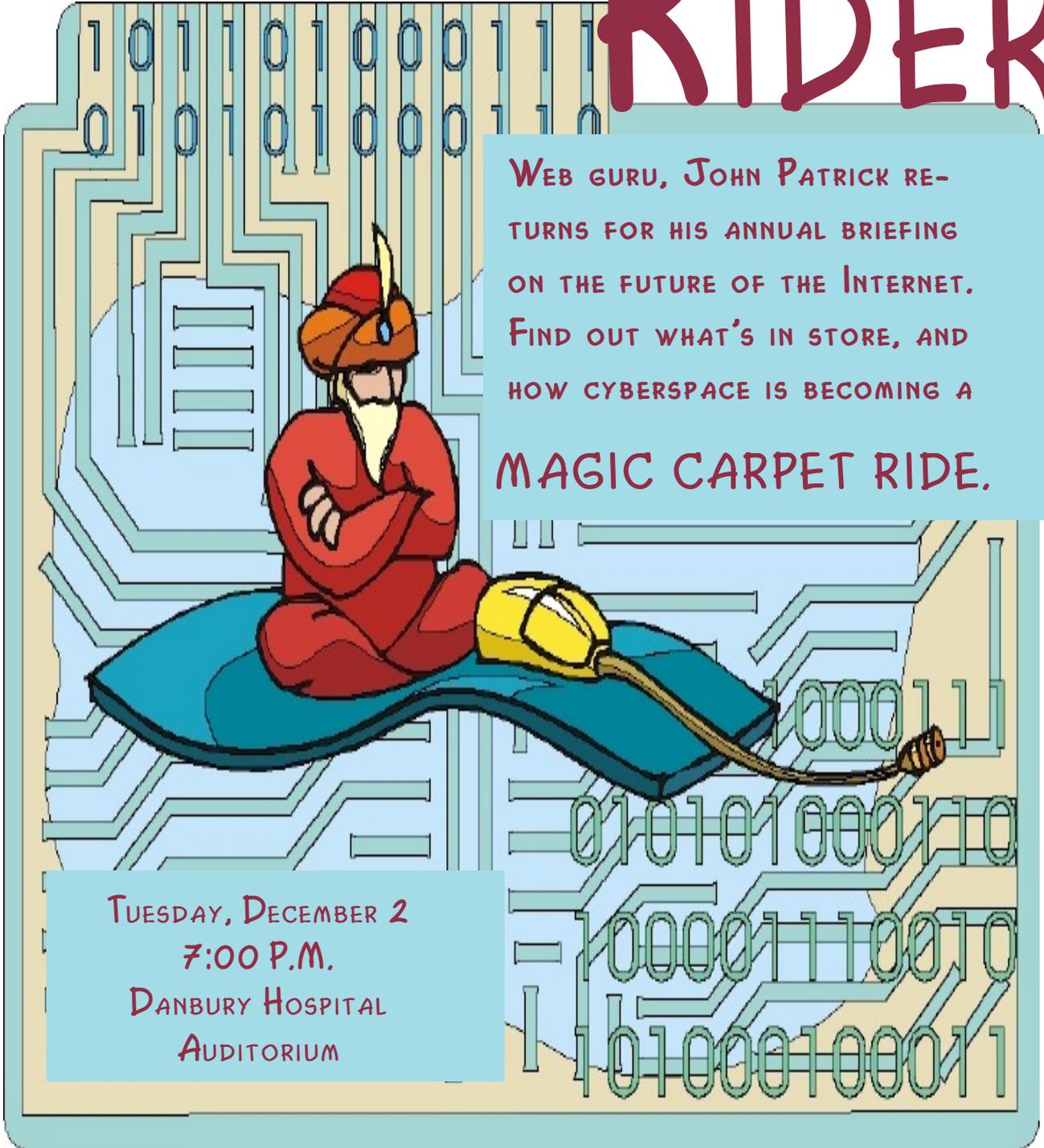


December 2003

Volume 14, Issue 12

# CIRCUIT RIDER



WEB GURU, JOHN PATRICK RETURNS FOR HIS ANNUAL BRIEFING ON THE FUTURE OF THE INTERNET. FIND OUT WHAT'S IN STORE, AND HOW CYBERSPACE IS BECOMING A MAGIC CARPET RIDE.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2  
7:00 P.M.  
DANBURY HOSPITAL  
AUDITORIUM

# President's File



## PRESIDENTIAL RAMBLINGS VERSION 1.6

### DACS Board elections

December is the month when we hold our one regular business meeting of the year along with the elections of half our board of directors. DACS has a representative form of organization where the members elect a board of directors and the directors then select the officers. Unlike most modern corporations, the DACS directors are directly involved in the management of the club. The directors meet each month on the Monday following the general meeting (normally this is the second Monday, but not always), and members are invited to attend.

Once again we have a great slate of candidates. Two people who have served on the board for several years are stepping down: Past President and Newsletter Editor Allan Ostergren and Secretary Larry Buoy. Larry will continue as Secretary for the time being and Allan will continue as Newsletter Editor so they are in no way leaving the club. Allan and Larry deserve our thanks for a job well done serving as board members.

### Hard Drive Failure Saga

Last month I mentioned at I had been hit once again by the dreaded hard drive failure. The recovery process took an entire month to complete and I'm still finding more little things to fix. Last time this happened (See *Server Won't Boot*, beginning in June, 2001, DACS.DOC) I said that you can't have too many backups. Well, this

time my backups were ok, but the backup software (the backup program that comes with Windows 2000) failed to restore a critical part of Windows. This is a bug in Windows that afflicts an extremely small percentage of Windows installations. Unfortunately, mine was one of these. I'll write up the full story for next month.

### New Year Predictions

Well, it's that time of the year again when we make those <shudder> trips to the mall for Holiday Shopping and people like me make predictions. I'll save my new prognostications for next month after we review my record from last year:

1. I predicted that the following would not only not go away but would get worse: (a) We would continue to lose our right to fair use of the music and movies that we buy in the form of CDs and DVDs. (b) The security issues for both Windows and open source operating systems will continue. Neither is perfect and both are trying to get better. (c) Our civil liberties are being eroded in the name of fighting terrorism by a Congress afraid to stand up for our rights.

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 e-mail—and the industry and Congress will start to notice.

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

On all three issues lumped into #1 I truly wish I had been wrong or at least less right. (a) The RIAA has filed hundreds of law suits under the DMCA against ordinary users. Many of these suits have proven to be wholly without merit. Often the people sued cannot afford to defend themselves in court and settle because they believe they have no choice, even when they have never used any form of file sharing. Their settlements are then sealed so we cannot see the details. The RIAA will not disclose how many suits have been dropped or thrown out. (b) Windows updates continue to flow from Redmond. Rather than being critical, we should be thankful that we get these updates. I'm sure Microsoft will begin to charge for these updates as soon as they think they can get away with it. (c) A new bill designed to increase the powers of Federal government to intrude into our privacy was proposed (Patriot Act II) and then dropped when there was an immediate and vocal reaction against it. So now

## Membership Information

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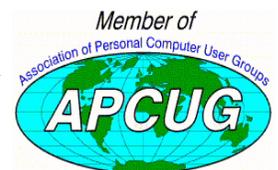
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Don Neary  
 APCUG Liaison  
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## HelpLine

*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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AOL	Marc Cohen	(203) 775-1102	(d e)
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	( e)
AutoCAD	Peter Hylenski	(203) 797-1042	( e)
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HTML/Java	James Costello	(203) 426-0097	( e)
Windows	Nick Strother	(203) 743-5667	( e)

## Directors' Notes

A Regular Meeting of your Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on November 10, 2003, at 7:00 p.m. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Buoy, Cohen, Gallichotte, Keane, Preston, Scheef and Setaro. Also present was Howard Berger. Jim Scheef, President, presided. Larry Buoy, Secretary, kept the record. Minutes of the last meeting, held on October 13, 2003, were presented and approved.

Treasurer Charlie Bovaird reported current cash assets of \$17,867.87, consisting of bank and postal accounts of \$17,777.13 plus postage on hand of \$90.74. Subtracting liabilities of prepaid dues in the amount of \$6,475.00 left a net of \$11,392.87. He also reported current membership of 415.

A review of the schedule of presentations for upcoming General Meetings was made: December - John Patrick; January - Jamie Yates and John Gallichotte on Google and/or easy Hacking and, for March, Snap Video. Jeff Setaro announced that he had approached Adobe regarding a possible presentation for February and that it would probably be possible to switch Adobe and Snap Video between February and March to accommodate either program. The balance of the year 2004 remains open.

On the possible donation of computers for rehabilitation by Casey Family Services, Charlie Bovaird announced that the computers may no longer be available and that the monitors definitely were not. Howie Berger stated that he had been offered space at the Union Carbide building in which to rebuild computers if such a project materializes.

Charlie Bovaird advised that he had no further response to the member survey and was contemplating a more basic survey based on specific interests via email. Relative thereto, Larry Buoy suggested an ongoing series of articles in the newsletter on basic computers skills, such as file management, or on programs of which ordinary users may be completely unaware. This was followed by many suggestions and discussions regarding the formatting and media for conducting a successful survey.

Next considered was the subject of the upcoming election of directors at the December General Meeting. President

*Directors' Notes, Continued on page 4*

**President's file** *continued from page 3*

the same provisions are being attached to other bills in the hope no one will notice.

Ok, number two was a "gimme". Processors are now so fast that Microsoft and the hardware industry will need to find other reasons for you to upgrade – like a new "secure" architecture. Gimme a break.

Wireless Internet access in the form of Wi-Fi "hot spots" has grown over the past year even here in the Danbury area. Last spring I asked Borders if they had Internet access and was told that they had no plans for such a service but by fall they were handing out flyers about their new service. While the service is not free, at least it is from the same provider (T-Mobile) as at area Starbucks. If you sign up for the service, you do have a choice of locations.

SPAM has become worse and Congress has begun to notice. So I was right but once again I'm not sure being right was good. The problem is that Congress cannot really do anything more about SPAM than they could about porn.

My last prediction was where I most wanted to be right. Unfortunately our membership continues to shrink very slowly. Our treasurer, Charlie Bovaird, calls as many lost members as possible. Many have simply moved out of the area. How can we serve you better? Do you have ideas for programs or services that DACS should pursue? Please let me know.

I'm not sure how to score this but with most of these, even if I was right, we all lose.

**New Mac SIG?**

At the November general meeting DACS received the surprise donation of an iMac. We are in the process of thanking the donor. In the mean time, the iMac has been moved to the Resource Center where we have determined only that it is an older model iMac with 32M of RAM, and that it has Mac OS 8 installed. We are now looking for someone to lead a new Macintosh group.

A Special Interest Group (SIG) is a place for people to share their knowledge about a common interest. The leader does not need to be a guru. I will be glad to help get the new group going. The first couple of meetings could easily center on upgrading our "new" iMac with more RAM. Once that's done, we could install OS X. Cool stuff!

Let me know if you are interested in a Macintosh SIG even if you don't want to be the leader. My phone number and email are in the masthead. **IF THERE IS NO INTEREST, THERE WILL BE NO SIG!**

**Happy Holidays**

I have a four year old Granddaughter and I don't know who's more anxious for Santa to arrive – her or me! I hope everyone has Happy Holidays whatever your religious persuasion and if you have no religious persuasion, may you not be bothered by those who do. And have a Happy, Prosperous and Safe New Year!

—JIM SCHEEF

DACSPREZ@DACCS.ORG

**Directors' Notes**, *Continued from page 3*

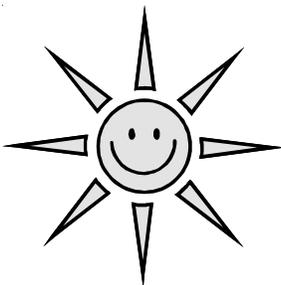
Scheef reminded the meeting that Howard Berger and Anna Collens had agreed to stand for election and that Allan Ostergren would not stand for reelection. There was a short discussion on the advisability of having more nominees for election as a director than openings for such office.

Howie Berger broached the subject of how to increase interest in any of the various SIG groups and cited examples in his own interests. The available methods of inciting such interests were explored.

Jim Scheef announced that Tech Venue, which had provided an online calendar of computer oriented events, had evidently deteriorated to the point where such calendar could no longer be updated via the Internet, and that he had canceled such service. In addition, Jim informed the meeting that the Access SIG was not currently listed with Microsoft's Mindshare program and asked Bruce Preston and Jeff Setaro to rectify same.

President Scheef also related his efforts to solve the problem of what Microsoft products had been won by which winners of same at the November 4th General Meeting.

—LARRY BUOY



**Senior Center wants  
Computer Volunteer  
Instructors**

The New Fairfield Senior Center located in the Heritage Plaza (next to Curves) is looking for responsible volunteers with knowledge of Windows / Word / Photoshop / Internet, to teach 8 weekly 1½ hour classes in Winter 2003/4. The Sunshine Computer Center has 8 Win-XP PCs. Please contact Kathy Hull if interested at [n.ffld.senior@snet.net](mailto:n.ffld.senior@snet.net) 203-312-5665. For more information about the center, surf at: [www.volunteersolutions.org/vcswc/volunteer/agency/one\\_191914.html](http://www.volunteersolutions.org/vcswc/volunteer/agency/one_191914.html).



December is election time for the DACS Board of Directors.

Help support our team.

**Join the Board**

## Meeting Review

# Microsoft Office 2003

By Alan Boba

**T**UESDAY EVENING November 4<sup>th</sup> DACS members and guests were treated to a review of the new end-user features of Microsoft Office 2003. Our presenter was Carl Solazzo. Carl was a last minute substitute who, as it happens, lives only blocks from the Danbury hospital.

Carl works for Microsoft as an Infrastructure Consultant and has spent many years taming Microsoft Exchange installations. Three years so far doing it for Microsoft and an additional 5+ years prior for other organizations.

The slides weren't familiar to Carl since he had seen them only once earlier in the day, none the less after an introduction and some questions from the audience we dove into the presentation. T-shirts were offered to encourage questions. As near as I was able to tell the slides focused on new end-user features in office and back end services such as IRM (Information Rights Management) and SharePoint, available from Microsoft Servers. We didn't follow the slides from beginning to end though. What follows are my impressions from Carl's presentation.

He was a good speaker and worked well with the audience. We began by reviewing the new Outlook 2003. To someone familiar with the interface the most apparent change is how the document reading pane is arranged top to bottom in the right side of Outlook's main window. The intent is to make reading messages easier while still maintaining a view of folders and message headers for better navigation of your mail folders and messages. It seemed clear to me that Carl sincerely appreciated this change in the user interface. The associated slide also made it clear more of an e-mail can be read with the reading pane in its' new layout. Outlook has also been changed so it no longer automatically loads objects and pictures by default when the message is viewed in the reading pane. This was identified as enhanced security. My perspective is that the new defaults are a more reasonable configuration to deliver the product with.

SPAM filtering has also been improved. Again, based on his own experiences, Carl described how SPAM filtering in Outlook 2003 did indeed capture more



SPAM than is possible with earlier versions.

Implementation of services and features throughout the Office 2003 components (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access) is more consistent. SmartTags are more widespread and their connection and reference links are broader. They now will popup travel and research options, among a long list of other topics, related to the recognized word.

Help mechanisms are improved as well. Help from any location (a dialog box, the "enter question here" box on the menu bar) and by any action (press F1, mouse, menu) refers to the same bookmark and the web will be checked automatically for updated references and examples. Help is cross application as well. In Word you could type "how do I create a meeting request?" in the "enter question here" box and you would be linked to Outlook and Outlook help showing the steps.

Network admins will appreciate the ability to control how and when Office's programs and their components load. The ability to specify the locations searched for installation files and provide some automated failover to alternate locations will be a real time saver for users and admins alike.

I'd like you to answer a question. Have you always used the "send report" feature when a program crashes to send Microsoft the diagnostic information? I've done it very rarely because of my desire to control what information about me is available and how it might be used. Carl was the most reassuring 'softie I've ever

heard on this topic. His enthusiasm for it was clear when he described how the information could help correct operating system and program flaws. From his reaction I suspect he has been able to solve some sticky problems with information gleaned from those reports.

For the first time in a while file formats for Word, Excel, and Powerpoint are not changing. This is a much appreciated non-change.

Carl had no joy for Mac users. He wasn't aware of any release plans on the OS X platform.

Rights management is a hugely significant component integrated into the 2003 suite. For home users it requires a Microsoft Passport id so you cannot control document rights on a single home system or small home network without a Microsoft Passport account. On a business network you must entrust authentication to Windows Rights Management Services using Microsoft .NET Passport as the authentication mechanism. As an admin this is a concern to me. Microsoft could have made the IRM feature work with any of several authentication schemes, not just one controlled exclusively by them. This will limit my choices for software purchases and upgrades which I resent.

One thing Carl did several times was acknowledge past failures such as buggy patches. I've attended one other Microsoft presentation on their 2003 software and all the presenters were ragging on Microsoft about various common customer complaints. I've read accounts in trade journals of similar statements being made at other presentations. I'm starting to think this is a deliberate strategy Microsoft has adopted as part of this release. It's as if they're trying to regain the good will lost to virus outbreaks and patching headaches by acknowledging the problems rather than trying to put positive spin on the problems as in the past.

Throughout the presentation Carl answered questions and kept the audience with him. After the presentation he fielded questions for about another 20 minutes. These were tough questions and slow pitches from the audience with good humor and a smile. He did a good job showcasing several features of the suite without giving a sales pitch. All in all he did a great job under difficult circumstances.

---

ALAN BOBA is a long-time member of DACS and a regular on our HelpLine.

# Lessons Learned Moving to Server 2003

By Jim Scheef

COMPUTER UPGRADES ARE a source for many of the questions and much discussion during the Random Access sessions at our monthly general meetings. Over the years, Microsoft has gradually improved the upgrade process making it relatively simple. If all you have on your machine is Windows—with no applications or data—then the upgrade process is a piece of cake! Of course that is not reality and the whole point of upgrading a machine is to preserve the applications and data, and the server at the DACS Resource Center (RC) was no exception. So we set out to upgrade our server from Windows 2000 Server to Windows Server 2003 Enterprise Edition.

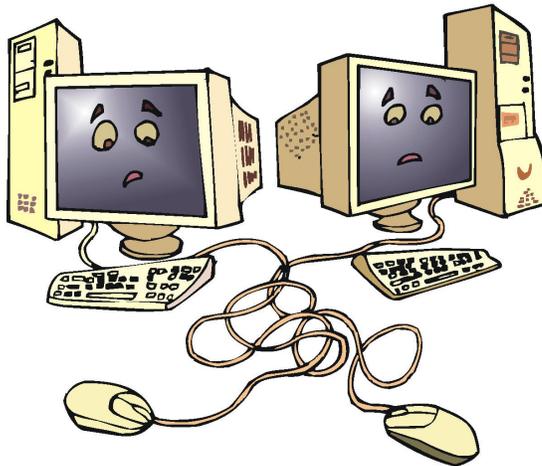
Here are the requirements we set for our move:

1. Originally the RC server had been set up to boot multiple operating systems. We needed to eliminate this and move the operating system to the primary partition.
2. Our goal was to make the completed server as secure as possible. These two requirements meant that we had to do a clean install rather than an upgrade in place.
3. The RC server runs a simple email server for the dacs.org domain. We had to move this application and not lose any configuration data. We also could not be down for more than a day or we would start to lose email messages.
4. Several SIGs had small amounts of data on the server and we did not want to lose any of that.
5. The server provides DHCP (automatic IP addresses) and DNS (domain name service) for the Resource Center network. We had to move this functionality.
6. Lastly, we did not want to lose the user accounts, passwords and related security information that was contained in Active Directory on the existing server.

Our primary requirement was to learn the upgrade process. DACS is an educational organization and this was an opportunity to learn about the new Microsoft

server operating system. And besides, I didn't want to do it alone!

The group that did the upgrade became known as the Server 2003 SIG. In reality it was a spin-off from the Server and Networking SIG. Six meetings were scheduled during October. At our first meeting, we inventoried the server for ap-



plications and services to move. Next we determined what we needed to install on the “new” server and how we would accomplish that. We wrestled with how to preserve the existing data during the move.

While we “practiced” the Server 2003 installation process on my laptop, we realized that the whole process could be vastly simplified by temporarily moving everything to another machine (like my laptop) and then moving it back. This seemingly obvious solution is not as simple as it first appears. Here are the major steps we determined we needed to do the job:

1. Install Server 2003 on my laptop and make it a “member server” on the old domain.
2. Run ADPREP (Active Directory preparation program) to update the Win2k AD to the structure needed for the Server 2003 AD. This is a two step process.
3. Run DCPROMO (domain controller promotion) on my laptop to install AD. As part of this process, the AD data is replicated to the new domain controller—with one important exception that we'll talk about in a minute.

4. Copy any needed application data and configuration information to the laptop making paper backups whenever possible.

5. Run DCPROMO on the old server to remove AD and remove it from the domain. This forces all remaining AD data over to the laptop (now the only domain controller in the domain).

6. Reformat the old server and install Server 2003.

7. Make the new server a member server on the domain.

8. Perform steps 3, 4 and 5 on the “new” server to create the new domain controller and replicate AD back to the server from the laptop.

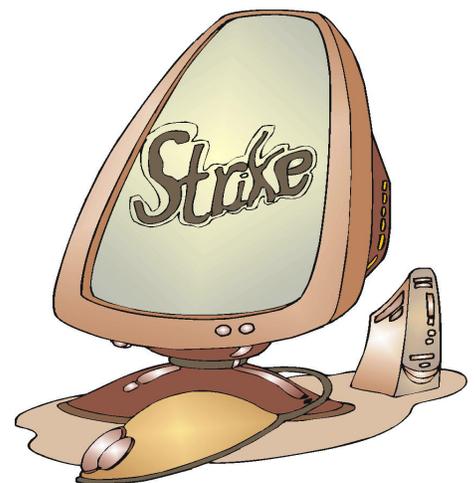
9. Reinstall the applications and services on the new server.

10. Run DCPROMO on the laptop to remove AD and force all remaining AD information back to the server.

Had we followed these steps, I am convinced we would have been completely successful. Would have been? Well, yes, we failed to meet requirement #6 and lost all of the user accounts and other AD data. In our haste, we skipped step #5 and lost part of the AD data. As a result, the AD on the new server could not function properly.

The primary reason for our failure was that we did not write the steps down before we started. The process seemed simple enough and we had rehearsed everything we could. OK, we got over confident and as a result we screwed up. I was pushing the key strokes at the time, so really it was my fault.

Active Directory (AD) is the application that manages all of the resources—users, computers, printers, etc—on a Microsoft Windows network. When a user or machine on the network tries to access



or use a resource, it is AD that checks to see if the user has the rights or permissions needed to use the resource. Since a new resource can be added from anywhere on the network (any domain controller and a large organization could have hundreds), AD needs a way to ensure that a resource is added only once. It does this in the Global Catalog. In a domain as simple as ours, there is only one global catalog. When we missed step #5, the global catalog was destroyed. As a result we could not add new users or anything else to AD on the laptop. At this point we knew we had lost the AD and were forced to create a new one.

We did have our paper backups so we knew the user account names (all nine of them). The task of typing them in was not too onerous. The biggest loss was to our pride. Because of this I will not name the other two DACS members who were there helping with the process.

The current status is that the "new" server has been up and running without any problems for almost three weeks. We still need a few finishing touches, like new CD burning software, but the server is performing its primary functions perfectly. We now have the opportunity to learn more about Server 2003 – how it is configured and managed. Come to any of the networking-related SIGs—Server and Networking, Linux, and Advanced OS—to learn more.

*Jim Scheef is President of DACS.*

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## Meeting Preview

### Patrick's Divine Prescience

By Allan Ostergren

AT OUR DECEMBER 2 General Meeting, we will welcome back John Patrick, former IBM vice president of Internet Technology, and widely acclaimed patron saint of the World Wide Web. A long-time member of DACS, John has become an annual star attraction--his savvy soundings on the latest e-trends, and his sage prophecies of the future as stimulative as a mind-expanding elixir.

John's first appearance before a DACS audience was in October 1994, when he demonstrated IBM's powerful and robust operating system, OS/2 Warp (Well, you can't call them all!) ...But in subsequent years, as he shifted from spokesman for his company's products to Web ambassador, John's career has achieved warp speed, and he has become a savvy commentator on the latest technology and high priest of cyberspace. Retired after 35 years at IBM, John is now president of Attitude LLC, and celebrated author of *Net Attitude*, a popular book on Internet culture.

As an Internet visionary, John is quoted frequently in the global media and speaks at dozens of conferences around the world. Business 2.0 named him as one of the industry's most intriguing minds, Industry Week named him one of the top 30 people who drive innovation and provide the initial spark to economic growth, and Network World called him one of the 25 most powerful people in networking.

John was a founding member of the World Wide Web Consortium at MIT in 1994, a founding member and now the chairman of the Global Internet Project, a senior member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and a member of the Internet Society, the Association for Computing Machinery, and the Working Group on Authentication at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He is a member of the board of directors of Jupitermedia and Knovel Corporation and has been an advisor to IntraLinks, Neoteny, Space.com, and ThirdAge Me-

dia. He is also president of The Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra Foundation.



John believes the next generation of the Internet is about to make today's Internet seem primitive. His presentation and technology demonstrations will bring to life his vision of the characteristics the next generation of the Internet will have — a network that will be fast, always on, everywhere, natural, easy, intelligent and trusted. John will provide an exciting vision about the power and the potential of the Internet and how it will

provide significant advances in order to meet the increasing expectations of an on demand world. He will discuss the key opportunities that are just beginning to surface, and the potential limitations that may stand in the way. More importantly, he will offer a visionary glimpse, from his book *Net Attitude*, of the future beyond the Internet as we know it.

The General Meeting will take place on December 2, 2003, at Danbury Hospital Auditorium. The events will start at 7 p.m. with computer related questions and answers, followed by brief club announcements. The featured presentation will start at 8 pm. All General Meetings are free and open to the public. More information is found at [www.dacs.org](http://www.dacs.org).

*ALLAN OSTERGREN is editor of dacs.doc and former DACS president.*



# DSL versus Charter Cable Some Background

By Jim Scheef

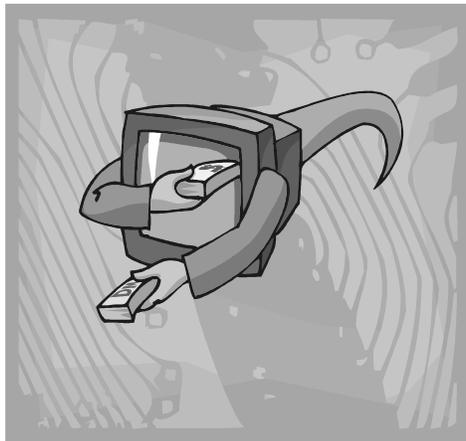
WAY BACK WHEN in the mid-evil days of computing (before the Internet), I was a loyal CompuServe fan. While I really liked the CompuServe forums, I didn't like how it took them forever to upgrade the Danbury POP (point of presence) to higher modem speeds. Thus I began my search for a better dial-up connection. I still wanted to use CompuServe. I just wanted to use it – and the Internet – faster. So I looked for a local ISP (Internet service provider) that would provide the fastest dialup connection available at the time, probably 28.8 or 33.6 kbps.

I started with Internet 84. Remember those guys? John and Nick were on the early edge of the Internet revolution – well at least in Danbury. Like a good local ISP, they were responsive to questions, helpful on the phone, willing to give extra services (like the small block of static IP addresses I once had), and way over worked.

After a year or so they sold their business to another company that was building a state-wide service. I hope they did well because they earned it. Unfortunately the new company did not provide the little extras or the support that John and Nick had. So low and behold, I found another local ISP, East Coast Internet. ECI had just changed hands and had a special offer for DACS members. By the time I signed up, they had changed the name to Mags Net.

When high speed or broad band Internet access first became available in Connecticut, I wanted a connection as soon as I could get one, regardless of how it worked. The two options were (and still are) cable modem service from the cable company (Charter Communications in my case) or DSL service from SNET (now SBC) or one of many CLECs (competitive local exchange carriers) that advertised in the

state. Even when SNET did begin to offer DSL, it was not available in New Milford. Some time after SBC bought SNET, DSL became more widely available in Connecticut.



SBC has a web page where you can check to see if DSL is available on a specific phone number. I checked the option to have them notify me when I could get the DSL and forgot about it.

Meanwhile Charter Communications upgraded their cable network to support digital services. This was

during the mid- to late-nineties during the “tech boom” when many people (including Bill Gates) thought the “Information Superhighway” would come into homes via a box connected to your television. It took them several years to start offering cable modem service and it took several more years for the service to get to New Milford. In June of 2000, I finally got a cable modem.

Now I would have preferred to get my broad band service from Mags Net but a proposal to force cable carriers to allow competitive access to their wires (as had been done with the local phone companies), was never enacted. Thus most cable companies have a monopoly within their service area. Despite the monopoly, I was delighted with the faster speeds and proceeded to wire my house with local area network outlets.

### Cable versus DSL – the showdown

Remember I said I checked an option on the SBC/SNET web site to be notified when DSL became available? Can you imagine my surprise when that worked!?! Well you could have blown me over with a feather. The very day I received that email, I called Patty at Mags Net to start the process of installing DSL service.

When I realized that I would need to buy a DSL modem, I checked eBay and bought one for about \$30 – about one quarter the cost of a new one. Since the phone company does the actual work of turning on the DSL service (they route it to Mags Net from the telephone company central office) it should not come as a surprise that I had the DSL modem from eBay a good two weeks before I could use the DSL service.

So now I have both DSL and cable modem service in the house at the same time – well for a month or two. So how do they compare? Thought you'd never ask.

### Installation Charter was easy

Of course Charter was easy, when I got cable modem service in June, 2000, the technicians did everything, self-service installation was not even an option. The process took two appointments. First a guy came to run a new length of coax - special low-loss coax - from the box outside directly to the computer. Since I wanted the cable modem in the basement, this job was easy. Then two more technicians arrived to do the actual installation and set up. My plan was to move the network servers from my office to the basement but all that was not quite ready, so I had the technicians install the cable modem to a single machine I set up in the basement.

A few days later I had an electrician install new electrical outlets in the basement and in my home office. He also pulled an ethernet cable (CAT-5) between the office and the basement. Once this was complete I could move the servers out of the office and down to the basement. Generally there are two or three machines running in the basement depending on what projects are active at the moment.

These days I understand that most of the cable companies charge for installation but offer a “customer install kit” if you want to try it yourself. I would suggest that you try the self-install because there is very little to go wrong with a cable modem.

### DSL is often “non-trivial”

Hey, I'm a networking professional, right? This DSL stuff should be a snap. My actual experience has varied from absolute agony to perfectly simple. With DSL there is more to do. Since DSL adds a new signal to your phone line, it is necessary to put filters on all of the regular analog devices on the same phone line. That includes the FAX machine, and your old

computer modem. Without the filter, you will hear an annoying “hash” in the background whenever you are on the phone. With the filters properly installed, the phone line is clear. Some people have reported problems with their DSL connection if any device on the line is not filtered.

My first experience installing DSL was pretty bad. The cause was not SNET but the customer’s office phone system and wiring. They have a very installed multi-line office phone system. Naturally when I hooked up the DSL modem, nothing worked. At that time (pre-SBC-SNET merger) the phone support was pretty bad until you got to the second level engineers. When discussing the situation with the support people I began to realize that the multi-line system would be impossible to filter properly, so we asked SNET to move the DSL service to another line in the office with just one phone. After another two weeks for SNET to process the change, the DSL modem worked and we had everything going in short order. The agony was the process of figuring out what wasn’t working, where and why. Just to increase the degree of difficulty, there was total confusion over the customer’s user ID and password. SNET had sent two packages with different passwords. The confusion would make a good Keystone Cops movie. The customer’s local area network (LAN) was also new. A simple hardware router completed the installation and allows two computers to share the DSL connection to the Internet.

My next experience was actually quite good. Chuck Fizer and I installed DSL service in his office in Danbury with Mags Net as the provider. The service became available on the day SBC said it would and the networking really was a snap. Of course, the network had been up and running for years. All we did was add a hardware router to the network, set it to the correct IP addresses and it all “just worked”. We did find that it was difficult to filter a two-line phone because most DSL filters only filter the inner pair of conductors on the phone plug. A special two-line filter from Radio Shack solved the problem.

So now we get to the installation at my house and all sorts of new problems. In all honesty, many of the problems were my own making. My home office network has been up and working for years so that was not an issue. When I connected the DSL modem, it was obvious that there was a signal but the modem would not “sync” with the signal. Mags Net could find nothing

wrong on their end, so they submitted a trouble report with SBC/SNET. While waiting for the technician, I started to re-search the problem on my own. My first stop was the Broadband Reports web site (dslreports.com) where I searched for the Westell 36R516 modem. On one of the message boards I saw several references to the fact that a slightly different signal standard is used by some DSL carriers on the West coast. Several references talked about the “VPI/VCI settings” which, it turns out, are internal settings programmed into the modem at the factory. Normally there is no need to ever change them because your modem is supplied by the carrier and they make sure it is configured correctly by the factory. Of course, given my interest in saving money, I skipped this step and bought a used modem on eBay.

A couple of days later a technician came to the house. After he trimmed a couple of wires in the box on the outside of the house and the modem still did not work, he pronounced my DSL modem to be defective. According to his meter, the DSL signal was strong and capable of the proscribed speeds in both directions. I had to agree – the modem was the logical suspect.

Since I already owned the DSL modem, this was troubling news, to say the least. When I mentioned the VPI/VCI settings to the technician, he told me that, yes, this could be a problem. A few months earlier SBC here in Connecticut had received a batch of modems that were intended for SBC in California. Rather than send these “problem” modems out to the left coast, SBC gave the technicians a utility to run on the PC that “fixed” the modems, one by one as they were found in the field! Now I was almost certain that this was my problem so I headed for the Westell web site and, at first I could not find anything to change the settings that I was now convinced were the problem. One of my mottos is, “When all else fails, read the directions.” Taking this to heart I read the FAQ (frequently asked questions) on the Westell web site and there as I live and breathe was a reference to VPI/VCI settings and a very well hidden link to download a configuration utility. Of course I really had no idea what I was doing, but then again I had nothing to lose. So I started to experiment and was really disappointed when changing the basic settings did not fix the problem. Then in a stroke of luck, I noticed that the utility would also update the modem firmware. Once again, with nothing to lose, I ap-

plied the newer firmware. Still no good, but with my brain beginning to actually work, I put all the settings back to the original values... (it pays to take notes when you do stuff like this), and wha da ya know! It worked! So the problem was the modem firmware, not the settings.

## **Performance DSL versus Cable**

As now I have both DSL and cable working side by side on my network. My intention was to run some benchmark tests to settle the question of which is faster. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on how you look at it) while all this was going on, Charter chose this moment in time to increase the speed of my connection from 768Kbps to 2Mbps on the downstream side or three times the speed of the DSL line. According to the letter from Charter, this is a “free four month trial”. In reality, it’s a marketing ploy to keep people from switching to a less expensive DSL connection. Given the disparity in the rated connection speeds, testing pure download speed would not be fair. In normal everyday usage, there is almost no difference. But as soon as you download a large file, the faster connection is, well, visibly faster.

## **The less visible factors**

So why would I want the slower Mags Net connection? Flexibility. The standard service from Mags Net uses a static IP address (one that does not change when you connect to the service). All of the other services – cable modem and SBC DSL – use DHCP to assign the IP address dynamically whenever you connect. A static IP address and some of those intangible little extras let me run my own email server and a web server. While it is possible to run a web site on a cable (I did it for over a year), it requires some tricky setups using third-party DNS (domain name service) and other “fancy stuff”. It is flat out impossible to receive email on an SMTP (simple mail transport protocol) server connected via standard cable service. You need a static IP address to receive email plus DNS pointing to your server.

So that’s the current status. I’ll pull the plug on the cable modem in another week or so. Anyone want to buy a slightly used cable modem?

*JIM SCHEEF is president of DACS, and as such, needs no introduction.*

# Special Interest Groups

## SIG NOTES: December 2003

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

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

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

**Next meeting:** DEC 9

**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:** Bill Keane (*wbk@mags.net*) 203-438-8032.

Meets on the second Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next meeting:** DEC 10

**dotNET.** Programs for Web site/server.

**Contact:** Chuck Fizer (*cfizer@snet.net*). Meets on 1st Wednesday, 4-6 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** DEC 3

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

**Contact:** Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 (*graffic@bigfoot.com* for the details). Meets on last Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** JAN 28

**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:** DEC 18

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

**Contact:** Bill Keane (*wbk@mags.net*) 203-438-8032

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

**Next Meeting:** DEC 17

**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:** DEC 23

**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:** DEC 11

**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 1st Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** DEC 3

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

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

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

**Next Meeting:** DEC 29

**WEB DESIGN.** Explores popular applications for designing and creating Web sites.

**Contact:** Anna Collens, 203-746-5922 (*acvo@annagraphics.com*).

Meets on third Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** DEC 16.

# SIG News & Other Events

**Dot.Net.** The DotNet SIG section 1 was well attended with many questioners as our meeting stenographer Claude Prevots noted in the following.

The meeting began with some random questions. Display of a PDF file was easily resolved. In another issue, Web services on a server are seen to require some DLL file including a proxy, and this question was resolved by showing the contents of a bin directory under a program.

The main discussion of the evening concerned classes and how they work in a program using C#. Chuck started a new project in Visual Studio for a Windows application in which the class was Rainbow. An array of colors was defined and several ways of using it were demonstrated. An important point was that collection classes require the user to build iteration, and to get an enumerator for this custom array. When a standard array is generated by the IDE, the program automatically gets the enumerator that it has built for the user.

Chuck programmed a switch with several lines, and under each case was a line to select a particular color. For the respective colors it read as follows:

```
ColorName=System.Drawing.Color.red.
```

In a form, an index was set to invoke particular colors from the array in different ways. With another display of a foreach loop, the entire content of the array was displayed. Such a loop must have an enumerator when a collections class is being used, and this was done. This entire exercise served to illustrate details of class usage in a simple example where high-lighted properties could be more easily seen.

DotNet section 2 resumed after a one hour pizza break. The course of the meeting continued with the issues of object oriented programming in C#. Classes are the fundamental components of object programming, so we continued to explore the issues surrounding the use of Interfaces and Abstract classes. The aforementioned color example served to illustrate the requirement of the Collections class, a .Net Framework supplied class. The Collection class has a number of methods it provides. One of them, the for each method can handle any collection which the Collection class is familiar with. But in our example, the Collection class had no idea of our custom collection. The Collection class implements its methods by requiring an enumerator, reset and move-next methods. It does this by declaring these methods to be Interfaces which the using class must implement for its own particular collection. Our code sample provided these three methods and the for each method became happy and looped through our data.

In future meetings we plan to continue this exposé of classes, dealing with static, virtual, instantiation, overrides, overloading and other features we can use to enrich of program development.

**Server.** The November meeting was all business at the Server SIG. First we reviewed the completed upgrade of the Resource Center server from Windows 2000 Server to Windows Server

Sig Notes, *Continued on page 17*

# December 2003

## Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																								
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7	8  7:00 PM Board of Directors	9  7:00 PM Access Bruce Preston 203 431-2920	10  7:30 PM Advanced OS Bill Keane 203 438-8032	11  7:00 PM SERVER Jim Scheef 860 355-0034	12	13  DACS.DOC DEADLINE																																																																																																								
14	15	16  Web Design Anna Collens 203 746-5922	17  7:30 PM LINUX Bill Keane 203 438-8032	18  7:30 PM INVESTMENT Paul Gehrett 203 426-8436	19	20																																																																																																								
21	22	23  7:00 PM Microcontroller J. Gallichotte 203 367-1202	24	25  Christmas	26	27																																																																																																								
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# Digital Photography

## Photoplus Expo

by Richard P. Ten Dyke

I VISITED THE PHOTOPLUS Expo at the Javits Center on October 30, as I have each year for the last ten years I have watched the floor space devoted to film photography shrink like a pool of water on a hot sunny day. Today the show could be called the Digital Photo Expo. While I saw nothing that was dramatically new this year, it is clear that there have been significant advances in digital cameras and printing.

The “point and shoot” customer, looking for a good, reasonably priced camera, will notice that quality has increased while prices have come down. A few years ago, a 3-megapixel camera was top of the line. With this you can easily crop the photo or make high quality enlargements. Today, 3-megapixels is the low-end standard, leaving the smaller one and two megapixel designs to novelty cameras, such as camera phones and sub-miniatures. Good quality 3-megapixel cameras are available from several manufacturers for \$200 to \$300.

For the serious amateur, the good news is the emergence of reasonably priced (\$1,000 plus or minus) single lens reflex (SLR) cameras with interchangeable lenses. You may recall that when I wrote the piece about digital photography in this newsletter last year, I said that cameras with interchangeable lenses suffered from problems of dust falling on the photo sensitive element when the lens was removed from the camera. That problem has been attacked head on, and this year the full force of the industry is now focused on providing SLR cameras using innovative means of to eliminate dust. Olympus, with their new E-1, actually uses a method of vibration to shake the dust off of the photo element, and other manufacturers are using other methods to shield the element itself. Another SLR entry is the 64-megapixel Canon Rebel, priced just under \$1000, including one lens. It is a scaled-back version

of their popular 10D model which is used frequently in sports photography, and uses many of the lenses in the Canon line, so you can use that old telephoto lens in your collection.

The issue with SLR cameras is matching the lens to the sensor. The digital photosensitive element is physically smaller than the traditional 35mm film frame, so old 35mm lenses will not always work with digital cameras.

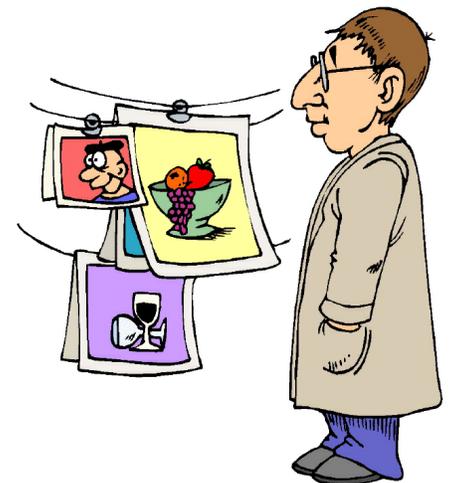
One solution is for camera designers to develop new lenses. But customers won't invest in new lenses they think will soon go out of style. So Olympus, Sony and Kodak are teaming up with a new “standard” of lens and sensor design they hope will catch on with other manufacturers. It is called the 4/3 (that's four thirds) standard. The sensor is about twice the size, and four times the area, of the more common sensors in use today. However, the 4/3 standard is still about 1/4 the size of the 35mm frame size, so using old lenses is still iffy.

The second solution is to make the sensor larger, so that old 35mm lenses can be used. CMOS technology already requires larger sensors than the more common CCD sensors, and CMOS is the Canon approach. Their CMOS sensor is about 65 percent the size of the 35mm frame, which is why they can build cameras with an old lens mount, and let those with a supply of old Canon lenses use them on the new cameras.

The bad news is that the whole sensor market is confused. There are three technologies (CCD, CMOS and Foveon) and a half-dozen sensor sizes. This is the result of rapid technological innovation, and is just not a stable situation. The next few years will see a consolidation of these technologies into a smaller number of choices. The average person could hardly care less, but the industry will be stressed until they find the right horse to bet on.

At the high pixel end, the Canon, Kodak and Sigma cameras occupy the shelf. Canon is the front runner in sales with an 11-megapixel studio camera. Also, the previously mentioned 6.4-megapixel Canon 10D has the ability to take a handful of pictures in a couple of seconds. This is strategically important when shooting various sports (including weddings). Kodak has had its 14-megapixel studio camera out for a year now. These cameras run upwards from \$5000, so they are only for professional use. Of course, for a lot more money you still can get a 22-megapixel digital back for your 2 1/4 square. Hasselblad, too, The Sigma camera is a curious dark horse. Sigma cameras are not particularly well known, but they use their own sensor, called Foveon, which employs three layers, one each for red, green and blue. That gives you three times the number of pixels in the same area as those which place the red, green, blue pixels side by side. This is still a somewhat experimental technique, but something to watch.

For me, the big news was printing. Epson announced their Stylus Pro 4000 series of printers, which use eight separate inks (five color, three black/grey) to produce stunningly beautiful color and black and white prints up to 17 x 22 inches in size. Aficionados of printing know that it is harder to create an outstanding, gallery-quality, black and white print than a



color print from an ink jet printer. The eye detects very slight changes of color in so-called black inks. Last year I said that black and white printing would be that last bastion to fall in the war between film and digital. With the technology behind the 4000, the battle will soon be over. The marketing director for Epson was reluctant to say that the tipping point had been

passed, but he did suggest that it would happen within the next two years. I suspect, from what he said, that there are products in the pipeline that will further improve the quality and availability of high-quality black white printing. Don't plan to rush out and buy the printer, however. It will not be available until January, and the price is about \$1,800. Also, each of the eight color cartridges will cost \$65.00. An Epson representative estimated the printing cost to be \$1.05 per square foot, which may seem high to all but died-in-the-wool gallery-quality black and white printers. But I will expect to see under-\$1000 printers using this technology within a year.

But while gallery-quality photos may be important to some, the biggest photography market is family vacation — wedding — birthday party photography. There are still a lot of folks who don't want to learn Photoshop. For those who want to take their film to a one-hour photo store, I saw a product at the show that will digitize a roll of 35mm film and put the photos on a CD in about two minutes. Well, that's what the guy said. That same machine can also take your digital camera's memory card and do the same. So, either with film or digital, you can easily have digital printing. The vendor and I talked about a scenario for the user of a digital camera. You would take your camera or memory card to a 1-hour photo. There, the clerk will put your card into a reader and burn the images onto a CD. That's for you to keep. He also prints a proof sheet with thumbnails on it, as well. You look at the proof sheet and circle the ones that you want printed or enlarged. Since he has a copy of your photos in his computer, he clicks on the ones you want printed, and you either wait for them or come back in an hour. The same scenario works with a film camera, but it takes a while longer to develop the film first.

Film photography may stick around for another few years, but digital photography is gaining momentum so quickly that there are few remaining areas where digital will not be the preferred solution. Eventually, it will be the only solution.

---

*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).*

(c) 2003 Richard P'Ten Dyke

## Tips & Tricks

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### How to make the toolbar YOUR toolbar

By Patricia Hill

**D**O YOU FIND yourself having to access drop down menus and clicking several times to perform repetitive tasks in the Microsoft Office product line? Did you know the toolbar is highly customizable? If the toolbar contains icons you never use - and don't think you will ever use - get rid of them! If you are looking for an easier way—with fewer mouse clicks—to do certain things, then add an icon to the toolbar. Here's how . . .

This article was written using MS Word 2002; the instructions are similar, if not the same, for previous versions of Word and other Office products.

Select Tools, Customize from the menu bar. You'll see three tabs in the Customize window; Toolbars, Commands and Options. Notice there is a check mark next to the toolbars that are always displayed when you enter Word. In the Toolbars tab select the toolbar you want to customize. It's probably the Standard Toolbar.

Once you've selected the Standard Toolbar (it will be highlighted or colored in), go to the Commands tab.

Let's add a File Save As button. File should already be selected in the left Categories pane. Scroll down the right Commands pane in the Customize window until you see Save As... Drag and drop the button to where you want it in the toolbar. Select Save As... by holding down the left mouse button. Still holding down the button, drag the button to where you want it on the toolbar and release the mouse button. Now you're looking at lots of buttons and something that says Save As... This isn't exactly what you'd like to see, so let's modify it. It takes a few steps, but you'll be glad you took the time to do it.

Click the Modify Selection bar; then Default Style. The Default Style is a button that shows the button activity when you hover your mouse over it. The button is now blank. Click Modify Selection again and then Change Button Image. Click on the piggy bank, the third object from the left on the top row.

Your button now shows the piggy bank icon. It's a boring piggy bank - so color it in. Select Modify Selection bar a final time and Edit Button Image...

Pick a color and hold down your left mouse button and color the piggy bank. There's a small preview pane that's rather

useless and you can move the icon within the button boundaries using the arrows.

If you're not sure in which Category a function you're looking for resides, scroll down the Category pane to All Commands and click on that.

If you want to add a new button that already has an icon, repeat the instructions in paragraph 3. Let's add the Grow Font and Shrink Font icons to the Standard Toolbar. Click on Format in the left pane of the Customize window. Scroll down the right pane until you see the Grow Font and Shrink Font icons. Select them one at a time and drag and drop them to where you want them on the toolbar. Because there is an icon already available, that's all you have to do. You don't have to mess with modifying it and selecting the Default Style.

To delete any icons you don't think you'll use, drag and drop the icon to anywhere in the Customize window. The key is to have the Customize window open. If you decide you want to put it back, reverse the process.

Another way to delete or add icons from the toolbar is to click on the down arrow at the far right of any toolbar. Click on Add or Remove Buttons and then Standard Toolbar. You'll see a list of all icons currently displayed on the Standard Toolbar. Some are black and some are grayed out. The black ones are the original toolbar setup when you first installed Word. The gray ones are the ones you used to customize your toolbar. If you want to add an original button to the toolbar, click on it and it'll move to the toolbar. If you want to remove buttons, then click on them and they disappear from the toolbar. Remember, though, if you want to group your buttons differently than Microsoft originally set them up, the Tools, Customize window must be open.

Drag, drop, customize, modify to your heart's content. Set up your programs so that they make sense to you and are easier for you to use. Make the toolbar YOUR toolbar.

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*PATRICIA HILL is Review Editor / APCUG Representative at Computer Booters of Sun Lakes, Arizona.*

This article comes from the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), of which this group is a member.

# Hardware Review

## Pentax Optio 555

By Jacqueline Cohen

*Editor's note: This article was published in Digital Photography Review, an online opinion site. You can find it at [http://www.dpreview.com/reviews/read\\_opinion\\_text.asp?prodkey=pentax\\_optio555&opinion=18837](http://www.dpreview.com/reviews/read_opinion_text.asp?prodkey=pentax_optio555&opinion=18837).*

I BOUGHT THE PENTAX Optio 555 on 2 November 2003 in Hong Kong. My number one reason for choosing the 555 was the longer battery life. My second reason was the 5x zoom, followed by stronger flash and additional features to learn how to use. Saying that, there will be times I wish I had the smaller, lighter, faster Minolta G500. So it was a serious compromise that was not an easy choice — they are BOTH excellent options for a small light “everyday” camera!

I have never owned a digital camera before, but I owned, most recently, a Nikon F100 and do know a little about film cameras. I bought the Optio 555, and charged the battery, which took exactly three hours. The specification battery life is excellent, but I still bought a spare.

While I waited for the battery to charge, I read the manual.

Oh—and the first thing I did was to stop all the annoying sounds by turning them all off in the user menu.

The second thing I did was turn the digital zoom off.

I also turned the startup picture off.

I do not have a stopwatch—but here are some approximate times. NOT ACCURATE TIMES; NO STOP WATCH!

Sunlight/brightly lit room - I found the shot to shot time to be incredibly good—even with the flash and the pictures again were in focus with excellent lighting.

Dimly lit room—wide angle - 1-3 seconds

Dimly lit room—full Optical zoom—1.5 - 3 seconds

Totally DARK room—wide angle—3 - 5 seconds



Totally DARK room—full Optical zoom—3 - 6 seconds

I mean TOTALLY DARK! But saying that, the photos look great, are well lit by the flash and in focus.

With the zoom, it takes a bit longer to focus, BUT once it gets it, it is perfect (how, I do not know).

I am using the P mode, and I quickly set up the User Mode as Gordon (see Pentax Forum) suggested:

ISO 200

AWB

Low Contrast

Spot Focus

I have a 256 Panasonic SD card

(10Mb/Second)

MAX Resolution of 2592 x 1944

At 1 \* it is 243 pictures

At 3 \*\*\* it is 75 pictures

I am switching between \* and \*\*\* depending on the subject.

I am looking forward to Panasonic coming out with a 2 Gig card!!!

The user mode, with these settings, is faster than the P mode by about one second in the dimly lit and dark rooms.

Continuous mode with no flash—that was really fast too—I did not time this.

PIC—Night Scene Mode—I went out at night on the streets of HK and took three pictures of the same things—P. Mode, User Mode, Night Scene Mode. What the Night Scene Mode does is really light up the whole area—I don't know how it does this, but the same photo in P mode was bright lights from the signs, and everything else a bit dark. With Night Scene, the whole photo lights up as if with a flood light—really amazing. At different times I would opt for P, User or Night Mode, depending on my desired outcome.

Physical—the case seems sturdy, the buttons are well placed, it is easy to hold and shoot. I like the way it is easy to change what the LCD dis-

plays and to turn it off. It is not as sexy as the G500, but it is a nice functional, sturdy camera!

OK—so this is the quick first impression—but so far I am really enjoying it!

CHECK OUT DPREVIEW.com PENTAXFORUMFOR LOTS OF OTHER USER OPINIONS!

<http://www.dpreview.com/forums/forum.asp?forum=1028>

### Problems

#### Wish List

I spent a long time deciding between the Optio 555 (faster low light focus) and the G500 (smaller, faster camera). And I feel confident that I made the right choice for me. Of course, I will always wish it was faster, and smaller—but these are not problems.

It is quite intuitive for me, and I have never had a digital camera before—so that says something. But I did read the brochures and manual, although I have not memorized them!!

The one simple thing I wish for is a laminated “cheat sheet” with the modes, and little pictures and other tips on using the more advanced features, so I could tie it to the camera!! All cameras should come with this!

And I wish Panasonic had a 2 Gig SD card at 10Mb/Sec!!!

The Optio 555 is a camera I can use as a point-and-shoot now, and then learn the full features later.

In a few months, I might be more critical, but for now I am thrilled—much better than I expected!

*Jacqueline Renee Cohen lives in Hong Kong, She hitched a ride across Europe after high school, and never came back. Now with two MA degrees, she has been involved with online education as a student and facilitator. You can reach her at [jaqueline@jaqatac.com](mailto:jaqueline@jaqatac.com).*

### Owners Opinion:

Pentax Optio 555	(jaqjaq, 3 Nov 03)
37.5 mm - 187.5 mm	
(4.9x) zoom, 5 MP	jaqjaq's Rating
Construction	5.00
Features	5.00
Image quality	5.00
Ease of use	5.00
Value for money	4.50
Overall	4.90
5.0 = 100 %	

# Jacqueline's Photos

My first shots with the Pentax Optio 555 - taken on 3 November 2003, one of the most polluted days in recent memory... some mornig shots, some evening shots. Very basic, jsut to give you an idea of quality. You can find them in color in the PDF version of *dacs.doc* at [www.dacs.org](http://www.dacs.org).



Hong Kong Jardine House  
3 Nov 2003



Hong Kong Jardine House (2)  
3 Nov 2003



Hong Kong IFC  
Wide Angle 3 Nov 2003



Hong Kong - Zoom -  
breakfast shot 3 Nov 2003



Hong Kong - Wan Chai -  
Fresh juice and breakfast 3 Nov 2003



Hong Kong Chinese Tea Shop -  
P mode/flash 3 Nov 2003



Hong Kong - pollution again, with  
zoom 3 Nov 2003



Hong Kong - Causeway Bay - night  
pic mode 3 Nov 2003



Hong Kong shop with P mode  
and flash 3 Nov 2003

# Random Access

November 2003

Bruce Preston, Moderator

**M**EMBERS WHO ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE GENERAL MEETING may submit questions to "[askdacs@dacs.org](mailto: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. (AskDacs) I did the Earthlink upgrade, and it hoses my system. In addition, I can no longer use IE - I no longer have browser access. How do I repair?**

A. One member had same problem and had to call up Earthlink's tech line - who were able to get him going again. He could not remember the steps that they had him go through. After a bit of discussion, it was pointed out that it would be prudent to 'ghost' the harddrive if you can do so, such that if something really hoses the system it can be removed by rolling back. A positive comment was that their e-mail (which is web-based) does a good job of blocking spam.

**Q. I have a 48GB hard drive, and purchased a 120GB Western Digital hard drive. I used their software to duplicate the 48 to the 120. Everything works just fine, except that it won't boot. I have checked master/slave jumpers, swap the drives around, etc. All my data is there, once I boot from the 48 things look perfect. I am running XP.**

A. There is a utility on the XP CD called "FixBoot" It is accessible from the "Recovery Console". Take a look at this page: <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=KB;en-us;314058&>

**Q. I have a new machine and found in the BIOS setup the AGP Aperture. Anybody know what this is? And of course, what should I set it to?**

A. No one in attendance knew what it was, but a subsequent Google search identified it. It is NOT shared memory used for video mapping, as often found on motherboards which have integrated video. Instead, it is the amount of memory (from the system RAM) that is given over to the processor in the AGP card for use in performing rendering, shading, and other video

processing. It does not affect how fast data is moved into the video card, it is the 'scratch space' used by the video card. Take a look at <http://www.tweak3d.net/articles/aperture-size/>.

**Q. I used to get around 48kbps dial-up access when I was in Colorado Springs. I know that a 56K connection really can only get to about 52K - but now I am only getting to the low 30's. Is this normal here?**

A. After finding that you were in Bethel all became clear. Bethel's telephone infrastructure is the restriction, what you get is typical. They do not yet offer DSL, and probably won't until the entire plant is rebuilt. The schedule is not published. It was suggested that you might be able to get your line 'conditioned' a bit by complaining that you have 'static' on you line. The line test utility site provided by US Robotics (and subsequently 3Com) mentioned during the meeting has been taken out of service. Other things that can have some effect upon the line speed are the quality of the modem, and whether it is a "WinModem" or a modem with an internal controller. In order to get more data through the connection than normal, the v.90 protocol performs on-the-fly data compression. This compression has to be performed by a processor. The processing is done by your computer's CPU if you have a WinModem (and it will only compress data if you are running Windows,) where if you have a modem with a controller the processing is done in the modem. All external modems have controllers. Most internal modems are now "WinModems" - but if you look you will find some (such as by USRobotics/3Com) that have controllers. If you want to get the

best throughput with a machine that is not running Windows (such as Linux) then you really want a controller-based modem.

**Q. What is Lycos Side Search? And now do I get rid of it? I keep trying to unload it and it won't go away.**

A. Side Search provides a side-by-side comparison of search results, so that you can compare, for example, the results of a Lycos search versus a Google search. This is for either web searching or for 'shopping' searches. It requires IE 5.01 or above, and scripting must be enabled. Add/Remove programs removes it from XP, but it comes back on its own within about a week. It falls into the category of "Browser Helper Object." This site ([http://www.safersite.com/PestInfo//lycos\\_sidesearch.asp](http://www.safersite.com/PestInfo//lycos_sidesearch.asp)) describes it in detail, and refers to it as a 'trojan', as 'adware', and as being a 'pest'. They provide detailed instructions on how to manually remove it, or offer to sell you their product which will remove it (and presumably others as well.)

**Q. I am looking for a portable, external hard drive to be used to back up multiple systems. Can anyone provide some names?**

A. Seagate, IOMega, MicroSolutions, Maxtor, LinkSys all make them. They are USB 2.0 devices (USB 1.1 is too slow.) You will need backup software to make a full drive backup, or you may just backup folders. Another thing to consider is a 'network storage device' which is just a box that you can connect to your local area network and copy data to, rather than have to carry a drive from machine to machine.

**Q. I have a Western Digital external drive—and it gets HOT. Is this "normal"? Is there some way to cool it down?**

A. If this is in its own enclosure then there isn't much you can do. If not, then a case fan may help. Send an e-mail to the support department at WD and ask if it is a problem.

*Q. I bought and installed PowerQuest's v2i that was presented here a while ago. They have a 1.1 update that I downloaded, but it won't install. It had to be unpacked, and WinZIP didn't like it.*

A. First, we need to know if you grabbed the .ZIP file or the self-extracting .EXE. If it is a self-unpacker, you don't need/want to open it with WinZIP—it should unpack itself. Second, if you are running XP then XP should be able to unpack it without an external program. Third, if you installed WinZIP on your XP machine then it will have taken over the task of unpacking .ZIP files—but you should be able to override that.

**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 10*

2003 Enterprise Edition. The upgrade was completed as a special project by a "subcommittee" of the Server SIG and you can read why it was both a success and a failure elsewhere in this issue. This special group met five times over six weeks to plan the upgrade and then do the actual installation which included the base Server 2003 installation and then the setup of file and print services, DNS, DHCP, and WINS. It was hectic but a lot of fun. Then Bill Keane showed us how to modify the startup menu in the GRUB boot loader (on Linux).

We then went on to inspect how Internet Information Server (IIS) is installed on Server2003. This is a new version of IIS and it has some nice new features and why the default setup is supposed to be more secure than the defaults for Windows 2000 Server.

Next month we'll continue looking at IIS and just for grins we'll set up two small web sites on the RC server. If we have time, we'll go over some experiments I've been doing in IP routing.

The next meeting will be Thursday, December 11th, at 7 p.m. in the DACS Resource Center. See you there!

**Web Design.** The November meeting of the DACS web design SIG covered some basics about tables and image slicing. Knowledge of the basic structure of tables is key to making them work successfully. Demonstrating the quirks of Netscape and Internet Explorer showed the importance of attention to detail. A brief sojourn into Fireworks illustrated how easy it is to slice an image, and how to use the different optimize settings to fine-tune the overall download times of a large graphic.

Details will be posted on: <http://www.annagraphics.com/sigsite/> (Follow the "Notes" link for an overview of the subjects covered after each meeting.)

Next month's subject will be Cascading Style Sheets. An essential tool to ensure the visual consistency of a web site, as well simplifying updates to the formatting of multiple pages. Easy to create in any web design software or by "hand-coding", and widely supported by (most) browsers, CSS is virtually indispensable to a successful web site.

## 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](mailto:dacseditor@dacs.org).

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

## 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 modem, or hard-copy may be submitted at our monthly general meeting. Fax your ads to Charlie Bovaird at 203 792-7881.

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

## New Members

from 10/18/03 to 11/18/03

- 1) Robert Hau
- 2) Elliott Whitney
- 3) Albert Tarrab

## THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

**EXP 9/2003**

**or earlier**

You need to renew your DACS membership **NOW**

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



**Thanks!**

*The  
management*

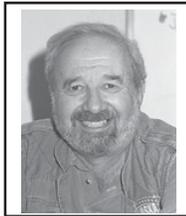
## Candidates



**Howie Berger** — Sherman. A member of DACS for many years, Howie feels that it is his turn to devote some of his energy to working within the organization. He is a principle in Visual Access Technology, Inc., a software development and consulting company located in Danbury, and has over 30 years of experience in software development for Computer-Aided Design, Facilities Management, and Web-related consulting in Knowledge and Information Management.

Howie is currently the Vice-Chairman of the Candlewood Lake Authority where he has been active in educational outreach within the 5 lake towns. He was actively involved in land use and environmental causes in Redding over his 16 years there prior to moving to Sherman 4 ½ years ago, and served on the Zoning Commission of the Town of Redding.

One of his goals as a board member is to facilitate an integration of members' expertise and DACS resources throughout the broader business community. He would also like to see an expansion of services and education to the general public.



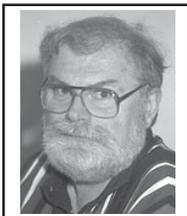
**Marc Cohen** — Brookfield. After more than 30 years providing advertising and public relations photography to local and national companies, Marc has recently retired. In 1982 he was the founder of the Danbury Osborne Group (now incorporated into DACS). A board member from the beginning, Marc has filled many DACS positions over the years— disk librarian, secretary, newsletter editor, and production editor. He considers himself a perpetual computer novice. To Marc, the computer is a tool for simplifying business problems, not creating new ones.



**Anna Collens** — New Fairfield. As an artist, Anna spent years dedicated to creating realistic and detailed fine art drawings and botanical watercolor paintings. However, since technology could no longer be ignored, she turned to the computer. Finding the graphics software an eye-opening revelation and a joy to use, she traded her pencil for a mouse. She now works as a freelance artist for web design, desk-top-publishing & Graphic design.

After moving to CT, Anna joined DACS and saw how effectively this organization can provide computer help and support to its members. She would like to bring her knowledge of graphics software to the DACS members and provide tech support for anyone struggling to learn these programs.

Anna moderates the monthly DACS web design SIG, and encourages aspiring web developers to balance designing-for-looks with the constraints of technical reality.



**Bruce Preston**— Ridgefield, is a consultant specializing in PC-based software solutions with emphasis on database applications. He has more than 30 years of experience in such areas as data communications, database management, technical support, and user education. For the past six years he has moderated the Random Access sessions that start our monthly General Meetings, as well as leading the monthly Microsoft Access Special Interest Group. Lately he has been joined by his son Scott, who co-presented two General Meeting programs - "Building a Home Network" and "Buying and Selling on eBay." His non-computer interests include digital photography, steam locomotives, and bicycling.



**Jeff Setaro**— Danbury. A lifelong Danbury resident, Jeff has been involved in the computer industry for more than 15 years. He has been a DACS member for seven years and has served as a DACS vice president for six of them. After stepping down from Program Chair to assume direction of the DACS Web page, he was persuaded to continue in both capacities. He also serves as information coordinator on computer viruses and until recently as director of the Web page design SIG. He is a member of the 1995 VAR business advisory board and is frequently called upon to comment on industry issues.



**Jim Scheef** — New Milford. Jim Scheef has been a DACS member since DOG became WCMUG. He has actively participated in the club over the years on the Program Committee, and as head of the Internet Committee. For the past six or more years Jim has been a co-leader of the Visual Basic SIG and started the Back Office SIG last year.

Jim has been a software developer since the days when mainframes were high-tech. His company, Telemark Systems Inc., provides custom software and networking solutions to businesses around Connecticut.

Jim's goals for DACS are to provide new services to the members via the DACS.ORG web site and to expand the use of the Resource Center as a learning facility. Jim convinced the board to install a DSL internet connection in the Resource Center as a step in this direction.

## Ballot

1. Select six (6) of the candidates for director of the Corporation, as indicated by my check mark:

— Howie Berger  
— Marc Cohen  
— Anna Collens

— Bruce Preston  
— Jeff Setaro  
— Jim Scheef

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

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

I appoint Larry Buoy, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, as my agent to vote in my place and stead at the annual meeting of members on December 2, 2003 as follows:

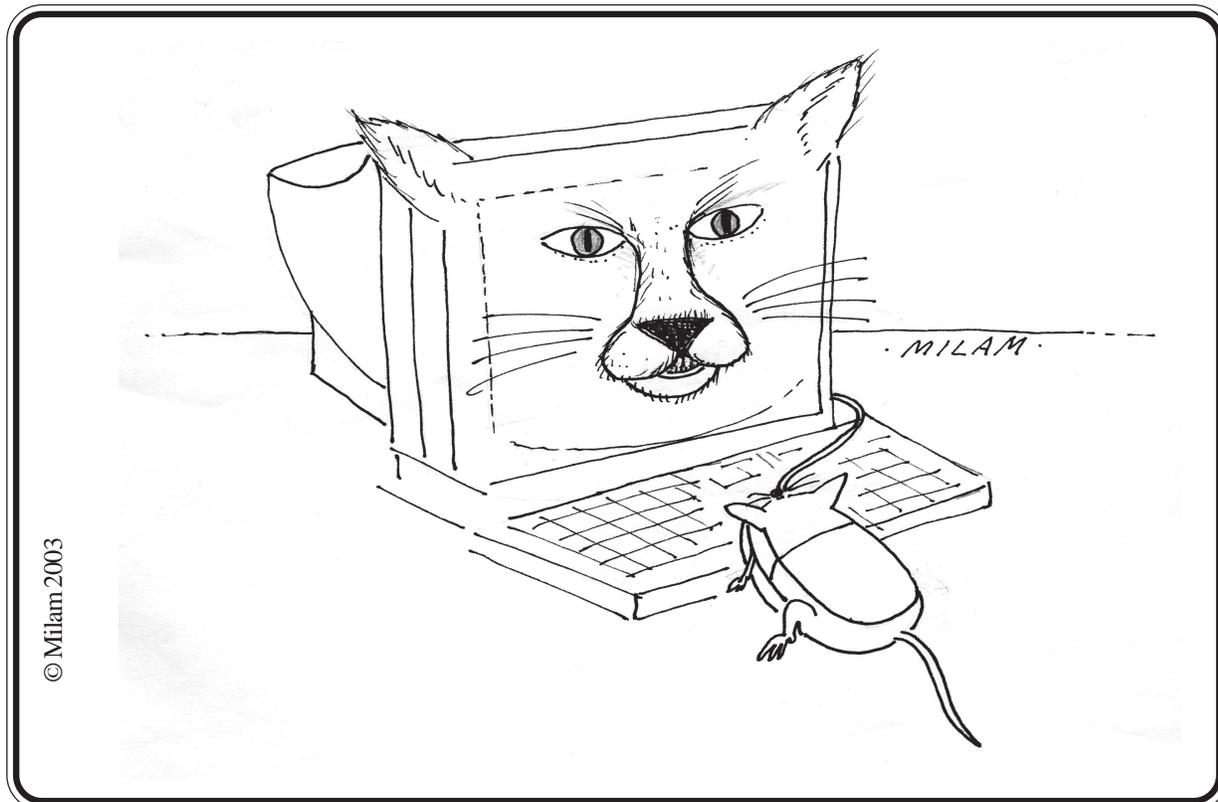
Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

### Notice of Annual Meeting

Notice is given that the Annual meeting of members of DACS will be held on Tuesday, December 2, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. in the Danbury Hospital Auditorium, 24 Hospital Avenue, Danbury, Connecticut.

An election of six (6) directors will be held. The meeting is further called for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the membership.



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## Future Events

Dec 2 • John Patrick - "The Future of the Internet"

Jan 6 • Jamie Yates and John Gallichotte - Hacking Google

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