



January 2003

Volume 14, Issue 1

## Next Meeting:

### Build Your Own Digital Music Library

DACS' own digital DJ, Frank Powers, will show how to turn your PC into a personal recording studio

- Learn how to rip your favorite music to CD.
- Learn how to record your records and tapes on your hard drive and then add them to your MP3 collection.
- Demonstration of popular music editing and recording software programs.



## Inside:

**Patrick Presents,**  
by Marlène Gaberel  
**Digital Photography III,**  
by Richard Ten Dyke  
**No Late Fees-with NetFlix,**  
by Mike Kaltschnee

**Ants in my Hub**  
by Paul Lujan

**MPEG 4 a Three-Ringed Circus**  
by Timothy Everingham

**Plus** Presidential Ramblings  
and more answers to your  
computer questions.

# President's File



PRESIDENTIAL  
RAMBLINGS  
ISSUE 0.9

The time warp of publishing lead times means that it is now a week before Christmas, but it will be after New Years when you read this. When I wrote last month's column, the neighbors still had Halloween decorations up, so the Holidays were the last thing on my mind – and yes, I still have shopping to do – so please accept my belated wish for peaceful and safe holidays.

The coming year is already presenting challenges. As I write this, we have programs confirmed for only the next two general meetings. I'm sure both will be excellent because both speakers are DACS members. In past years, the "home grown" program was the exception. The size of our membership allowed us to attract speakers from software companies all over the country. Unfortunately, the number of companies able to pay for speakers is shrinking every month. Besides, how many times do you want to hear about the same programs? So here is my call for help: what topics do you want to learn about at the general meeting? How many would be interested in a program about programming tools? This would be quite a bit more technical than we are used to. We had a program on setting up a home network. How many would be in-

terested in a "next installment" on security? What about wireless networking? These are all my areas of interest; please let me know yours. Send me your thoughts at [jscheef@dacs.org](mailto:jscheef@dacs.org).

In the spirit of the Holidays I am going to give the following issues a rest:

1. The fact that Microsoft and our legislators are giving away the concept of fair use to the music and movie industries. Have you ever thought that Microsoft had your best interests in mind? How many lobbyists do you have in Washington?

2. There needs to be a balance in the reporting of security issues between Windows and open source operating systems. Neither is perfect and both are trying to get better.

3. Our civil liberties are being eroded in the name of fighting terrorism by a Congress afraid to stand up for our rights. Please tell them what you think.

4. Please register your shareware. If you use it, pay for it.

5. Ain't open source wunnerful? If you really think some free software is particularly good, send the developers a pizza.

Here are my predictions. By the end of the year:

1. Issues 1, 2 and 3 above will not only not go away, but will get worse.

2. Disk drives will get bigger and processors will get faster—and no one will care.

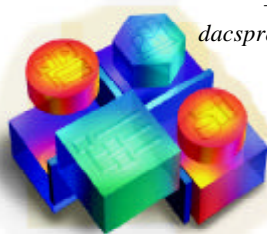
3. Wireless LANs will be everywhere—except anywhere I want to use one.

4. SPAM will be more than half of all email—and the industry and Congress will start to notice.

5. DACS membership will stop shrinking and start to grow again.

Weren't those early snow storms great? We actually had local cross country skiing in early December! Wonderful! This could be the best ski season in the East in years! Once again, here's to a safe and peaceful New Year!

—JIM SCHEEF  
[dacsprez@dacs.org](mailto:dacsprez@dacs.org)



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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 SPECIAL Meeting of the Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on Monday, December 16, 2002. Present were Messrs. Buoy, Cohen, Gallichotte, Keane, Ostergren, Powers and Scheef. Also present was Don Pearson. President Scheef presided and Secretary Larry Buoy kept the record. The minutes of the last meeting, held on November 11, 2002, were approved with one correction.

In the absence of Treasurer Bovaird, a Balance Sheet prepared in advance was presented to the meeting showing combined bank and postal accounts of \$18,028.02 plus postage on hand of \$107.31, a total of \$18,135.33, less prepaid dues of \$7,427.00, for a net of \$10,708.33. Also reported was current membership of 452.

Following a discussion of the effectiveness of newspaper advertising for General Meetings, it was proposed that advertising via posters placed in libraries and other venues may be a viable alternative. The logistics of preparation and distribution of that media were discussed and Allan Ostergren agreed to draft such a poster.

With regard to future programs for General Meetings, the subjects of: Hackers and how they operate; Spyware; WiFi, the hazards and conveniences thereof; Firewalls, both personal and network; and digital photography techniques.

President Scheef stated that there had been some response to the announcement that business card ads would be placed in the newsletter at no cost to members and that he had accepted several business cards for such purpose. He also restated the need for volunteers to help with the establishment of Sendmail on the Linux server at the RC.

Jim Scheef broached the subject of making the RC more accessible to the general membership, such as a library of computer-related material deemed obsolete by individuals but useful to others, which may or may not be returned. A discussion led to many possible uses as well as many problems, chiefly regarding access and security.

During the foregoing discussion, Treasurer Bovaird entered and participated in the further proceedings of the meeting.

President Scheef also suggested that a permanent email address could be established for members through the DACS server which would forward such members mail to any ISP of his choice but retaining

*Directors Notes continued on page 4*

Directors Notes continued from page 3

the @dacs.org address. Such proposal will be presented to the general membership to measure its reaction.

Also discussed was DACS' relationship with the Danbury Chamber of Commerce, with the result that it may be feasible to co-host an occasional Chamber event for the networking opportunities available.

John Gallichotte then announced his intention to attempt to organize a new SIG on the subject of microcontrollers.

With reference to the rising costs of maintaining automatic renewal of memberships via credit card charges, it was expressed, without definitive action being taken, that the discount for such automatic renewal should be discontinued.

—LARRY BUOY

## New Members

11/21 thru 12/16

- 1) Debra Zucker
- 2) Gregory and Lauri Austin
- 3) Frank Powers
- 4) John Lansdale
- 5) Joseph Brooks
- 6) Lynn Medini

### THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

**EXP 10/2002**

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You need to renew your

DACS membership

**NOW**



## Preview

### Let Your CD Player be the Vinyl Resting Ground for Your LPs and Tapes

By M. Gaberel

**A**RE YOU “YOUNG” enough to remember vinyl records? I drew a blank look from my younger son when I asked him what it was. Recently, my husband and I were cleaning up a drawer that contains tapes that have not been listened to in years. I threw away half because the music is available on more convenient CDs. The kids were wondering anyway why we had bothered to buy anything as cumbersome as vinyl and tapes when CD are available.

Well, it seems — at least to me — only yesterday that CDs were introduced. My kids take them for granted.

DACS members who want to preserve those precious vinyl records and tapes for the future will have the unique opportunity to learn how to do this at the January DACS general meeting on 1/7/2003. The meeting will take place at Danbury Hospital Auditorium. Frank Powers will present “several computer programs designed to facilitate record-

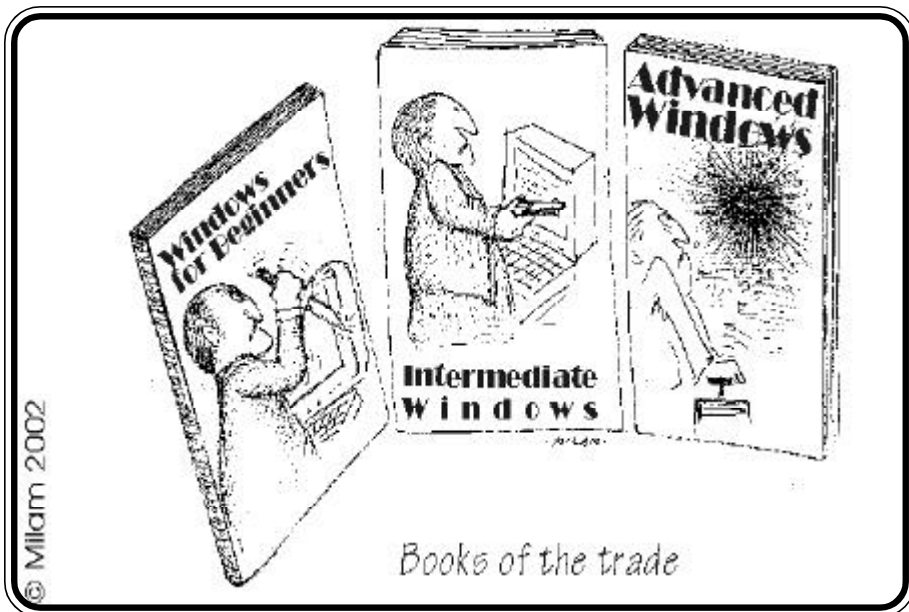
ing your vinyl records and analog tapes onto your PC's hard drive. He'll be using Voyetra's AudioSurgeonT and Cakewalk's

PyroT and he'll show you some tips and tricks to make the process produce the best sounding files with the least amount of effort.”

Before the January meeting you may want to “try your hand at recording some tapes or vinyl records.” For some background information, make sure you read

Frank's excellent articles in November and December 2002 in *dacs.doc*. Frank says he will raffle some copies of Voyetra's AudioStationC & AudioSurgeon, MusicMatch Jukebox ver 7, and Cakewalk's Pyro

The meeting will start at 7pm with some questions and answers and club announcements. The formal presentation will be at 8pm. For directions to the Danbury Hospital Auditorium or more information about the meeting, please check DACS' web site at [www.dacs.org](http://www.dacs.org).





## Meeting Review

### John Patrick's presentation

By Marlène Gaberel

THE DECEMBER DACS general meeting featured IBM now-retired V.P. of Internet Technology, John Patrick.

It was John Patrick's 11th talk to DACS members, going as far back as his OS/2 presentation. OS/2 was an IBM attempt to compete with Microsoft Windows. A trim John Patrick, who looks much younger than his 57 years, talked about the present state of the Internet. While looking casually, one may generally conclude that the Internet is a mature product. Patrick dispels this notion by saying that we have not seen anything yet, and that we still have a long way to go. He estimates that only 2% of the full Internet potential has been reached presently. He pointed out that the general attitude regarding the Internet will progressively change toward one of a more life-integrated product, but also that we may have to wait until the next generation, to achieve the right attitude toward the Internet.

Patrick described some examples of companies that have it and some that still do not get it, Internet-wise. Some sites meet a user's expectation by making available all the necessary resources to complete a task. An example given by Patrick as a versatile site is myups.com. Such sites offer an end to end experience, where a visitor can start an enquiry, for example, a simple hotel reservation, and apply any bonus-points received from a frequent user plan, without having to go to another site. An ecommerce company that gets it will allow you to start a process and finish whatever is required, without having to make a telephone call, or fax, or send an email, or check another, unrelated, page on the web.

He then demonstrated that there are still numerous businesses where visitors transacting on the Internet cannot complete their applications right on that company's web site. This is the reason we are not there yet. An example given by

John was American Express, which requires a user of their web site to call during business hours. Many are just not able to call during business hours. In my own case, during business hours I usually conduct my employer's business; I just do



not have the time to do private stuff during the week. Sunday afternoon is usually when I have time to do some home office work and planning. I wish I could contact the doctor's office to make an appointment, to contact my kids' teachers for their progress reports and to re-schedule that hair cut appointment that was cancelled because of the ice.

Another business-related issue that John Patrick mentioned during his presentation is that a survey found that 77% of businesses do not reply to their email. Just imagine all the lost opportunities in leads, and suggestions on improvements and corrective actions that are wasted, in addition to the lack of courtesy to those taking the time to write.

With the future of the Internet in mind, Patrick talked about Wi-Fi, where people with portability can access the web just about

anywhere. John described his experience working with his Thinkpad from a Subway fast-food place, using a connection that surprised him by its speed. He pointed out the potential of Wi-Fi, whence a chip will be implanted in our cell phones. This surely will be competition to Sprint, ATT, Verizon, Cingular, etc... It will be interesting to follow that development. He also mentioned instant messaging, the automatic translation of web pages, better intelligence in simplifying data, and the potential breakthrough in medicine by using instant information via the web. Another point he made is that with his cell phone he was able to close his garage door in the USA from London.

One of Patrick's hobbies is blogging (from weblogging), or the sharing of a mutual interest among people with a similar viewpoint or interest, who use the web and share information among all concerned. His web page has such a feature. He directed us to check his blog.

Patrick closed his presentation by saying that attitudes toward the Internet need to change. Businesses need to incorporate the call center into the web and listen to customers comments.

Members of the audience had many questions to ask John. They were all duly addressed. He reassured one member of the audience by affirming that the backbone of the Internet is intact, despite the consequences of 9/11. In summary, his advice is to listen to your customers—their input is invaluable; listen to your kids—they are the next generation; and listen to the elderly—they have persistence.

**Marlène Gaberel** is a DACS board member and VP for Public Relations. You can e-mail her at: [marlene\\_gaberel@yahoo.com](mailto:marlene_gaberel@yahoo.com).



Webmaster, Jeff Setaro receives APCUG runner-up award for Best Web Site from APCUG Treasurer and DACS member, Joan Dineen

## Pastimes

### A Brief Introduction to Digital Photography Part III - Edit Your Photographs

By Richard P. Ten Dyke

**I**N PART I, WE DISCUSSED getting a photograph into digital form, and in Part II, storage and compression. Now we will discuss editing and improving your images.

Taking pictures is only one part of the creative process. After you have your image in digital form, you will almost certainly want to make modifications to improve it. Very few photographs are perfect when they come out of the camera. To modify or edit an image, you will use photo-editing software.

Some of the more simple editing functions may be included with software that comes with the digital camera or scanner. These might include cropping, improving contrast and brightness, and removing redeye.

Many times more needs to be done, and you may want to use a more sophisticated software package. The most widely used photo editing software package is Photoshop, by Adobe. The current flagship program is Photoshop 7.0, which sells for \$600. Recently, Adobe released a reduced-function version called Photoshop Elements. To say it is reduced-function fails to give credit for the richness of function that it provides — about equal to their then flagship product of just a few years ago. Elements is all that you will need; it runs on a Mac or a PC and it sells for less than \$100.

Another excellent editor is Picture Publisher, offered by Corel, priced at about \$100., but runs on a PC only.

Regardless of your choice, any of these editors offer all the functions that a non-professional user could want, and more. Here are some of the ways that I have used photo-editing software in recent days.

(1) Correct minor problems, such as eliminating spots, eliminating power lines, removing glare from glasses.

(2) Do a better job of correcting problems of under- and over-exposure. It is

possible, for example, to lighten a specific area of a photograph, while leaving other areas untouched. This will allow you to pull detail out of shadows, or soften high-lights.

(3) Soften wrinkles in a photograph of a person. Clean up skin blemishes.

(4) Create a composite of photographs to be used in a publication.

(5) Straighten vertical and horizontal lines, and correct distortion in buildings or other large objects.

(6) Combine parts of two separate images to merge the best parts of each into a single image. (I have done this with group photos to (hopefully) end up with a picture where everyone had their eyes open and is smiling.)

(7) Adjust the pixel dimensions when placing the image on the Internet, in order to control download time.

(8) Make proof sheets to view multiple images, for reference purposes.

(9) Create a panoramic image by combining two separate “left-and-right” images of the same scene.

(10) Add text.

And the list goes on...

These are simple ways to correct defects, or slightly improve on the original image. I have not mentioned many of the ways one can use photo-editing software to become extraordinarily creative. One can rotate and distort images, cause multiple images to blend into one another, and add a wide variety of text and graphic effects. In fact, when the artist in you starts to take over, what you end up may not resemble a photograph at all.

To do these things takes practice, of course, but the programs come with tutorials and documentation, and numerous text books are also available. The quality of your photographs will show the difference, and your rewards will be worth the effort. Remember, when you say “Oh I

would never want to do anything like that,” it is probably because you didn’t know you could do it, or how much fun it would be.

All photo-editing software works with an uncompressed image. If your photo is in your computer as a compressed jpeg file, it will be expanded to its original pixel dimensions when it is loaded into your photo editor. I know of no photo editor that works with compressed images. (There have been attempts, however.) If your uncompressed image is 5 megapixels, it will translate into 15 megabytes of memory. Your software will also be saving copies of pre-edited images to make use of its “undo” features, so you will need available memory that is three to five times your image size, or performance will suffer. Machines come loaded with lots of memory, so this is not a problem with newer machines, but it was a problem for older ones. Professionals often work with images that are 100 megabytes and greater, so machines with a gigabyte of main memory are common in the industry. You will probably not need more than 256 Megabytes to do your work, and I sometimes use a PC with Windows 98 using 96 Megs.

In our next and final section, we will discuss questions concerning printing and displaying our images.

RICHARD TEN DYKE is a member of Danbury Area Computer Society who has had a long interest in both photography and computers. He started his photography career with a Leica IIIC in 1952, and his computer career working with an ERA 1103 in 1956. He currently is retired from IBM and resides in Bedford, New York. You can reach him at [tendyke@bedfordny.com](mailto:tendyke@bedfordny.com).

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# Troubleshooting

## Ants in my Hub

By Paul Lujan

SO, LAST NIGHT, I come home after a 4-1/2 hour drive back from LA (note to law enforcement officials: that's a "6" there, really), and sit down in front of the computer to check my mail. My connection is, for lack of a better word, ass-slow. I go to look at the hub to see if everyone else is having this problem.

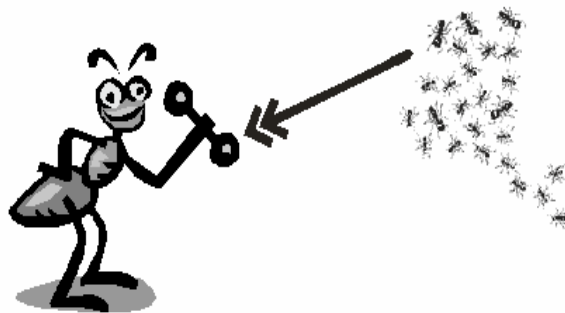
Nope, Mike and David's activity lights are busily flickering; it's only me who has been screwed. I reach down to fiddle with the connection, and notice that the hub is covered with ants (as well as my hand, after the fiddling). "That's odd," I think to myself, "what would ants want with our hub?" But I'm way too tired to deal with it at the time, so instead I go to sleep.

I wake up this morning, and decide to investigate further. Yep, the hub is definitely swarming with ants. And it doesn't look like the ants are just going over it to somewhere else (especially since there aren't any tasty ant treats anywhere nearby); they're clearly going into and out of the hub. Some of the ants going in are even carrying little white pellets. "Is that food?" I wonder. "Where is it coming from?"

I unplug the hub and pick it up, and then kill all of the ants that come out of it. And kill some more ants. And kill some more ants. This goes on for a while. I begin to think that the little white pellets look an awful lot like eggs. I shake the hub, and it sounds like someone has poured a handful of coarse sand into it. "That's odd," I think to myself, "I could have sworn this hub didn't come with the sand option." I initially thought that there were just some ants here, but it's pretty clear I've got more on my hands now.

So, I decide to take a closer look at the hub. Unfortunately, the hub boasts a screwless construction, but I know that my screwdrivers can be used for more than merely removing screws, so I start prying. As I do so, a bunch of ants and eggs, as well as what look like larvae (basically, they look like slightly-smaller-than-normal ants, but a very pale brown instead of black) continue to fall out (into the sink, since I've become clever enough to do this over the sink).

I finally get the thing open, and see a bunch of eggs lying on the circuit board, but less than I would have expected if there's really a colony set up here. So, I figure that they're probably under the circuit board, and set to work unscrewing the circuit board to take it out of the box.



### ENLARGEMENT OF ANT CARRYING AWAY DATA PACKETS

Jackpot! (That is, if my goal were to win an ant colony, which it really "wasn't".) The entire bottom of the box is coated with eggs, and I see a large ant which I can only assume is the queen. I terminate the queen with extreme prejudice, and then wash out the box (it's made of metal, so I figure it'll be okay.)

The circuit board, on the other hand, I can't just wash off (since I hold hopes of saving the hub, not really wanting to have to drop \$30 on a new one), and there are lots of eggs wedged in small places, like between the link lights or between the chips connected to the ports, where they'll be really hard to get out of. So, I set the circuit board aside for the moment to take a shower.

When I come back, I notice that the ants have actually done me a favor! (Suckers!) In their futile attempts to save the colony, they've picked up the eggs themselves to scurry around like maniacs, solving my problem. I pick off the ants, and then vigorously shake the board to try to dislodge anything still stuck in the ports, and much to my surprise another queen falls out. (I've read that Argentine ants

can have more than one queen per colony, but this is still a surprise, especially since I thought I had already gotten almost everything.) I dispose of her, too, clean up the remaining ants, and figure I might as well try putting the hub back together. Not that I can completely undo my prying, but hey, that's cosmetic anyway.

Much to my surprise, it actually works! And my performance is back from miserable to normal. Ants 0, Me 1.

Man, I hate ants. If I could choose one genus to completely wipe off the Earth, assuming that it wouldn't, like, destroy the ecosystem (but really, what depends on ants? Anteaters? Well, they're not doing a very good job, are they?!), it would be them. Well, okay, I suppose I should probably choose something like mosquitoes, since even though they're less personally annoying to me, they still have the whole large-scale disease-spreading thing. But I'd expect some serious compensation from the WHO for not choosing ants!

—PAUL LUJAN. Article reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group. This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG)

## Voice for Joanie

Help give the gift of speech  
Call Shirley Fredlund  
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(1-866) 770-6203  
and become a  
**Voice for Joanie**  
volunteer.



## Special Interest Groups

### SIG NOTES: November 2002

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

**Contact:** Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920 (*bpreston@mags.net*).

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

**Next meeting:** Jan. 10

**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:** Jan. 15

**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:** Jan. TBA

**INTERNET PROGRAMMING.** Programs for Web site/server.

**Contact:** Chuck Fizer (*cfizer@snet.net*). Meets on 2nd Wednesday, 4-6 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center. Members' suggestions are welcome.

**Next Meeting:** Jan. 8

**INVESTMENT STRATEGIES.** Discusses various investment strategies to maximize profits and limit risk.

**Contact:** Paul Gehrett, 203 426-8436, (*pgehr4402@aol.com*).

Meets 3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Edmond Town Hall, Newtown.

**Next Meeting:** Jan. 16

**LINUX.** Helps in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. Nov also be of interest to Apple owners using OS X.

**Contact:** Bill Keane (*bkeane.nai@rcn.com*) 203-438-8032

Meets 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 pm at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** Jan. 15

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

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

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

**Next meeting:** Jan. 9

**SMALL BUSINESS.** All aspects of small business management.

**Contact:** Matthew Greger, 203 748-2919, (*matthewg@thebusinesshelper.com*).

Meets on last Wednesday, 1-3 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Jan. TBA

**VISUAL BASIC.** Develops Windows apps with Visual Basic.

**Contact:** Chuck Fizer, 203 798-9996 (*cfizer@snet.net*) or Jim Scheef, 860 355-8001 (*JScheef@Telemarksys.com*).

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

**Next Meeting:** Jan. 8

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

**Contact:** Shirley Fredlund, 203 770-6203 (*voiceforjoanie@juno.com*).

**Next Meeting:** Look for announcements.

**WALL STREET.** Examines Windows stock market software.

**Contact:** Phil Dilloway, 203 367-1202 (*dilloway@ntplx.net*).

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

**Next Meeting:** Jan. TBA

## SIG News & Other Events

**Internet Programming.** The IP-SIG met with enthusiastic participants. The bidirectional information flow enlightened the meeting. We started with a random access discussion and a question on meaningful reference material in book form. Of course, there are many books, which one to choose? .Net introduces so much new technology where do you start. For internet programmers, we decided that a book on ASP.Net would be a meaningful addition to the library. The ASP.Net book we are using essentially focuses on aspx pages and their attached code behind page aspx.cs. Notice the .cs. We have embraced the C# coding paradigm, hence our code behind pages are .cs ones. Additionally, we talked about the fundamental accompanying coding language and the need for a book on objects and the .Net object library. Sooh, if you accept C# as the coding language then another book or two on coding syntax is essential, particularly in the object oriented framework of .Net. The important thing is to choose wisely based on your knowledge of object oriented programming.

The meeting then progressed to the demonstration cycle where we talked about the programming environment in the IDE. The IDE provides an environment for developing web programs with apsx and aspx.cs pages. The IDE provides WebControls that can be dropped on the form and futher configured into a program. We have stressed the importance of learning the IDE and to use its environment and wizards to help one create their program. This is the preferred approach superceding the Notepad spaghetti html/script coding mess. Our demonstration discussed the DataList WebControl. We chose this control because it embodies substantial functionality and challenge to make it work. The DataList control is a templated data bindable control. This means that the control can be used to display multiple rows of data from a database, and present the data in a meaningful fashion to the web browser.

The DataList control is a Server Side control. This means that the control executes on the server and then renders html to the client browser. Comparatively speaking, five lines of source code in the code behind page on the server can and does render 50 or more lines of browser specific html.

The fundamental secret to implementing Server Controls is to learn and understand the control's various objects and life cycle so that the programmer can direct the control to deliver the sought after content. This programming approach is desireable because it is more impervious to changes in the IDE and subsequent changes to the programs in future version update cycles.

The next meeting of the IP-SIG will be rescheduled to January 8, 2003, at 7pm in the DACS Resource Center.

**Server and Networking.** We had an uproarious meeting and finally got DNS working - really! Once you go thru this type of a debugging project, you really start to understand networking. This journey has taken many months of meetings. It still takes me a while to find things in Linux and once I find something it can take a while to figure out how to install/fix/update/tweak it, but once you do, the pieces begin to fit together. This became all to clear when the DNS running on my laptop (Red Hat 7.2) refused to work correctly using configuration files virtually identical to ones that work on my network at home. The mystery was that BIND did not put any error messages in the log complaining about errors in the configuration files. The symptom was a failure to find the machine's own IP address in DNS. It could find other machines' addresses but not its own. This meant that the zone in my example (Scheef-family.com) was not loading but the other zone (rc.dacs.org) was loading. The clue came when I did an 'ifconfig' and noticed that the domain

**SIG Notes Continued on page 15**



# January 2003

## Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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## Digital Video

# MPEG-4 Video Has Become a Three Ringed Circus

by Timothy Everingham, NOCCC

**W**E CURRENTLY HAVE three proprietary standards for Internet video: Windows Media, Real Video, and QuickTime. Of course with such proprietary standards there becomes an issue of interoperability, which leads to having to potentially have servers and/or players for each one. So why not create an international video standard for the Internet like the MPEG 1 & 2 standards used on CDs and DVDs. Enter MPEG-4. An international standards committee developed it. Of course one of the problems with doing it that way is it takes longer. With Internet video technology changing at an extremely rapid pace, by the time the standard was agreed up it was two years behind current technology the proprietary standards were using. However, with some updates it still looked good to many because the content providers would only have to encode and manage one format instead of three and some quick updates could be added to bridge some of the technology gap. Apple was one of those companies. They announced last June at the Streaming Media West Conference that they were throwing their lot with MPEG-4 and was no longer going to do developing for QuickTime Internet video. They are now regretting that decision.

It was assumed that like MPEG 1 & 2, that once the standard was set there would not be significant licensing issues regarding the patents that are part of the standards. However, MPEG 1 & 2 was developed in a different environment, especially economic. Technology companies have been really hurting and are under pressure to increase revenues. This includes royalty payments from patents. The patent holders of MPEG-4 for video portion decided to use the same patent licensing house to do a group licensing on MPEG-4 as MPEG-2 had used, MPEG LA. This way it would make it more convenient to license the technology than going through all the approximately 20 companies involved. However, in January when the licensing proposal came out there was a firestorm. They had included a per stream (viewer) fee and the accompanying record keeping that went with it. There were claims

that this licensing went in violation of the international agreements that the standard was developed under. Deployment was stopped. In February Apple was going to release its QuickTime 6, which included MPEG-4; but the uncertainty regarding the licensing issues had made them put the release on hold.

There was a forum on MPEG-4 licensing on April 25 at the Spring Internet World/Streaming Media West Conference. The forum was expected to be hot, but that was an understatement. The moderator was from Philips Electronics, one of the patent holders. He could not get his laptop to work with the LCD projector properly, so he had to turn it over to the rep from MPEG LA to go over the licensing proposal. Right after that the moderator started to have the panelists do their opening statements. First was the Apple rep, who made it clear that Apple was furious over the licensing mess which had prevent the shipping of its products. The next speaker opened up with calling the licensing organization in violation of antitrust laws, he had sicked the Federal Department of Justice and several States' Attorney Generals on them which were currently investigating MPEG LA, and intimated that he was considering filling suit against them. A person from Dolby Labs representing the audio portion of MPEG-4 patent holder spoke and was received as having a fair licensing proposal for audio. The group licensing organization rep spoke trying to calm everybody down with saying that these proposals were preliminary and a new proposal was being worked on because of all the criticism of the first one. Also she and the moderator said that you do not have to go through the group licensing organization to license the technology. Other speakers on the panel expressed frustration and tried to find common ground for agreement. Questions from the floor were received early in the session, and one of the first persons from the floor to speak was the Chief Technology Officer of Real Networks, makers of Real Audio and Video. He confronted the moderator from Philips Electronics saying that Philips and a number of other companies are not willing to discuss li-

censing their technology individually, so to get a license on one of the technologies you have to license the entire group of MPEG LA's MPEG-4 patents. As such, the statements about not having to go through MPEG LA made by the moderator earlier were false. Neither the moderator nor the rep from MPEG LA denied the accusation. The CTO of Real Networks then charged that the people involved in creating the standard were getting preferential treatment by the patent holders, which is a violation of antitrust laws. At this point the moderator seemed to lose credibility with most of the panelists and the audience and lost the ability to guide the discussion, but only able to keep it so only one person talking at a time. The rest of the comments during the session were ones of animosity or frustration. Near the end one of the people in the audience expressed her frustration by saying that in her viewpoint that we would not be able to use some great technology because the licensing issues cannot be agreed upon. The session ended in frustration on the edge of chaos.

The night before the MPEG-4 licensing forum, the CEO of Real Networks spoke at the conference. He said that if MPEG-4 cannot get its licensing issues settled soon, MPEG-4 will become irrelevant. With what happened at the MPEG-4 licensing forum and the threat of legal action that could last for years, the odds are that MPEG-4 will become irrelevant and we will see few devices and software using it.

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*TIMOTHY is CEO of Timothy Everingham Consulting in Azusa, California. He is also the member of the Executive Council of the Los Angeles Chapter of SIGGRAPH, the largest chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery's (ACM) Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques and one of Southern California's significant professional organizations within the entertainment and media industries. He is also on the Management Information Systems Program Advisory Board of California State University, Fullerton; which he also graduated from with honors with the double majors of Management Information Systems and Accounting. In addition he is the Vice President of the Windows Media Users' Group of Los Angeles. He is also part-time press in the areas of high technology, video, audio, and entertainment/media and has had articles published throughout the United States and Canada. He is a member of North Orange County Computer Club.*

Further information can be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~teveringham>

## Couch Potato's Heaven

### No More Late Fees? Netflix Saves \$\$

By Mike Kaltschnee

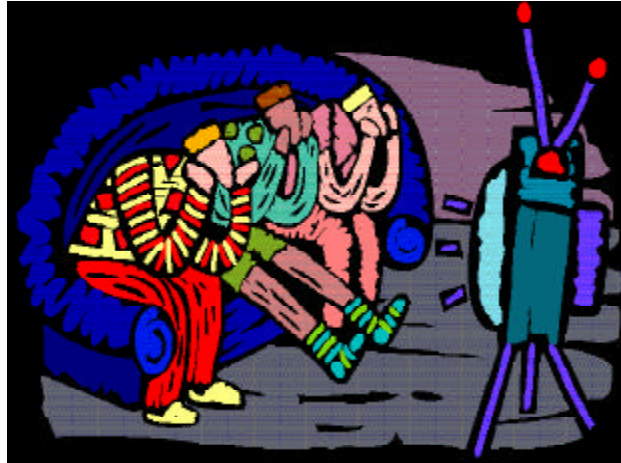
UNLESS YOU HAVEN'T logged on in a year or so, you must have seen the ads for the online movie rental service Netflix ([www.netflix.com](http://www.netflix.com)). I like to watch movies, and have a small but interesting collection. However, it's human nature to want to watch a movie that you have to rent instead of an unwatched movie sitting on your television. Unfortunately, to rent a movie you have to get off the couch, drive to the store, pay \$4 or more plus snacks, and drive home. This process, if done correctly, can take two hours (ok, so I'm exaggerating) and can involve a late fee or two.

I joined Netflix as a test to see if it would save me money and give me access to a wider variety of DVDs than I could find in Danbury. I like to watch a wide variety of movies, including the typical "action/drama" flick, foreign (even with subtitles), or even independent movies that were never shown in a theater. Netflix has more than 12,000 titles, which should keep me busy for a while.

They have several plans, all based on how many movies you can have out at any time. I'm on the "3 out" movie plan, which costs \$19.95 per month. They have four plans, ranging from two movies at a time for \$13.95 (max. of four per month) to the "Netflix Ultimate," which gives you eight movies at a time for \$39.95. For about \$20 per month, I get to rent about eight movies a month, which is less than \$3 per movie.

The way they do it is ingenious. When you sign up, you pick the movies you want and add them to your queue. They ship out the movies in a thin envelope, about the size of a DVD movie case. When you get the movie and remove the cover paper, it turns into a self-mailer so you can return the movie at no charge. When they get the movie back, they send you the next movie in your queue. I typically

have about 30 movies in my queue, and I'm always adding movies that I hear about from friends or read about online.



The only complaint I have is that they really don't promote the new movies as they come out. I think they do this so everyone doesn't rent the same movie on the same day. They would need thousands of copies of one movie, and then they would have very few rentals after that, leaving them with thousands of movies that were used once.

I know that Blockbuster and even Walmart are coming out with their own versions of this service, and will target Netflix users. The great thing about Netflix is that there is no contract, and since I can leave them at any time, they have to work hard for my business.

I'm impressed so far with the service. It does take two or three days for a movie to arrive, but they have almost every movie in stock when I want it, the cost is less than \$3 per movie so far, and I have not paid a single late fee.

The only real problem is deciding which movie to rent next.

*Mike is a DACS member who loves movies almost as much as computers. You can let him know about your favorite movies at: [mikek@demorgan.com](mailto:mikek@demorgan.com).*

#### A new SIG Group is being formed: Microcontroller SIG (MCS)

You might ask: "What the heck is a microcontroller and what do you do with them?" Well come to the sig and find out, but in the mean time they are the little self contained single chip computers. The devices are found in everything from toasters to your automobile engine.

John Gallichotte who has vast experience with the technology will lead the SIG and will start by jumping in head first into understanding microcontrollers. We will learn the architecture of the different controllers their pros and cons and how they function in detail. This will definitely be a hands on group. Come to our meeting and learn! Better yet come to our meetings and get you hands dirty.

The early meetings will discuss the basics of all microcontrollers and their support circuitry. We'll cover most of the popular micros including the AVR (Atmel), PIC (MicroChip), The Stamp Series, and products from Motorola and Texas Instruments among others.

The group members will be encouraged to obtain their own Microcontroller Development Systems to perform hands on design and development of the gadgets from led flashers to full blown robots. We'll learn where to obtain free compilers that will allow us to program in Assembler and high level languages such as Basic, c/c++, Pascal and others. Development systems\* are available from under \$25.00 up to whatever your project or killer application requires. Obtaining and setting up systems will be discussed in detail.

Time will be set aside at every meeting to discuss your progress, successes and any problems you may be having. We will answer the question of why doesn't it work the way I want.

Two organizational meetings are planned to pick the best night for regular meetings. For more information and any questions you may have contact John Gallichotte at [tlclotus@ieee.org](mailto:tlclotus@ieee.org) 203-426.0394 voice 203.426.8502 fax) or Bill Keane at [bkeane@dacs.org](mailto:bkeane@dacs.org).

To receive organizational mailings please send me an email at [bkeane@dacs.org](mailto:bkeane@dacs.org).

\*<http://futuralec.com/ATDevBoard.html>



# Digital Audio

## Internet Radio

### Article 4

By Frank Powers

**W**ELL, IF YOU HAVE been following the articles to date, and have ripped all your CD's and recorded all your vinyl records and analog tapes, you might be in the mood for some new music. If you have a broadband Internet connection your in for a real treat. Dial-up connections will still bring you a wide variety of music and news, but at a reduced quality. Welcome to the new media – Internet Radio!

There are several sites that offer directories of Internet Radio stations. Here are a few:

- **Live 365** – [www.live365.com](http://www.live365.com)
- **Shoutcast** – [www.shoutcast.com](http://www.shoutcast.com)
- **Windows Media** – [www.windowsmedia.com](http://www.windowsmedia.com)
- **Radio Tower** - [www.radiotower.com](http://www.radiotower.com)  
(requires Real Player or Windows Media Player 7.1 or above)

My favorite is Live 365, because it offers over 45,000 stations to choose from. Amateur music lovers from all over the globe run the majority of the stations and the diversity and quality of the music offered is outstanding. Before continuing, I should mention that I am one of those amateur broadcasters. Frank's Americana has been broadcasting on Live 365 since May of 2001.

### Listening to Internet Radio

I'm going to use Live 365 has a model to show you how you can listen to a wide variety of quality music even if you are on a dial-up connection. But you should also be aware that Internet radio can bring you news, sports, weather, and more. I use AudioStation and its free service "Turtle Radio" to tune into my favorite NPR stations from around the world. Real Audio and Windows Media player also have preset radio where you can tune into music or news and their services are currently free. MusicMatch Jukebox offers a paid subscription to its radio service called, Radio MX and Real Audio has a subscription service that allows you access to major league baseball, golf, and BBC, NBC, etc news.

### Tuning in to Live 365

Get yourself connected to the web, and set your browser to [www.live365.com](http://www.live365.com)

You'll see this screen:



Figure 1

BTW – you will find a pop-up underneath. There is a way to make pop-ups and audio ads go away. It's called "Preferred Membership" and costs \$4.95 per month. I'll talk about it more later, but for now, be aware that the Internet is not the free ride that it used to be. Everyone's got to eat.

If this is your first time you'll see the "Listening Wizard" screens appear, and

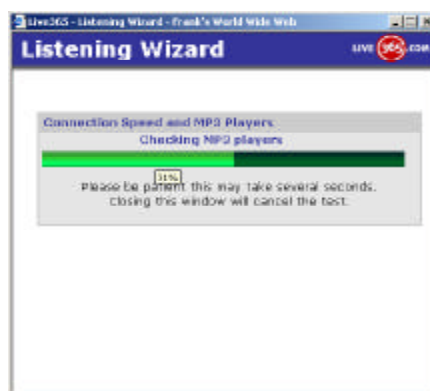


Figure 2

Live 365 will check your audio configuration. Figure 2 shows what that looks like:

When the wizard completes you'll see a screen as in figure 3:

If you have installed AudioStation or Winamp choose MP3 player, but if you're not sure what you have, go ahead and

pick the Live365 Player. Confirm the connection speed the wizard set for you and you're almost ready to listen to Internet radio.

### Joining Live 365

Beginning sometime after the New Year, Live 365 will require that you log in order to listen to free Internet radio. While

I regret that this additional hurdle to listen has been instituted, I can attest to the fact that Live 365 has never shared my email address, and for both financial and copyright legalities, needs to institute this policy. It's painless, safe, and affords you many customization options. Just click on the "Sign Up" link located on the top right of the home screen shown above. Remember to carefully pick a username, you CANNOT ever change this without creating a new account. Once you've joined up go to the "My Settings" link located to the right of the "Sign Up" link and set your preferences for Ad Content, vote for your "Favor-



Figure 3

ite" station, arrange the sort order of searches, and more. You can also change your Internet connection speed and player preferences, as well as rerun the Listening Wizard.

### Searching for Stations

Now that you have set up your player, it's time to use the search window to find the music that you'd like to hear. We'll use my station Frank's Americana, to show you how easy it is. In the Search

window located in the middle of the radio picture type: Frank's Americana

You'll go right to my station listing (figure 5).

You could have typed "Rock", "Swing", "Frank Sinatra", etc into the search window and come up with a large assortment of stations to pick from. For now, click on the blue title Frank's Americana, and you'll come to my station page.

Now if you click on the yellow speaker icon, you'll start up the Player window, and the MP3 player you have installed will begin to buffer and play the station. Make sure your speakers are turned on and your volume is up.

Note the Green "Add this station as a preset" button and the "Rate this station" window both located at the bottom of the player window. If you like what you hear, add it to your preset list, and assign the station a rating between one and five stars.

### Some other things to note on the Station Page are:

- **Broadcaster Profile** – find out about the broadcaster, their station, musical tastes, and favorite broadcasters.

- **Broadcast Schedule** – a new feature allows broadcasters to schedule segments. Click on the tab to see what show may be coming up.

Also note that on the top of every page there are additional tabs labeled:

- **Home** – go back to the Live365 home Page

- **Listen** – see a detailed listing of the first 1,000 stations sorted in the order you choose when you set up your listener preferences.

- **Broadcast** – this tab will give you information on how to become a Personal Broadcaster. Once you sign up as a broad-



Figure 4

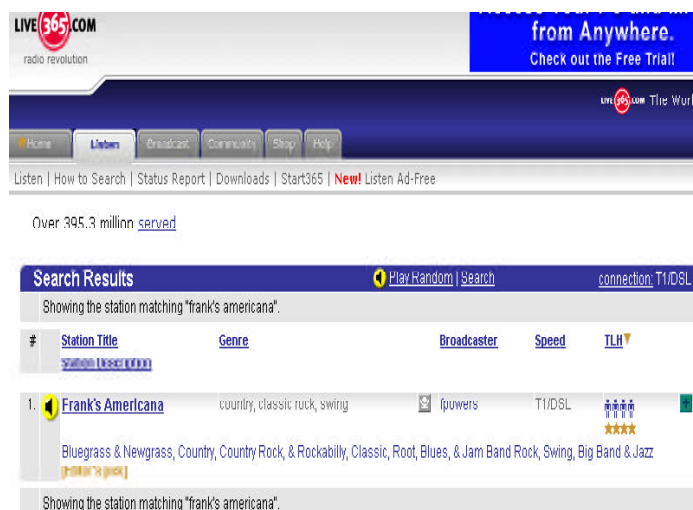


Figure 5



Figure 6

caster, it gives you control over your station settings.

- **Community** – join in forum discussions or enter the Live 365 Chat room to meet other music lovers and broadcasters. You'll find me in the Chat room every Thursday evening during my live broadcast, and in the Folk/Blues/Country forum where I am the moderator.

- **Shop** – become a Preferred Member and enjoy AD-FREE listening. Become a Broadcaster or shop for apparel and Internet radio toys and gadgets.

- **Help** – everything you need to know about listening and/or broadcasting on Live365.

Now that you have the idea, go back to the home page and type your favorite genre into the search window. You'll find hundreds if not thousands of stations that play the music you enjoy. Remember if you are using a dial-up, only pick stations with a 33kbps data rate or below. Broadband users can get 56kbps/22khz stereo stations that sound as good as a clean FM signal.

Here are a few of my favorite Live365 broadcasters and their genres:

- **Station6070S...60s&70s** - Classic Rock- 60s and 70s, Featuring, The Beatles, Led Zepelin, Pink Floyd, The Doors, The Moody Blues, CSNY, Clapton.....[Editor's pick]

- **80's Retro Radio** - Only the BIGGEST 80's Hits - songs you know, by artists you love! PLUS: No Repeat Workday — it's ALL 80s, ALL THE TIME!

- **Bluegrasscountry.org** – **Professiona** – Professional station from American University broadcasting bluegrass 24/7

- **Radiowayne** – A great collection of folk, country and bluegrass from my fellow broadcaster Wayne Green out of Texas.

- **Swing2Jazz!** – Big Band, Jazz, and pop from my favorite Canadian – Big Bad Brenda.

- **Fine Classics** – Classical music at its best





Figure 7

• **Remember The Future** – a fellow Danbury, Ct, broadcaster.

Remember, there are over 45,000 stations listed on Live 365 – everything from Arabic folk to Zoot Suit jazz.

### Preferred Membership

Live 365 has struggled to keep costs down and provide free internet radio to listeners for several years now, but with the recent CARP ruling, they are required to make a huge payment to the RIAA through SoundExchange. The payment is in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and is a royalty that will go to the record companies. Without going into the particulars, traditional radio is NOT required to make this additional royalty payment, but the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 requires it of any digitally distributed radio station. To find out more go to:

### • Save Internet Radio -

<http://saveinternetradio.org>

In order to pay for this, they have had to increase the number and scope of advertisements on both their website and those imbedded in the audio streams played by Personal Broadcasters. You can help keep Internet radio alive and eliminate all pop-up and in-stream audio ads by becoming a Preferred Member. The cost is only \$4.95 / month, and if you find you enjoy Internet radio on Live 365 I highly recommend you join the community of amateurs helping to support independent broadcasters and Live 365. In addition to eliminating advertisements, as a Preferred Listener, your vote for a Favorite Live 365 station contributes \$.50 cents of your monthly fee to the station broad-

caster of your choice. Currently Frank's Americana has two Preferred listeners who have picked my station as their favorite. That reduces my monthly cost of broadcasting by \$1.00 / month. I have over 1,600 listeners who have chosen my station as a preset, and ten non-preferred listeners who have chosen Frank's Americana as a favorite. With just 30

additional Preferred Members choosing me as their Favorite, I can either reduce my cost of broadcasting to zero, or add over ten hours of additional on-line storage to increase the diversity of music playing on the station. So supporting your favorite broadcaster by becoming a Preferred Member can defray their cost and help them financially be able to improve their station. It's a good deal all around!!!

### Personal Broadcasting

Do you have a large collection of music on your hard drive now? Have you always wanted to either share music or a point of view with the entire planet? If you have, consider becoming a Personal Broadcaster on Live 365. For \$14.95/month you can become a Premium Personal Broadcaster and have access to all the tools you need to broadcast your opinions or music to the world. And for \$50.00 / month you can store over 14 hours of 56kbps / 22kHz stereo music, available for you or anyone else on the planet with an internet connection to listen to. I started my station just to listen to the music I wanted to when I was at work. Quickly I discovered that it was even more fun to share that music and create a unique station that plays the sort of music I always wanted to hear on radio. Join the Radio Revolution on Live 365, and don't forget to tell them that Frank sent you when you sign up for Personal Broadcasting. The referral program is another way Live 365 gives its broadcasters a chance to defray their costs.

**Be sure to attend the digital audio demo at January 7<sup>th</sup> General Meeting!**

I'll be showing the recording techniques covered in the November DACS

Newsletter at the January 7<sup>th</sup> DACS General Meeting.

### Next Month

I'll wrap up this series by showing you how you can listen to your digital collection throughout your home and while on the go. See ya next month!

**FRANK POWERS** has extensive digital music experience working for companies like Voyetra Turtle Beach, Inc and Sam Ash Music as well as composing his own material and running an Internet radio station. Frank is available for digital music consulting and can be reached by email at: [frank@franksamericana.com](mailto:frank@franksamericana.com). You can find out more by visiting his website at <http://www.franksamericana.com>.

He also can be heard on the Internet at Frank's Americana™ Live365® Internet Radio station at <http://www.live365.com/stations/fpowers>.

## FREE CLASSIFIEDS

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

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

21" Nokia 445Xpro monitor, max. res. 1800 X 1440, dot pitch 0.26 mm. \$250 OBO. Al Vale [avpaa@comcast.net](mailto:avpaa@comcast.net)

Do you have special computer skills or a business that uses digital technology in interesting ways? Demonstrate your unique talents and expertise at a General Meeting.

## Become a DACS Presenter



# Random Access

December 2002

Bruce Preston, Moderator

**M**EMBERS WHO ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE GENERAL MEETING may submit questions to "askdacs@dacs.org" by the day prior to the meeting. We will attempt to get an answer for you. Please provide enough detail, as we will not be able to ask for additional information.

**Q. I can't print from Internet Explorer. It prints OK from other applications, but I just get the name of the page on the footer, the rest is blank.**

A. On the FILE/PRINT dialog box, check the OPTIONS setting. It was also mentioned that Netscape had a problem with printing a page that had been on the screen for a while, and that was cured if you refreshed the page -- you might try that. Other suggestions were to reinstall IE.

**Q. When I do e-mail via my Juno connection, I try to use Yahoo! Mail and compose on line. I can't add fonts or other forms of text, just plain text characters. On other machines I can embellish text when I am in Yahoo! Mail.**

A. A suggestion was to try composing in "WordPad" and copy and paste into Yahoo! Mail. Another suggestion was that the customized version of Internet Explorer that comes with Juno might be causing a problem -- once you connect, see if you can

open up a copy of 'standard' IE and work with that.

**Q. I tried downloading the Windows Update Service Pack 1 for my machine. It said that it was 3MB, but once that finished it wanted to download 30MB, which is a bit much for a dial-up connection. Is there any other way to do this?**

A. You can order a CD for about \$9 which has the update on it. Or, you can download to a machine that has a CD burner and then make a CD to take to other machines.

**Q. I have McAfee AntiVirus and my Windows 98 machine boots very slowly. Why?**

A. McAfee installs the DOS scanner and sets it up to scan the entire machine on boot. (This is BOOTSCAN.EXE in AUTOEXEC.BAT). To make matters worse, because under DOS there is not as much memory available, it loads only half of the virus

signatures, does the scan, and then loads the second half of the virus signatures and does a second scan. If you have the antivirus running at all times when you copy files from diskettes, open emails, or surf the internet, then there isn't a reason that you must have the bootscan run when you start the machine.

**Q. Follow up: Recommend some other software?**

A. F-Prot for Windows, \$25/year, or AVG from [www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com) - free. The latter has gotten mixed reviews -- some love it, some don't.

**Q. I've got a problem with my Windows 98SE machine that stalls with a "System is Busy" message when I try to shut it down. How can I fix it?**

A. There are many patches that need to be applied to Windows 98 and/or Windows 98SE to fix this problem. There are many problems with Windows 98 shutdown -- go to this page and do a search on WINDOWS 98 with the keywords SHUTDOWN and HANG. [http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;\[ln\];kbhowto](http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;[ln];kbhowto)

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

## SIG Notes Continued from page 8

names were not correct in /etc/resolv.conf (as a result of the IP configuration received from the DHCP server). As soon as this was corrected, the lookup results were correct.

During this process, we looked at the configuration files used by BIND (Berkley Internet Name Domain). BIND is the program used for DNS on Linux. The Microsoft DSN server used on Windows NT and 2000 are derived from BIND. These are typically cryptic in UNIX fashion, but are human-readable.

We also discussed the 'nslookup' command which is used to query the DNS system. I prefer this tool as it is also provided on Windows 2000, but newer tools like 'dig' and 'host' often provide more information.

You can buy any book you want on DNS but you will eventually buy DNS and BIND (currently in 4th Edition) by Albitz and Liu (O'Reilly, 2001-1992). I also like Windows 2000 DNS by Abell, Knief, et al (New Riders, 2000). The next Server and Net-

working SIG meeting will be January 9th at 7pm in the DACS Resource Center. The program will be on tape backups and, time permitting, cross-platform communications tools like SSH, rdesktop, and running X-windows on Windows.

**Visual Basic.** The VB-SIG meeting was preceded by a pizza session and more informal discussion on programming in both the .Net and VB6 environments. We started VB-SIG with random access questions. The VB SIG brings out technical gurus who ask tough questions like, how do I program the Adobe Acrobat Distiller to ... Or how can a web page direct the web server to print those Distiller pages? In these cases, we have to rely on the APIs provided by the application "Provider". Of course, a background in Windows APIs is a valuable resource to have.

The demonstration session resulted for a question on how do you access an ADO recordset. We proceeded to develop an application program that would accomplish

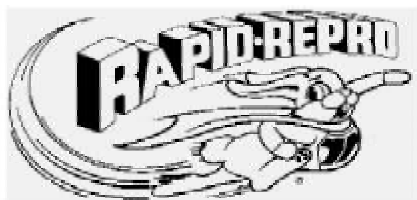
just such a thing. Having not written any VB6 code in several months my rust was evident. But, other SIG attendees helped with good information and introspecting types of questions that ultimately gave us a sample program that read the Northwind database (NWIND.mdb) using the Access OLEDB Provider and presented the data in a debug window. Attendee participation was terrific and we certainly had everyone's undivided attention. Post meeting, we reexamined the application code and expanded on it in several areas to help one get a better understanding of the concepts. This new sample code was e-mailed to all the members of the VB-DACS Yahoo group.

Future meetings will work with sample code distilled from various sources. We will discuss the concepts and then make the code available to group members via Yahoo.

The next meeting for VB-SIG will be rescheduled to January 8, 2003, at 7pm in the DACS Resource Center.

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## The Small Business SIG

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*For more info, eMail Matthew Greger at  
matthewg@thebusinesshelpcr.com*

## Future Events

January 7 • Frank Powers - Digital Audio  
February 4 • Mike Kaltschnee - Geek Toys


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