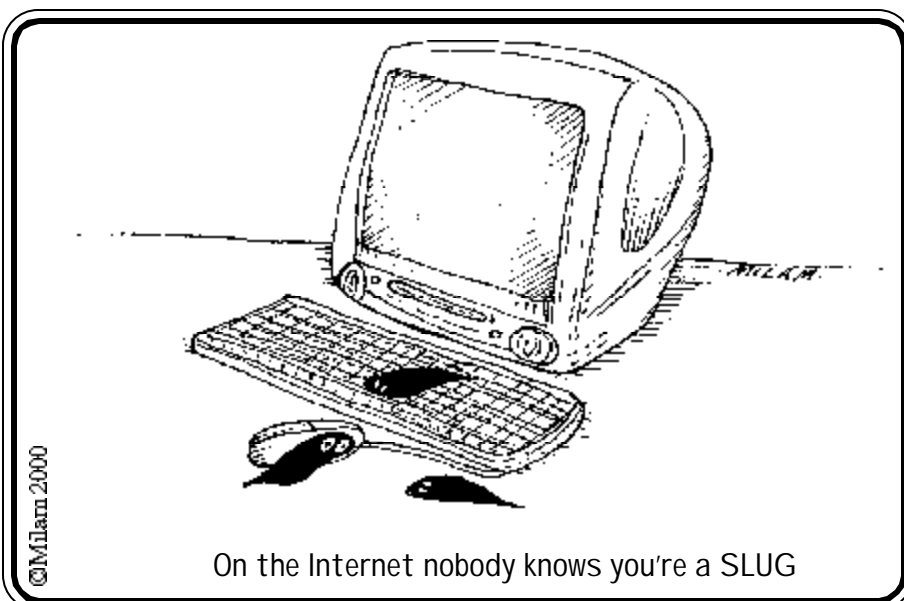
Dated _____

Notice of Annual Meeting Notice is given that the Annual meeting of members of
DACS will be held on Wednesday, December 6, 2000 at 7:30 p.m. in the Danbury Hospital
Auditorium, 24 Hospital Avenue, Danbury, Connecticut.

An election of 5 (5) directors will be held. The meeting is further called for the
transaction of such other business as may properly come before the membership.

In the event that a member will not be able to attend, a written proxy may be delivered
to the Secretary or to any other officer or director of DACS so that it arrives on or before
the Annual Meeting.

Larry Buoy, Secretary



On the Internet nobody knows you're a SLUG

Computer Donations Welcomed

TheDACS computer project is accepting the following items (in working condition):

- Mice with PS2 type connectors
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- IBM compatible Computers with 1 gigabyte (or larger) hard drives
- VGA or SVGA monitors
- Laser printers.
- Volunteers

To arrange a donation, call 203-431-1500

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Call Shirley Fredlund
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Future Events

December 5 • John Patrick, Vice President of Internet Technology, IBM Corp.
January 2 • Microsoft Corporation - @Home.
February • David Goldberg, Health Science Inc. - Assistive Technology

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