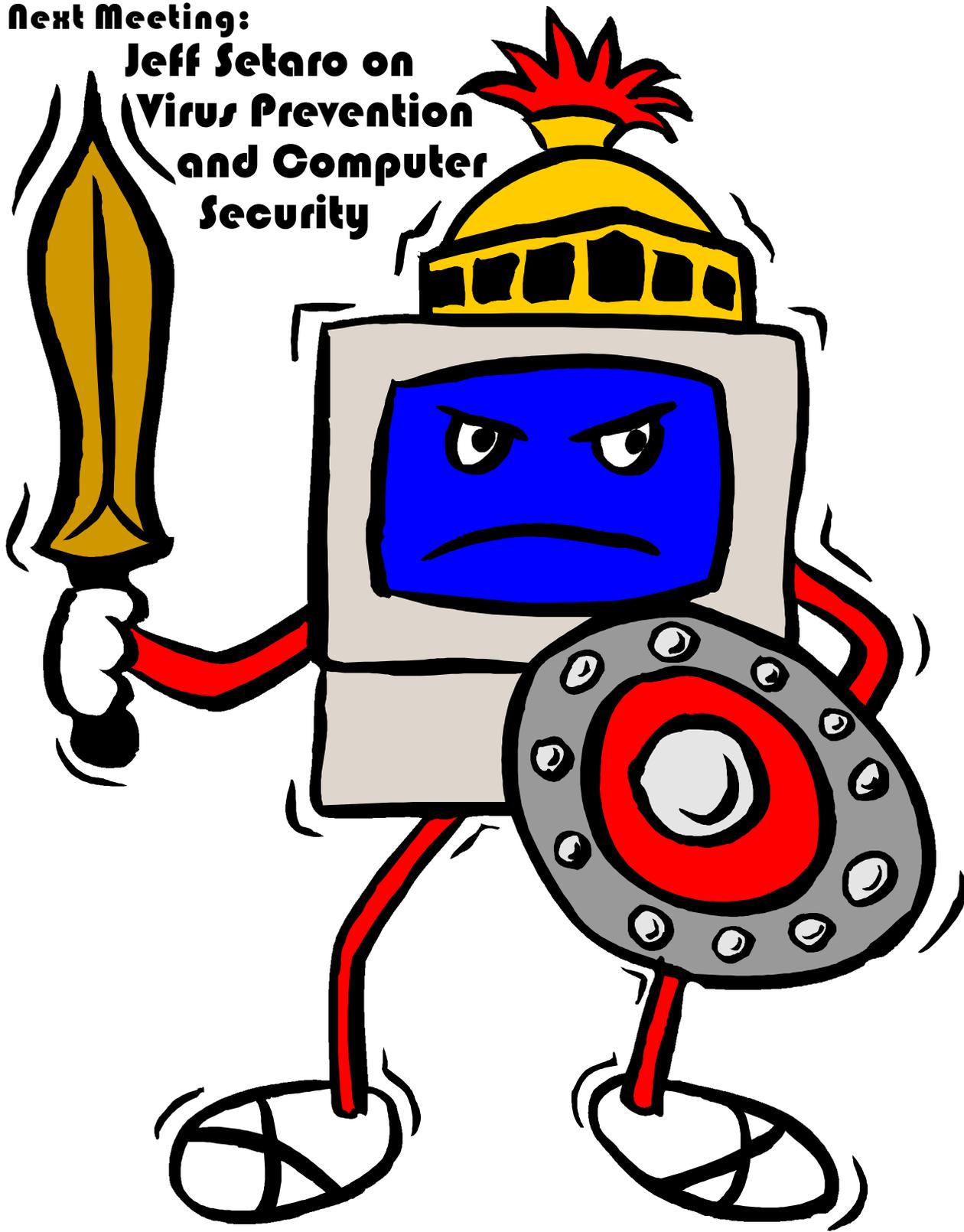




April 2003

Volume 14, Issue 4

**Next Meeting:
Jeff Setaro on
Virus Prevention
and Computer
Security**



President's File



PRESIDENTIAL
RAMBLINGS
ISSUE 0.11

As you can see from the version number, this is my twelfth column as DACS president (the first was 0.0). The year has flown by faster than I ever thought. In fact, when we canceled a board meeting due to a snow storm, we failed to vote on officers for the current year. We'll correct that at the next board meeting. If you would like to be considered for one of the DACS officer positions, please let me know.

The tech of skiing

I hope you're all enjoying this ski season as much as I am. How do I reconcile skiing with my love of technology? Well, skiing is high tech, of course! Even Nordic (cross country) skiing is high tech—the skis, boots, poles, clothes, even the wax! Wax, you say? Yes, the wax used on the base of the ski is perhaps the most technical equipment in the skier's arsenal. In Alpine (downhill) skiing, races are timed to a thousandth of a second. The wrong wax can add seconds to a skier's time in a race that takes less than a minute. So waxing is important!

In typical Nordic skiing you don't have to be a racer to get involved with waxes. If you have never tried cross country skiing, you have probably wondered how the skier is able to move forward

over the snow and even climb straight up hills, yet is also able to glide. The secret is something called "kick wax." This amazing substance comes in color-coded tins and has a consistency that varies from about like a crayon to some pretty gooey stuff. When crayoned onto the base of the ski under the skier's foot and then smoothed with a cork, this stuff provides both grip and glide at the same time! Amazing!

The color on the tin indicates the temperature range where the wax will "work". Green is cold, red is for above freezing temperatures—you get the idea. My favorite color wax is 'Blue Extra' because its temperature range is 22-28° Fahrenheit—perfect skiing. Use too cold a wax and you slip, too warm and the snow sticks to your skis. But get it right and it is heaven!

So how is this like computing? Well, of course it's exactly like computing—get it right and it is heaven! Unfortunately the reverse is just as true.

Linux exploits continued

As often seems to happens, I make significant breakthroughs right after a Server SIG meeting. Even if we don't discuss the exact topic, something in our discussion will give me ideas that lead to learning something new. Of course this is what the SIGs are all about.

My newest break thru is how to run the Linux desktop remotely on another computer and the cool part is that the other computer is running Windows. The magic secret is an open source project called Cygwin (www.cygwin.com). From their web site: "Cygwin is a UNIX environment for Windows." The core of Cygwin is an emulator for the UNIX API on Win32. This means that a program running on a Windows machine can use services and resources as if it were running on UNIX. This makes is relatively easy to port UNIX applications to Windows. Now comes the cool part: they have ported many very useful UNIX programs to this interface—including the XFree86 X-windows server—the same as on Linux.

This means you can sit at your Windows machine and run an entire KDE or Gnome desktop session on your Linux machine using the keyboard, mouse and screen of the Windows machine. How does this work? Well, explaining the X windowing system is beyond me, let alone this column. But I can simplify it this way: when you sit at your Linux machine, you start the Linux operating system and then run X to display that nice graphical user interface—these are two separate "pro-

Ramblings, Continued on page 4

Membership Information

dacs.doc, ISSN 1084-6573, is published monthly by the Danbury Area Computer Society, 4 Gregory Street, Danbury, CT 06810-4430. Annual subscription rates: \$25 to regular members, \$20 to students (included in dues).

Postmaster

Send address changes to Danbury Area Computer Society, Inc., 4 Gregory Street, Danbury, CT 06810-4430.

Editorial Committee

Managing Editor: Allan Ostergren
Associate Editor: Ted Rowland
Production Editor: Marc Cohen
Technical Editor: Bruce Preston
Public Relations: Marlène Gaberel

Contributors

Charles Bovaird Larry Buoy
Richard Corzo Marlène Gaberel
Mike Kaltschnee Jim Scheef
Frank Powers Richard Ten Dyke

DACS, its officers and directors assume no liability for damages arising out of the publication or non-publication of any article, advertisement, or other item in this newsletter.

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

© 2003 Danbury Area Computer Society. Permission to reprint or publish granted to any non-profit group, provided credit is given and a copy of the final publication is mailed to the copyright holder. All rights reserved. For further information, consult our Website, www.dacs.org.

Technical Support

dacs.doc is prepared using an AMSYS Pentium 133 and an HP LaserJet 4 Plus printer. Software packages used to publish *dacs.doc* include: Microsoft Windows 98, Office 7.0, TrueType fonts, Adobe PageMaker 7.0, CorelDRAW 8.0, Calendar Creator+ for Windows *dacs.doc* file transfer security provided by AVP. Internet access provided by *Mags.net* Applications & Hardware to enhance *dacs.doc* are welcome.



Don Neary
APCUG Liaison
203-746-5538

IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENTIAL RAMBLINGS	2
DIRECTORS' NOTES	3
HELP LINE	3
NEW MEMBERS	4
REVIEW DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY	5
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY	6
SIG NEWS & NOTES	8
CALENDAR	9
COMPUTER SHOPPING	10
ONLINE HOAXES	11
TECHNICAL SUPPORT	12
SOFTWARE REVIEW	13
MEETING PREVIEW	14
RANDOM ACCESS	15

Officers

PRESIDENT: Jim Scheef (860) 355-0034 (dacsprez@dacs.org)

VPs: Gene Minasi • Marlène Gaberel • Jeff Setaro

SECRETARY: Larry Buoy • **TREASURER:** Charles Bovaird

Directors

dacsboard@dacs.org

Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	cbovaird@dacs.org
Larry Buoy	(860) 355-0394	lbuoy@dacs.org
Marc Cohen	(203) 775-1102	mcohen@dacs.org
Marlène Gaberel	(203) 426-4846	mgaberel@dacs.org
John Gallichotte	(203) 426-0394	jgallichotte@dacs.org
Bill Keane	(203) 438-8032	bkeane.nai@rcn.com
Donald Pearson	(914) 669-9622	dpearson@dacs.org
Donald Neary	(203) 746-5538	dneary@dacs.org
Allan Ostergren	(860) 210-0047	dacseditor@dacs.org
Bruce Preston	(203) 438-4263	bpreston@dacs.org
Jim Scheef	(860) 355-0034	dacsprez@dacs.org
Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748	jasetaro@dacs.org

Committees

NEWSLETTER: Allan ostergren: (860) 210-0047 (dacseditor@dacs.org)

PROGRAM / WEB MASTER: Jeff Setaro (203) 748-6748

SIG COORDINATOR: Don Neary (203) 746-5538

RESOURCE CENTER: (203) 748-4330 **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)
Macintosh OS	Matthew Greger	(203) 748-2919	(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)
Photoshop 5.5, 6, 7	Annette Collens	(203) 746-2340	
Q&A ver 3/4	Anthony Telesha	(203) 748-4478	(d e)
QuickBooks	Bill Sears	(203) 743-3367	(e)
Statistics/Data Analysis	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(d e)
SQL Server	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9996	(d)
Viruses	Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748	(d)
Visual Basic	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9996	(d)
HTML/Java	James Costello	(203) 426-0097	(e)
Windows	Nick Strother	(203) 743-5667	(e)

Directors' Notes

A Regular Meeting of DACS' Board of Directors was held on Monday, March 10, 2003 at the RC. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Buoy, Cohen, Gallichotte, Keane, Ostergren, Powers, Scheef and Setaro. Also present was Don Pearson. President Scheef presided and Secretary Buoy kept the record of the meeting. The minutes of the last meeting held January 13, 2003, were approved.

Treasurer Charlie Bovaird reported combined postal and bank accounts of \$18,055.40, plus postage on hand of \$92.40, a total of \$18,147.84. Also, he reported a liability representing prepaid dues of \$7,452.00, leaving net cash assets of \$10,695.84. Further, Charlie reported current membership of 461.

The opening discussion centered on the urgent need for presentations for General Meetings, there being no commitments for either April or May. Suggestions ranged from a panel discussion by DACS members on its history, a speaker from INET (International .NET Association) to U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd—all of which led to a commitment by Jeff Setaro to make a presentation on virus protection and firewalls at the April meeting.

The current use of posters to promote attendance at General Meetings was discussed briefly and the directors were urged to copy and distribute same. President Scheef then advised that he had submitted material on free or discounted magazines and merchandise for inclusion on the member benefits page on the DACS Web Site. Also briefly mentioned was the opportunity for the general membership to utilize the free business card advertising in dacs.doc available to them.

President Scheef advised that he had been requested to furnish a key (and keypad code) for entering the RC to the Danbury Housing Authority and that adherence to such request would be made.

Discussion then ensued regarding the suggested use of the server at the RC to establish a "permanent" email address for any member desiring same regardless of changes in his ISP. The directors were reminded that the current computer used as a Linux server would be impractical for such use, it being impossible to configure it so as to wake up after any power interruption. It was announced that a substitute machine was being sought and Frank Powers suggested that such machine be success-

Directors Notes continued on page 4

fully converted to a server by one or more SIGs, including the required Sendmail software, before any further promotion of an email server be attempted.

After a brief discussion on the benefits of participation in any Danbury Chamber of Commerce activities, President Scheef advised that he had researched and submitted to Jeff Setaro for inclusion on the Web Site, and also distributed copies of, a form of disclaimer for any errors or omissions in copy available through the DACS Web Site as well as a Copyright Notice. It was agreed that such be attached to the Web Site. Also, it was agreed that a portion of the Copyright Notice subtitled "Reprints" be substituted for the current such notice included in the dacs.doc newsletter.

President Scheef then broached the subject of creating an employment-oriented site on Yahoo for members seeking or offering employment. It was generally concurred that the implications of same would not be acceptable to the general membership. Mr. Scheef also announced that he had been asked to serve on an advisory board at Naugatuck Valley Community College, but could not do so. It was the opinion of those at the meeting that this opportunity for DACS members to become involved in NVCC activities be passed on to the general membership.

— LARRY BUOY

New Members

2/19/03 to 3/16/03

- 1) Arthur Crane
- 2) Jose Garcia
- 3) Richard Lee
- 4) Joyce & John Covino

THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

EXP 1/2003

or earlier

You need to renew your DACS membership

NOW

grams". The Cygwin/XFree86 X server lets you move the part that displays the GUI from your Linux box to Windows. What connects the two is the network. In X terminology, your machine becomes the "server" and the program running on the Linux machine is the "client." This makes sense when you think that a Linux program, say OpenOffice Writer (word processor) for example, wants to write something to the screen so it sends a command to the server. The server (X-windows) writes the character or draws the icon or whatever, on the screen. The client 'commands' the server to do something. The reason this is confusing is that we want to all our workstation "the client"—and when you ask a "database server" for some data, your machine is the client.

As confusing as this is, Cygwin makes installing X on your PC quite easy and relatively foolproof (i.e.: it worked for me). The first step is to download the Cygwin setup program, about 1Mb in size. When run, this goes to a Cygwin server somewhere (you choose from a list) and presents a list of possible applications you can install. The core components will already be selected. As you select additional applications, the setup program will add any components needed to support your selections. All together I downloaded about 100Mb of stuff, but I installed a lot more than just XFree86. Since Cygwin/CFree86 uses the video driver already installed in Windows, there is no need to go thru the X configuration that Linux users love so much (you remember – where they warn that you are about to fry your monitor). Once all the X components are installed, they just work (well, your mileage may vary).

There are a few gotchas on the Linux side – did you expect different? First, you need a package called GDM (greeter dialog manager?). This seems to be installed by default in Red Hat 8 but I had to install it manually on Red Hat 7.2. GDM allows you to enable something called XDMCP. This is what listens for someone knocking at the door to start a remote X session. Next you must open up your firewall to pass port 177. There may be others that I don't know yet.

Once installed, using anything in Cygwin is, as you would expect, more UNIX than Windows. The command to start an X session on a remote machine is "xwin -query <machine name>". As you would expect, there are a plethora of additional command line options that you can use to tailor X to your situation.

Learning to make this work was made easier for me—a Windows user—by a book by Mark Minasi, Dan York and Craig Hunt, *Linux for Windows NT/2000 Administrators, The Secret Decoder Ring*, published by Sybex. This book takes Linux administration tasks and relates them to things familiar to Windows administrators. I recommend it for Windows network administrators trying to learn Linux (like me).

Well, that should keep you busy for a while.

Other Issues

No, I haven't lost interest in preserving our rights to use the intellectual property we buy or our civil liberties. Writing about that stuff every month would drive me into depression. There is another issue that hits close to home and that is Governor Rowland's proposed state budget. If you value the parks and open space we have in our state, call or write your state legislators and tell them so.

What are your interests?

The biggest challenge for the DACS Board of Directors is to bring you high quality interesting programs month after month at the general meetings. We are more than fortunate to have so many members doing such interesting things—and I'm sure there are more! Please come up and talk to me during the breaks at the general meetings or send an email. Let me know what your interests are. Even better, come to a board meeting and witness in the madness first hand. We meet the Monday following the general meeting in the DACS Resource Center.

JIM SCHEEF

DACSPREZ@DACS.ORG

*When dining at the
DACS Resource Center,
please carry your
leftovers out with you.*



*Thanks!
The
management*

Meeting Review

Digital Photography

By Marc Cohen

In recent months, vendors and manufacturers have been cutting back on the budgets allocated to supporting usergroups. We have been fortunate being able to call on our many and knowledgeable Dacs members, to share their hobbies and interests. I find this a positive turn. Proved once again at the March Meeting, when Richard Ten Dyke gave us a broad over view of Digital Imaging, from scanning a photo from prints or film, selecting and using digital cameras, manipulating the images with a popularly priced software package, selecting printers, inks and paper then showing samples of finished images.

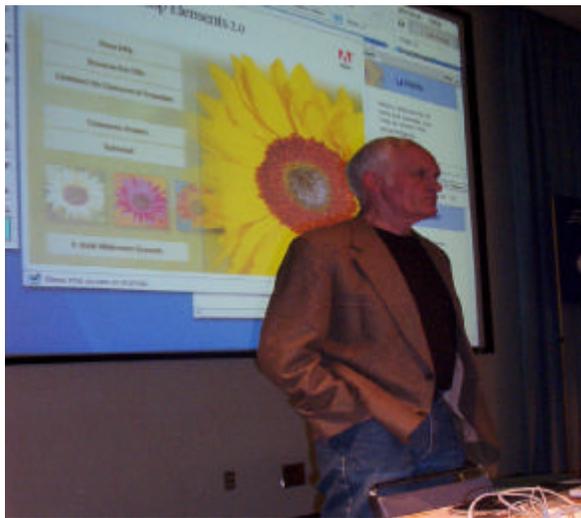
The hour and a half wasn't nearly enough time to satisfy most of the attendees for Richard to accomplish all he covered with humor and clarity with demonstrations, examples, and opinions. All of this done without a sales pitch and nary a PowerPoint slide.

The past several years have seen tremendous improvements in scanners, cameras, printers and software even as prices have descended to levels that hobbyists can now consider.

Richard feels the sweet point in digital cameras, cameras that offers an expanded level of control, a non-removeable lens with an optical zoom range from wide-angle to modest telephoto and can resolve a 3-4 megapixel image. Many of these cameras are as small as a deck of cards and weigh only ounces. This level of camera permits making printing to 8x10 inches or a bit larger.

All the cameras can be plugged directly into the computer for downloading the images. The cameras can also store their images on a removable devices and depending upon the camera this may be a postage stamp, or stick of gum, sized memory card or even a micro CD drive. The size of the image files and the capacity of the memory device determine the number of photographs that can be stored. Richard suggests obtaining 2 memory cards of a size that would permit you to

shoot a days worth of photographs without having to get back to your computer for downloading. Depending on the card capacity these cards range in price from



less than \$40 to \$120+. You will never have to buy or process another roll of film. Card readers that plug into your computer's usb1, usb2 or firewire port transfer the images to your computer and free up the cards for reuse. These readers are priced from \$30-\$50.

Photographers with a large inventory of expensive lenses can purchase compatible cameras that will accommodate lens interchangeability. Richard pointed out that this interchangeability comes at an increased risk of getting dust on the sensor, this would usually require a service call to the manufacturer. There also are camera backs, for mid and large format cameras. These fall in the professional range and prices reflect the more limited market. Checking in several catalogs revealed many of the 'sweet spot' camera choices are in a range of \$300-400. Of course for the professional user there are cameras and options from \$1000 to sky's the limit.

Photoshop Elements 2.0, at a cost of less than \$80 (Costco), is the software of choice for most digital editing needs. This little brother to the full benchmark photo editing package Photoshop 7.0 (\$600+) has most of the tools needed to make magic with your images. Plus the techniques learned

here are transportable to the full 7.0 version as you progress.

Popular Flatbed scanners (for Prints) range in price from \$100-\$200. Again prices go much higher to meet the requirements of the professional user. Film scanners (for Slides and Negatives) start at around \$800 and climb to several thousands. The lower price points are more than the most hobbyist would require.

Catalog prices reveal many ink jet printer choices available in the sub \$100-\$200 range that print using 4 colors of ink (CMYK) Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and blacK and can print from 8 1/2x11 to 8 1/2x44 inches. Other printers that can also be considered in the amateur market can print using 6 or 7 colors of ink and produce a wider range and richness of colors. There are printers that can make prints as wide as 8 1/2, 13, or 19 inches by as long as 44 inches. The additional colors (LC, LM) Light Cyan, Light Magenta make up the six colors and a (LK) Light blacK makes the seventh color. Prices range from \$600-\$1500

Epson's recent developments in inks and paper by have improved the color stability of the printed photos to a point that they rival conventional photographs. Especially if they are laminated or mounted behind glass with a water proof backing on the frame. Original inkjet inks were dye based. Newer printers can use the newer pigment based inks that have higher ultraviolet fade resistance compared with the organic dyes of the original inks. Dye and pigment inks have unique paper requirements which increase their color stability. So it's best to follow the manufacturers recommendations. Protecting the prints from UV, high heat and humidity make the claims of over 100 years without fading achievable. So, again, follow the manufacturers recommendations.

Adding all the costs, setting up a 'dry darkroom' costs much less than setting up a conventional 'wet darkroom', no carpentry, no plumbing, no wiring, no sink, no safelights, no enlarger, no disposal of hazardous chemicals, and the only space needed is in your hard drive. Add to that, the ability to preview images on the monitor, e-mail, print, save, store and sort images in folders on the computer, or on CDs, makes digital imaging a no brainer. Now all I have to do is convince my wife...

MARC COHEN is a member of the board and production editor of dacs.doc. He considers himself a perpetual novice, soon to join the digital revolution You can reach Marc at marco10684@aol.com.

Digital Photography

FOTO JUNKIE HOOKED ON A DIGITAL CAMERA

By Joan Stephens, CAUG, aka The Intrepid Traveler

FOR QUITE SOME TIME I'd been toying with the idea of purchasing a digital camera. But didn't think I could justify the expense since I was happy using my 35mm Minolta 400si SLR in which I had invested approximately \$1,000. including the 28-200mm telephoto lens (very handy for "sneaking" fotos of natives, without asking permission) while traveling. But I finally succumbed after associating with some of my "computer buddies" who constantly were singing the praises of using a digital camera.

Before the shopping process could begin I had to do some (a lot of) research, because I knew absolutely zero about a digital cameras. Again, through the help of persons I met at the CAUG Digicam SIG group I obtained information to begin the shopping process.

First I went to Roosevelt Baker and got some good information from a clerk there. Of course, I didn't know what he was talking about part of the time. Bill D. suggested I search the web and pointed me in the right direction. I searched www.zdnet.com and www.cnet.com D.B.Kline told me he bought his camera through www.buydig.com

I put a cap of \$500 that I was willing to spend. I found just what I wanted. I decided on an Olympus D-550, 3.4 megapixel, with optical zoom and LCD viewfinder. This camera came out in June 2002 and the list price was \$399. (It's now down to \$349. in the stores.) I found I could buy it online for \$306. This came with a 16MB Smart Media Card. I decided to upgrade to the "Executive Kit", which included a 64 MB Smart Media Card, camera case, etc. The price then was \$376. I also ordered four nickel-hydride rechargeable batteries and charger for \$69.99, a Smart Media Card Reader for \$49. shipping was \$19.95, making a grand total of \$514. I received it in four days, shipped by Fed Ex.

So, now I have it, what do I do with it? Again, thanks to my computer buddies in CAUG (our computer user group) who helped me get started I'm trying to learn to use it. I was diligently reading the di-

rections (few that there were) on how to begin.

The first problem: I couldn't figure out how to insert the batteries. I called Bill D., who was at the time, not feeling well and



flat on his back in bed. I told him of the problem and he insisted that I come over and he'd help me. I did, and he did, and I took my first picture of "Sick Bill." I'm getting hooked fast!

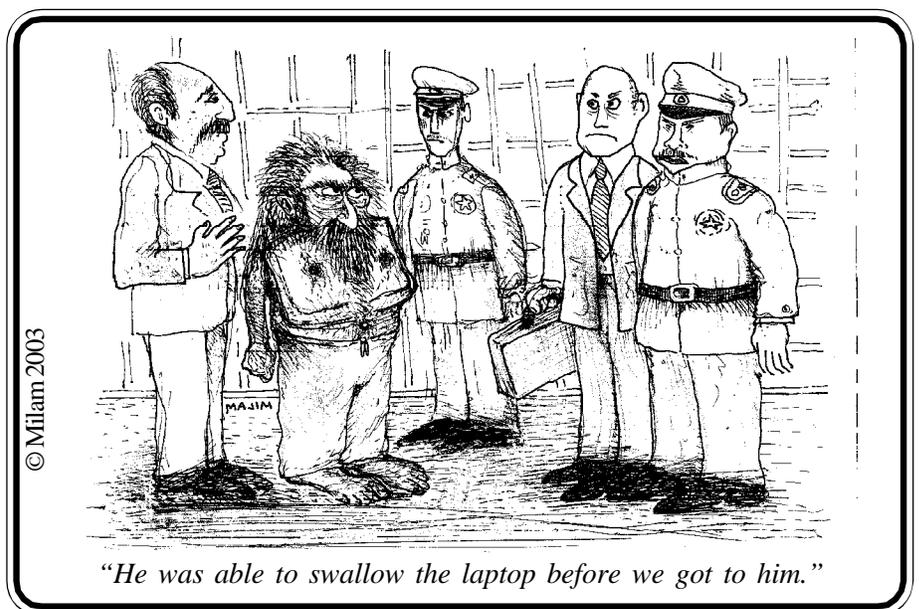
Next hurdle was how to install the card reader. Knowing how "techno-logically challenged" I am, Jack Hord came out and installed it for me. So now I had my first successful attempt and am ready for another. I took another group of fotos and am on my way. I loaded them into the computer and couldn't bring them up. Called Bill D. again; he made a "house call" and discovered that I was omitting one crucial step.

But I'm feeling more comfortable with it now. While in California recently, I found some good buys at the Fry's stores there. Bought two more 128 MB Smart Media Cards on sale for \$39.99 each. They retail locally for \$79.99. I also bought two more sets of nimh rechargeable batteries and another battery charger. I now have one 16MB, one 64MB and two 128MB Smart Media Cards, as well as three sets of nimh-rechargeable batteries and two chargers so I am all set for my upcoming trip to S.E. Asia next month. I hope to get beyond the "point and shoot" mode and capture some good shots.

Those of you who know me well are aware of my penchant for travel. Due to personal circumstances, I haven't been able to indulge my travel bug much this year, so far only a trip to the Cayman Islands. Didn't get my annual "Cuba fix" this year.

Advantages of a Digital Camera

First of all, there is instant gratification. You can view immediately what you have shot, select the best and erase those not worthy of keeping. It does not require film or costs for developing prints. For



example, depending on the resolution you shoot at, a 64 MB card will yield from seven (highest TIFF) to 664 (lowest JPEG) pictures per card.

Roughly multiply that by 2 for a 128 MB card. Since your fotos are already saved as electronic images, they can be e-mailed, put on a website or edited immediately through the use of various editing programs such as Paint Shop Pro, Adobe Photo Shop, Corel, etc.

That's where the fun comes in. I have much to learn in that department! A film-based camera is better for some things, such as for more detailed pictures. Therefore, I will take my Minolta on my trip and use it as a backup.

Email Joan Stephens:
jstephns@caller.infi.net

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization to which this user group belongs.

Let DACS Promote your Business

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

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

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

Got Work? We Need Talent!

We deliver your talent to our customers through our exclusive PowerMatch™ system.

Whether looking for a contract position, contract to perm, or direct-hire position, you can be assured our personalized approach and flexible services will meet your expectations.

Do you know a company who's **Got Work?** Ask us about our Business Referral Program. The Client gets the right talent, the process is confidential, and you get dollars in your pocket!

Contact us today!

888.842.3818 or ctadmin@hallkinion.com

the right talent.
the right project.
the first time.

www.hallkinion.com



Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: April 2003

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: May 13

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: Apr. 9

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: Apr.30

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: Apr. 2

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: Apr. 17

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: Apr. 16

MICROCONTROLLER. Investigates microcontroller applications from theory to hands-on implementation and member projects.

Contact: John Gallichotte, 203 426-0394, (*tlclotus@ieee.org*). Meets on 4th Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Apr. 29

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: Apr. 10

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: Apr. 2

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: Apr. 28

SIG News & Other Events

Access. The MS Access SIG will NOT hold a meeting during the month of April, 2003. Please contact the SIG leader, Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920, after May 1st, to confirm the date, time and location of the May, 2003 meeting.

dotNet. The dotNet-SIG meeting was and off and on affair during February. Jim was scheduled at his time share, and Chuck had an ASP (Appalachian Service Project) meeting. So we didn't think there would be a meeting in March. The ASP meeting was cancelled at the last moment so Chuck decided to have the dotNet meeting as scheduled. As a result, our attendance was low. But we were able to excise the chaff and get right down to looking at ASPX program code. We had some good stuff to see regarding database access and binding the data directly to the controls on the Web Form. Our technical documentarian extra ordinaire Claude Prevost writes of the meeting:

Further strides have been made in the daunting task of linking menu items to roles in a SQL Server environment. Two aspects were prominent in the review of program development—the opening of menu items into a pick list, and filling the list with choices. Consider each construction in turn

On the Web page that is rendered, the three menu items offered emerge from BannerObjects as a class, BOObject. These menu items are in a parent-child relationship with the items or choices on the drop down list from which a choice is to be picked with the mouse pointer. The text in the choices must have adequate space as well as time to be read by the user. Opening of the menu items as parent is controlled by a mouse over event, but a timer is still needed to keep the list open long enough to allow the pointer to be drawn down to a particular choice. The timer will be added later.

To fill the choices listed, text must be made available from some repository. Rather than have multiple tables containing the texts needed, our designer chose to have them in one larger table, to avoid the confusion of an error-prone multiplicity of tables. In the one larger table, the cell placement of the text for menu choices is also identified with cardinal numbers in other cells of the same table. With such storage wizardry, the designer can withdraw the needed content to fill the menu drop-down list with the text that describes the choice, and link the choice to action, all with controlling code. This code is supported by a stored procedure in the DBMS. This procedure exhibits the four parameters that provide application flexibility to clients for data retrieval, namely—Name, Type, Size and Value.

Other important elements in the code were the specifications for the configuration of supporting devices. The server and a connection string to it were identified, to support a SQL Data Adapter through the use of a XML format.

Server. The March Server SIG meeting continued the install of Windows Server 2003. Sometime last month, Microsoft changed the name from Windows .NET Server2003, removing the ".NET" part. This started a flurry of speculation in the trade press that Microsoft was abandoning .NET. It must have been a slow day in the news room.

As a meeting topic, the install was also a slow day. I had intended to get the setup program past all the file copying so we could spend the time configuring the server, but such was not the case. Instead we talked and watched the install run, and talked, and watched the install run. Our topics included things like CVS (the open source change management system for source code), VPN (virtual private networks), routers (hardware firewalls and building a firewall/router using Linux).

The next Server and Networking SIG meeting will be Thursday, April 10th at 7 p.m. in the DACS Resource Center. Our topic will be X-windows and running programs remotely on both Linux

SIG Notes Continued on page 14

April 2003

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																										
		<p><i>1</i></p>  <p>7:00 P.M. GENERAL MTG</p>	<p><i>2</i></p> <p>4-6 PM INTERNET PROGRAM Chuck Fizer 203 798-9996</p> <p>7:00 PM VISUAL BASIC Chuck Fizer</p>																																																																																																													
<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>		<p><i>9</i></p>  <p>7:30 PM ADVANCED OS Don Pearson 914 669-9622</p>	<p><i>10</i></p>  <p>7:00 PM SERVER SIG Jiri Scheef 860 355-0034</p>		<i>12</i>																																																																																																										
<i>13</i>	<p><i>14</i></p>  <p>7:00 PM BOARD OF DIRECTORS</p>	<i>15</i>	<p><i>16</i></p>  <p>7:30 PM LINUX Bill Kesner 203 438-8032</p>	<p><i>17</i></p>  <p>7:30 PM INVESTMENT Paul Getrell 203 426-8436</p>	<i>18</i>	<p><i>19</i></p>  <p>DACS.DOC SIG NEWS DEADLINE</p>																																																																																																										
<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<p><i>22</i></p> <p>7:00 PM Microcontroller J. Gallichotte 203 420-0394</p>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>																																																																																																										
<i>27</i>	<p><i>28</i></p>  <p>7:00 PM WALL STREET Phil Dilloway 203 367-1202</p>	<i>29</i>	<p><i>30</i></p> <p>1-3 PM SMALL BUSINESS Matthew Greger 203 748-2919</p> <p>7:00 PM GRAPHICS Ken Graff 203 775-6667</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">Mar 2003</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30</td> <td>31</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Mar 2003							S	M	T	W	T	F	S						1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">May 2003</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> <td>31</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		May 2003							S	M	T	W	T	F	S						1	2 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Mar 2003																																																																																																																
S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																																																																										
					1																																																																																																											
2	3	4	5	6	7	8																																																																																																										
9	10	11	12	13	14	15																																																																																																										
16	17	18	19	20	21	22																																																																																																										
23	24	25	26	27	28	29																																																																																																										
30	31																																																																																																															
May 2003																																																																																																																
S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																																																																										
					1	2 3																																																																																																										
4	5	6	7	8	9	10																																																																																																										
11	12	13	14	15	16	17																																																																																																										
18	19	20	21	22	23	24																																																																																																										
25	26	27	28	29	30	31																																																																																																										

Computer Shopping

The Truth About Mail-in Rebates

By Roger A. Poverny, TUGNET

MAIL-IN REBATES are a bonanza for retail computer stores: They can advertise a very low sales price (or even a free price, after mail-in rebates), and then charge buyers of these so-called bargains a higher-than-normal sales price. It brings in the customers who are looking for good deals, and who may purchase other items while they are in the store. It means higher sales figures for the retailer since these mail-in rebates are underwritten by the manufacturers, and they cost the retailers nothing. It also creates a cadre of unhappy customers. Why? Consider this: according to the Wall Street journal, up to 95% of people forget to claim the rebate. They end up paying more for the product than they would have without a rebate. For those who make the claim, there are a variety of reasons why the claims go unpaid. Some of these reasons are detailed below.

Let's start with this premise: manufacturers don't want to rebate money to you, so they put a number of obstacles in your way. Sometimes the rebate forms are hidden in the store or you have to ask the cashier for a copy. The rebate form lists the submittal requirements in great complicated detail so that a simple non-compliance error on your part will void your claim. You must include a copy of your purchase receipt (sometimes with the purchased item circled or underlined) along with the original UPC code from the package. Be careful here, as some packages have multiple UPC codes with different numbers. Then you must mail the completed rebate form, with inclusions, to a specified address (usually a fulfillment house hired to handle the rebate). There is always a window of opportunity; i.e. an "offer expiration date" and a "postmark before" date. Most mail-in forms tell you to expect your rebate in eight to ten weeks.

Very seldom will a rebate check arrive by the promised waiting period: you are forced to call their 800 number (although some don't have a toll-free number) to find out what the holdup is. The manufacturer is counting on you to forget that a rebate promise date has passed. If you do remember to call them, this is generally when the excuses start. Typical excuses are: "We didn't receive your UPC code or register receipt," "We never received your letter," "You didn't complete your rebate

form properly," "The offer has expired ... or is no longer funded by the manufacturer." The fulfillment houses are experts at not paying, and as a matter of fact are hired by some manufacturers just because they are so tough. Many times you will get a postcard, not a letter, saying you were denied a rebate. Postcards are easy to lose or throw away in the trash, which is why many rebate checks are mailed in the form of a postcard. They don't even look like checks! Most people will stop trying once they have been rejected. The manufacturers count on this. At

a FRY's the other day, a customer relations representative pointed at two 4-drawer filing cabinets and said they were full of customer complaints about rebates. That's eight drawers of unhappy customers, and they represent only that five percent (according to The Wall Street Journal) who actually sent in their rebate forms. After all is said and done, probably 2% of the customers receive a rebate check.

Manufacturers and retailers make more money from us when the items they are selling have mail-in rebates, so it doesn't seem likely that the practice will end any time soon. The number of items using rebates appears to be rising exponentially, and the customer is the loser. It is just plain unfair. How can we fight back?

Fighting Back

There are two ways to fight back: (1) Politically, through our Legislatures, Better Business Bureaus, Federal Trade Commission, Retail Store Managers, etc. We can write letters or call and complain; (2) The second method is to make it so costly for the manufacturers to offer these rebates that they will abandon the practice. We can do this by making sure we get every one of the offered rebates. If you follow the directions outlined below, you will get every one.

1. Make sure you have the rebate form before you leave the store. Check the form to be sure you fall within the offering's dates. Also ask the cashier for a second copy of the purchase receipt.

2. As soon as you get home, remove the UPC code from the container or wrap-

ping before you throw the packaging away. If you intend to try out the product first to make sure you want to keep it, and don't want to remove the UPC code yet in case you want to return it, see #7 below.

3. Read the form carefully so that you will comply exactly with their requirements. Read it a second time before you fill it in. Don't forget to circle or underline the item on the receipt if required to do so.

4. Make copies of everything you send, including the UPC code. This is where most people falter since they don't have copy machines. They set it aside to take to work or to a copy store and forget about it. But, most of us have scanners! Use them to make your copies. Even most fax machines will work.

5. Staple together all the pieces: receipt, UPC code, rebate form. Then they can't say they were not with your submittal, or must have fallen out of the envelope.

6. Mark the mailing date on your copy. Also mark the date when the waiting period ends, 8 to ten weeks later.

7. This next step will help you to remember. Go to: www.memotome.com (memo to me) and sign up for their free e-mail reminder service. Have them to send you an e-mail when the rebate check was promised. If you are trying out a product prior to sending in the rebate form, ask for a reminder in a couple of weeks.

8. If you haven't gotten your check after the promised time, call the telephone number listed on your copy of the rebate form. Try to talk to a live person. Tell them the waiting period has passed and insist that you be paid. Keep on insisting if you get the brush-off. Ask to speak to a supervisor. Mark the names of those you talked to, the dates and excuses on your rebate copy. If necessary, send another copy of your submittal in case they deny receipt of all submitted items.

9. If all else fails, go to the retail store where you purchased the item. Bring your paperwork and insist that they do whatever is necessary to get you the rebate check.

ROGER A. POVERNY is on the Board of Directors of The Users' Group Network (TUGNET) in Granada Hills, California. This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), and international organization to which this user group belongs.

Online Hoaxes

AOL Scam Alert

Pass this on to all your AOL friends

By Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

WE ALL KNOW someone—friends and relatives—who use AOL, and I suggest you consider forwarding this message to them. As you'll see, it's not a hoax but a real-life scam.

It started when my mother recently received a beautifully done AOL message. It's the kind of thing you read about but rarely get to see firsthand.

The message she received was from the AOL Billing Services Team. She forwarded it to the accounting department—moi—because I pay for her account (she has me to blame, I know). Read the message here:

<http://www.pibmug.com/files/aolletter.jpg>

It took a minute to figure out something wasn't right.

Telltale Clues

For one thing, the e-mail header showed that the AOL Billing Services Team was blind copying her using version AOL 5.0. (<http://www.pibmug.com/files/aolheader.jpg>) You'd think they could use a more current version, right? There's more: The return address was *Remindingyou@aol.com* and the subject line had a misspelling.

I followed the Billing link in the message. At first glance I saw an AOL Welcome box. (<http://www.pibmug.com/files/aolwelcomescreen.jpg>) Take a careful look and you'll know why I was suspicious. Yep, lots of misspellings.

I went along with the game plan and clicked OK. Now I was staring into what looked like a remarkably authentic credit card payment form. Even if you didn't click the other links, you HAVE to see this one. It's worse than a loan application.

<http://www.pibmug.com/files/aolcreditcard.jpg>

Is it Really You?

To make sure it's really you, they also want your Social Security Number, date of birth, driver's license number, and mother's maiden name. With that, the scammers can get to "identity theft" heaven before you shut down your PC for the night.

But they're not finished. How about throwing in your AOL screen name and password, something even novices know AOL wouldn't do. To add a level of legitimacy, they warn you that, "For your safety, please do not download any files from strangers. AOL will never ask you to download anything."

Who Is?

I went to <http://www.samspace.org>, my favorite Web examination site, and backtraced the Billing link. (The site was closed by Hypermart so it now leads to an error page.) It's an obfuscated URL: <http://www.aol.com-billing:july-2002@072002.hypermart.net> that leads to <http://072002.hypermart.net>. It works because any characters before the @ sign are ignored. And all it took was a quick web search with Google.com to find locations loaded with AOL scamming files. You can view one site here:

<http://www.pibmug.com/files/aolhypermart.jpg>

I contacted one of AOL's security people I met years ago because of a story I did about AOL. Unfortunately, I never heard back from him. I also sent a mes-

sage to abuse@hypermart.net and they responded in four days.

AOL Protection Strategy

Forward this to a buddy using AOL. They need to know that the best AOL protection strategy is to be alert to constant scams. You know, if it looks like a duck, smells like one, and occasionally quacks, there's a good chance it is one.

If you're unsure about a billing question, it's best to call AOL's billing services directly at 800/827-6364, or their Screen Name/Password line at 888/265-8004.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check PCW's current edition at www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at www.pcworld.com/bass_letter.

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization to which this user group belongs.



Do the DACS General Meetings leave you thirsting for more? Find all that plus food for thought at the meeting after the meeting—the DACS PIG SIG.

Pastimes

Should You Charge for Technical Support?

By Mike Kaltschnee

WE ALL KNOW the feeling of dread when we pick up the phone and it's a friend or family member saying, "You know that PC I bought last year? Well it's not working right..." It seems that if you're a computer geek you're the one that gets the call at 9pm (it usually happens during your favorite TV show) with a desperate voice on the other end that you know hasn't backed up anything in two years.

I've been helping people with computers since I was 19. Some of it was paid, and some of it was for friends or family. I've charged as much as \$100 per hour for my time, and I won't take a dime if I can't fix the problem. Consulting has been nice supplementary income over the years, but I've done a lot more free work for friends and family.

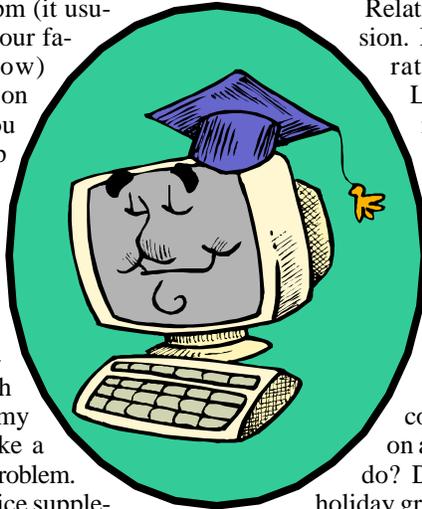
The idea for this article came after reading a series of comments on <http://www.Slashdot.org> about doing tech support for your family.

The problem is not your folks; they changed your diapers and raised you. You're going to a very hot place later on if you don't help them (or at least have to deal with MGS—Mom Guilt Syndrome).

My dad has called me many times over the years with personal computer problems, as well as stuff I should have charged his company for when they had horrible computer support people. I was proud to help my dad out, even if it meant losing sleep sometimes. He's come a long way and is approaching the "geek" stage. I'm so proud!

My goal here is to discuss the other people that call—brothers, sisters, friends, close and distant relatives, co-workers, or even acquaintances. When I worked in a computer store, people would ask me to go to their house and setup the computer and install the software. This was an easy decision - charge for it. However, the line becomes less clear when your brother needs your

help and he just cleared 4 trees from your yard. Of course you help, but if that brother only calls when his computer is down and he's suddenly "busy" when you need help it's easy to be "busy" yourself. Luckily, my siblings are awesome and we help each other out often.



Relatives are a tougher decision. My family, while separated by hundreds (St. Louis) and thousands of miles (Hong Kong) is very close. I don't have a problem helping any of them, but I've heard horror stories from my friends about distant relatives that expect 3am support for 3 hours when their Mike Kaltschnee computer dies and they're on a deadline. What do you do? Do you even exchange holiday greetings? Should you tell

them to wait until morning or when you get some free time? Or just find some local help? It's really hard to debug a system you've never seen over the phone. I have had to tell people that I'll call them back at a later time. It's hard to do but you have to decide if they are taking advantage of you. Sometimes you make the wrong decision but don't let them do it to you twice.

Friends are easy to decide which way to go. If your buddy is a good friend, and you both help each other out, it's usually "yes." However, if they are more like an acquaintance, you should feel free to tell them that this is what you do for a living (or as a side business) and you typically charge for it. It's up to you to discount your rate, or even barter for the work (I've done computer work for countless dinners, home-made honey, venison, computer parts, and even a discount from a doctor). Many people are open to trading services - it's always a good idea to have a plumber owe you for recovering his business records after he accidentally deleted them.

Don't charge if you can't fix it, and don't be afraid to tell them you don't know how to do it. I've tried to fix things I had no business fixing when I should have told them a polite "no." I've had to spend

additional time fixing my mistake. Know your limitations and let them know you haven't done this before. People think you know everything if you seem proficient, but there are too many things for any one person to know everything. Give them the choice of letting you do the work or finding someone more qualified. Everyone will feel better (and you won't feel guilty about making things worse in some cases). The moral of the story is that you have to remember you have a very valuable skill, worth up to \$100 per hour, and if you feel that you are being taken advantage of you should not feel guilty about charging for your time. Remember that they would have to pay a computer store to fix the computer at probably double or triple your rate.

Please don't call MIKE if you have technical questions, but you can always e-mail him at: mikek@demorgan.com.

Smart advertisers reach over 1000 active computer users and software buyers by taking advantage of the attractive advertising rates in **DACS.DOC**

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

Software Review

InstantEXE 2.0

By Gary Stone

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN what you might call a tinkerer, and this program is meant for those who want to do just that. InstantEXE is able to do things like DDE, manipulation of COM ports and writing INI and Registry files, among other things. The CD contains 4 files, just over 7 MB, of which only one is really needed to install. The other files are included in case the recipient of a compiled exe doesn't have the needed VB6 runtime on their PC. Since VB6 is installed as part of MS Internet Explorer 5, most everyone in the world will already have this capability. The box says "Start programming in five minutes" but it took almost that long for some troubleshooting. Installation is very easy, getting the program to run took some 'tinkering'. The default installation put the executable into C:\Program Files\Instexe20\, which makes it easy to find, although I would have preferred Instexe2 (which is what it is) without the extra 0 on the end, which takes up room in

the fat for a whole other file, but that's just a pet peeve of mine. I noticed that the shortcuts to the program and the help file had the wrong icons to them, and the shortcuts wouldn't work. Examining the properties of those shortcuts revealed that they were pointing to a subdirectory called scripts, which is not where the program installed itself. After fixing this little glitch, it did start up ok and I was on my way to creating my own executable programs.

Starting the program puts you in edit mode where you can compose or edit scripts that will be compiled later into your own program. Just over 50 commands are provided to you for placing into scripts for execution. Depending on how these commands interact, you could make some pretty impressive scripts that do neat stuff. There are 59 example scripts already there to use and for tinkering. One of these looks for temp files on the hard drive and deletes them for you. I adjusted the script to make it go directly

to the windows\temp folder for this operation. The File menu contains an option to Create EXE from your current script. This worked nicely and now I have an EXE for cleaning up that temp folder. Some of the commands available include display menu, IF, GoTo, read, loop, print, search, and write. Someone with very little programming experience could actually make an EXE to do something with this program. One of the examples provided is for an analog clock for your desktop. That's the first one I chose to play with but found that it would not work properly for me. The face with the numbers would display and then that would disappear when the hands were drawn. No amount of tinkering I did would get the two to display together. Probably I just needed more time. There's even a Bavarian clock which has the numbers in backward counter-clockwise fashion, but that one didn't show me hands either. Other examples include a music box for playing wav files, a viewer for bmp files, a mini calculator and a modem dialer, all of which work pretty well.

More sample scripts are to be available someday, on their website, but none

InstantEXE, Continued on page 15

Are you computer savvy? Great!

Know others who are not? Refer them to SeniorNet - an effective and affordable way for people age 50 and over to learn basic computing skills. They can start with our beginner's course, Introduction to Personal Computers. Once basic Windows and mouse skills are acquired, they can continue with intermediate computing and introductory courses in The Internet, Personal Financial Management, Digital Imaging and Genealogy.

Most courses meet once a week (2 1/2 hours) for eight weeks. Classes begin the week of April 21, 2003.

The Danbury SeniorNet Learning Center, located in the Senior Center, 80 Main St., is an all-volunteer organization. (Many of our volunteers are DACS members).

For more information about our courses, volunteer opportunities and our organization, please sign on and surf our website at: www.danbury.org/seniornet or call the Senior Center at: (203) 797-4686.

SeniorNet Spring 2003 Courses

Introduction to Personal Computers - Wed., 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Intermediate Computing - Thurs., 2:30-5:00 p.m.

Introduction to Internet - Tues., 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Introduction to Digital Imaging - Wed., 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Introduction to Personal Financial Management - Thurs., 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Introduction to Genealogy - Sat., 9:30-12:00 noon.

Meeting Preview

Don't let worms put the byte on you

By Allan Ostergren

AT ITS NEXT GENERAL Meeting on April 1, DACS will welcome back Jeff Setaro, resident computer security guru, for an update on virus prevention. At press time, Jeff was preparing additional content to his standard presentation, along with a detailed look at the latest weapons in the epic battle for cyberspace. You can see the latest version, and download a printable handout from our Web site www.dacs.org.

April 1st would seem a fitting occasion for a presentation on computer security. After all, fools have always been the easy first targets of hacker mischief, and given the propensity of fools to repeat their mistakes, they have only themselves to blame. However, as hacker attacks evolve and become more sophisticated, innocent third parties—including major Internet companies—are increasingly being drawn in, and the potential damage is rising exponentially.

With about 10-20 new viruses, worms and Trojan horse programs discovered every day, new words are being added to the



lexicon to describe them. The latest is malware, a generic descriptive which is short for malicious software, designed specifically to damage or disrupt a system, such as a virus or a Trojan horse. As the theater of operations moves to corporate servers and major Web sites, hackers are setting aside their code-based invasive programs that attack

the host computer or send out copies of themselves to mailing lists in favor of more strategically targeted programs that use the host as a launching pad for mass destruction. These are dubbed distributed denial of service attacks (DDoS), and they work by sending out a blizzard of instructions from a host of compromised systems (zombies) to target Web sites that tie them up in petty operations and thus deny them the ability to carry out their legitimate tasks. One security expert described the process as “getting pecked to death by ducks.”

Distributed denial of service attacks first got underway in 1999, and in the following

year began to command attention with one that crippled CNN, Yahoo and eBay. More recent variants are getting more sophisticated in their targeting instructions and are proliferating much faster. The Code Red worm in 2001 doubled about every 37 minutes, while the newer SQL Slammer (pronounced “sequel” for Microsoft’s database program) managed the same task every 8.5 seconds and spanned the globe in only 10 minutes. The growing threat is exacerbated when you consider that there are at least five networks of zombies with as many as 7,000 to 140,000 computers in each that could be harnessed to spur DDoS attacks, potentially bringing Internet commerce to its knees.

But if malware is increasingly going after the big fish, why should we little guys be concerned? For one thing, we all suffer when our favorite Web sites are brought down. Even more importantly, the proliferation of high-speed Internet connectivity that is always on is making our home PCs the gateway for most attacks. Our negligence in providing a vector for transmission of computer viruses is at the root of the problem—and negligence is a favored term among the legal profession.

Come to the April DACS meeting at Danbury Hospital auditorium to hear about the latest in virus technology and how to protect your system from it. The meeting starts with casual networking at 7:00, followed by a business meeting at 7:30 and the scheduled presentation at 8:00. The meeting is open to the public, so bring a friend.

SIG Notes *Continued from page 8*

and Windows. This will be fun! Bring your laptop and a network card and you can download and install Cygwin/XFree86 X-windows on your Windows machine.

VB. The VB SIG was similarly attended and again we had the opportunity to go to the code. At the previous meeting in February, we examined a recipe program originally written by Tish Barrow. We took the opportunity at this March meeting to discuss and then begin implementation of a GUI design that used fewer controls and screens yet provided a more robust interface to the user. We actually created some components of the code along with a few darns as our brains were jumping back and forth between ADO and ADO.NET. The recipe application is essentially a database program that either captures recipes or presents them to the user. As currently configured, it uses a MS Access database. In this application, we are connecting to the database using OleDb and ADO in VB 6. As such, we must abide by the SQL 92 implementation paradigm.

Sooh, the syntax between Access, SQL and OleDb is slightly different. Sometimes our feeble brain thinks SQL, at other times it thinks Access, so you can see the problems that arise. At first blush one would think this isn't good, but, the mistakes give rise to discussion on how it ought to be. So we had an opportunity to discuss issues clarifying syntax and programming methodology. The net net (no pun intended) for the evening was that we made progress on the program, and this program will continue to be used as a model application for the VB-SIG in the future.

Microntroller. February was the first official meeting of the MCS (MicroController SIG) and was a great success. Although two demonstrations were planned only the first one was completed. An AT90S2313 development board was setup and attached to a laptop computer which served as the development system host. Assembler and Loader software had previously been installed. After attaching the development board via a parallel port cable an

RS232 serial cable was attached and connected to the host computer. A demo program was assembled (source code was converted into machine readable code) and the code downloaded to the microcontroller. When the reset button was pressed on the development board the microcontroller generated a 'Hello World' type message which was sent to the host and displayed on a 'Dumb Terminal' (software on the host). A very simple setup with a very simple software doing almost next to nothing!

Our meetings are scheduled after *dacs.doc* has gone to press. therefore a few web pages have been uploaded to the web allowing our group and interested parties to read about our activities in a more timely manner. The pages can be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~tlclotus>.

At the March 2003 I will demonstrate a more advanced (and expensive) development system. We will start our journey into the details of the AT90S2313 Assembly language instructions and learn more about how microcontrollers work.

Random Access

March 2003

Bruce Preston, Moderator

MEMBERS 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 am looking at an external hard disk for a laptop computer—USB 2.0 interface. There are two models, 4,000 RPM and 7,000 RPM available. Is 7,000 RPM going to be that much faster?

A. The speed of the USB interface will probably throttle down the USB such that You won't see much difference between the two drives. If the Interface were Firewire, then that would move data faster.

Q. I am going to be painting my house this summer, and am wondering if I could use a photo editing program to visualize what the house would look like if I were to scan the various color chips that I am considering.

A. You could, as many programs have a 'color replacer' capability. However you will not preserve the gradations of color due to shadow, or differences between Direct sun reflection etc. As a result, the image will look somewhat 'flat'. But you may find it to be an interesting exercise.

Q. I have a re-writable CD. It burns music just fine, but I can not burn data. Any suggestions?

A. If you are using Direct-CD or “Drive Letter Access” for data, then the media must first be formatted if you intend to make use of the re-writable capability of the drive and the media. (It takes about 45 minutes per CD) With the cost of plain CD-R media about 1/20th the cost of CD-RW, many find it more cost effective to just burn data onto the CD and not “close the session”—which lets you append additional data to the CD until it is full. Once the CD is full, you either keep it or throw it away— but you can't re-write it. To burn a data CD, you would use the same software as you use to burn the music CDs, just tell it is data. (Example: Roxio EZ-CD Creator, Nero, etc.)

Q. When I installed SNET-Yahoo! DSL, it installed their own browser. When it did so, it brought in my bookmarks that had been in IE. Now when I use

IE, my book marks are gone. How do I get them back?

A. In IE (6, maybe earlier) try FILE then IMPORT/EXPORT. This will start a wizard which will offer to bring in Favorites and Cookies. By the way, Netscape saves them in the folder for the current user (\Program Files\Netscape\Users\username\bookmark.htm). Newer versions of Netscape use the .HTML extension.

Q. Has anyone had problems with DVDs from Netflicks disappearing upon return to Netflicks?

A. One or two others attending the meeting reported that they had lost DVDs that went through the Flushing, New York clearing house. A search on the web showed that best practice is to contact Netflicks' Customer Service and follow up by filing with the post office.

Q. When I try to download Turbo Tax State my ISP times-out. What can I do?

A. Some ISP dial-up services will time-out if they don't see activity from your end. You may have to browse to a web-site during the download - the clicks will keep the connection alive. Take a look in the properties page for the dial-up connection and make sure that there isn't a 'disconnect after inactivity' setting. Moving the mouse does not send a data packet, you have to send data through the connection.

Q. My wireless connection drops every day between 3PM and 4PM. Any suggestions?

A. No one could come up with a specific reason, however it was suggested that you set up the wireless networking with static IP addresses assigned to your machine(s) and not run the DHCP server - such that traffic 'passing by' can't tap into your network. If you have the other security/encryption capabilities in your network, activate them.

Q. I have a Dell machine, about 2 years old. There is some software that I want to run that would like faster

video with more color depth than the current Intel Integrated Graphics that is on the motherboard. Can I put in a video card and disable the Intel Integrated Graphics?

A. It depends upon whether the motherboard and/or BIOS settings permit it. It also depends upon whether you have a slot available of the appropriate type—or example, most high-end graphics cards are AGP—they require an AGP slot, which might not be present on your motherboard.

Q. My machine hangs when I boot Windows 98. It may take 15 minutes or so before it finally boots. (Upon asking we found that:) I am running McAfee anti-virus.

A. Older versions of McAfee runs a DOS-environment scan of your hard disk when you boot. The DOS environment does not provide enough memory for the scanning engine to hold all of the virus signatures, so it has to do two passes! If you have a large hard disk, this can take a long time. The thing to do is to disable the execution of the scan-on-boot, as you still have real-time protection which identifies infected files are they are introduced to your machine (via e-mail, download, etc.) You do this by editing the AUTOEXEC.BAT file on your machine and commenting out the line that has the SCAN program.

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.

InstantEXE, Continued from page 13

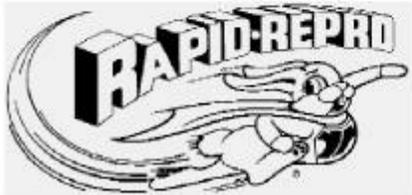
were there yet when I looked. That page had only four lines and two obvious misspellings which means that English is likely not the author's native language. There is a link though to a Yahoo group for sharing scripts among the 57 members.

InstantEXE 2.0 needs Win 95 on up, 166 MHz, 64 MB RAM, 5 Megs of disk space, SVGA, mouse and CD rom . A trial version is available for tinkerers to download at <http://www.instantexe.com> and if you want, you can buy the boxed program for \$59.95.

GARY STONE is a member of DACS, a CNE and MCP, is a freelance technical support consultant, participates in various SIGs and likes to dabble in digital video projects. You can reach him at webpagevideo@yahoo.com, or through a link at www.cyberonic.net/~webvideo.

One- to four-color printing
Direct from disk high speed
black & white and color copying
now available

For All Your Printing, Graphics, and Copying Needs



3 Commerce Drive
Danbury, CT 06810
(203)792-5045
Fax (203)792-5064
mail@rapid-repro.com

Voice for Joanie

*Help give the
gift of speech
Call Shirley Fredlund
at 203 770-6203, or
(1-866) 770-6203
and become a
Voice for Joanie
volunteer.*

Future Events

April 1 • Jeff Setaro - Virus Protection
& Computer Security

AMSYS.NET®

...making your Net-Work!

Consulting Services 

Network Solutions 

Application Hosting 

Internet Solutions 

AMSYS has been recognized as a leader in computer consulting, computer technology, computer services, Internet services and computer networking in the New York and Connecticut market for more than 14 years. AMSYS offers a one-stop source for complete MIS outsourcing, computer application hosting and support services to the small and medium size business owner.

...AMSYS makes your Net-Work!... so that you can run your business!



AMSYS

AMSYS, Inc.
900 Ethan Allen Highway
Ridgefield, CT 06877
Phone: 203-431-1500