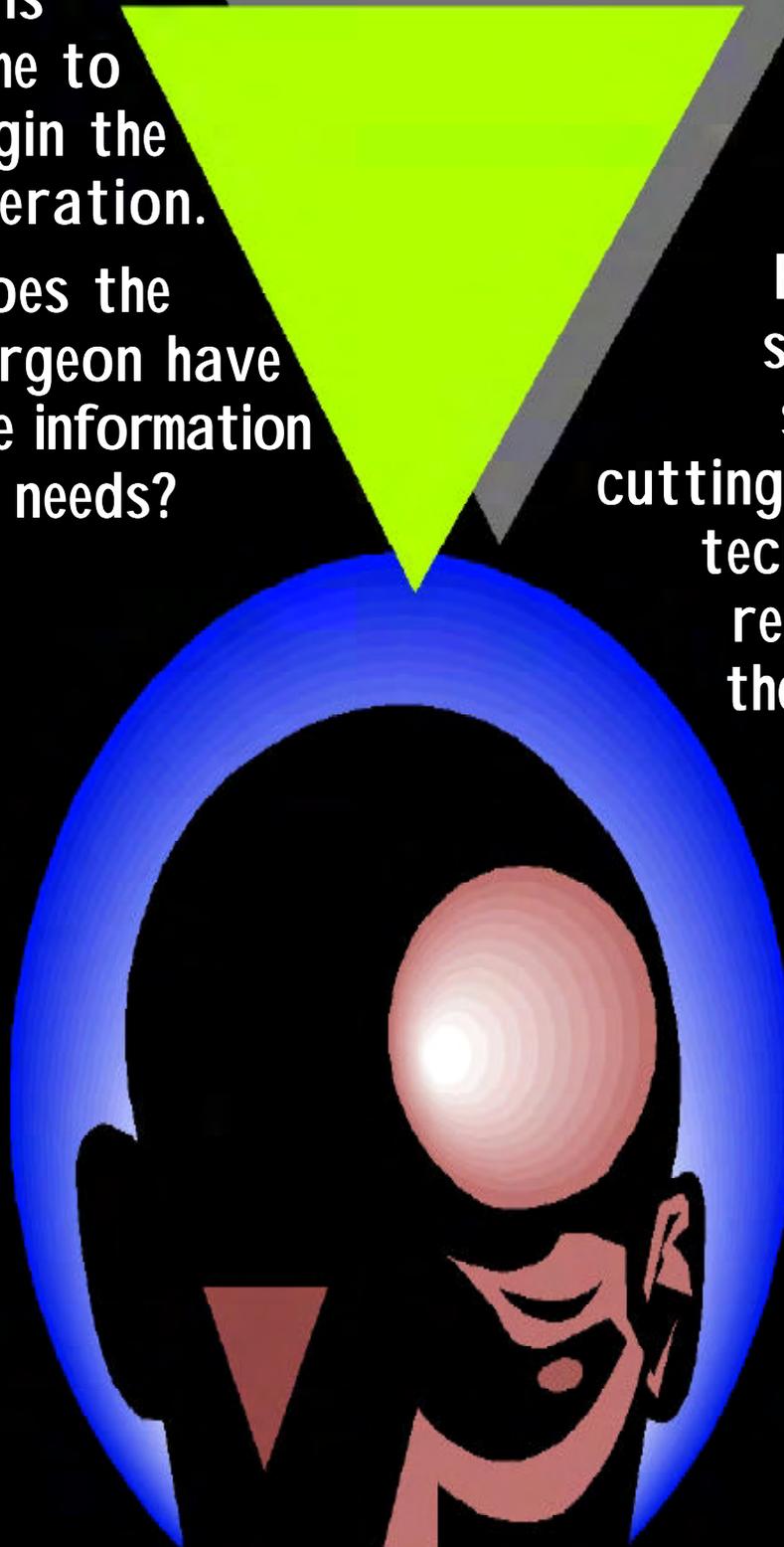




It is  
time to  
begin the  
operation.

Does the  
surgeon have  
the information  
he needs?



**DACS**  
veteran and  
computer  
innovator,  
Ed Heere, will  
show how new  
software and  
cutting-edge imaging  
technologies are  
revolutionizing  
the way medical  
information  
is created,  
transmitted  
and applied.

Tuesday, May 4  
7:00 P.M.  
Danbury Hospital  
Auditorium

# President's File



PRESIDENTIAL  
RAMBLINGS  
VERSION 1.11

Several interesting things happened this month. While your list might differ somewhat from mine, here are some things I found interesting.

First, someone managed to write an Internet worm that does not need an attachment. This means that you can infect your computer by merely reading an email message. Internet malware is no longer funny or clever – it's terrorism, and the authors should be treated accordingly.

Now on a much more pleasant note, DACS has become a member of the Science Horizons Planning Committee. This means that our club is now a conduit through which you, the members, can participate in the planning and operation of the science fairs and symposiums run by Science Horizons. There will be opportunities to participate as mentors, judges and in many other ways. You can learn more about Science Horizons on their web site, [www.sciencehorizons.org](http://www.sciencehorizons.org). This will be fun.

The IBM 360, the first really successful mainframe computer, had its fortieth birthday this month. Forty years ago IBM introduced the 360 with the promise that it would not change the instruction set of this series ever! Before the 360, buying a new computer, even from IBM, meant you had to rewrite all of your software pretty much from scratch. Every new computer was a completely new

design and thus had a new assembly language that was only marginally compatible with any computer that came before. Plus, in 1964, COBOL and other high level languages were either not yet invented or were just gaining popularity, so a lot of the software used by businesses was still written in Assembly Language where the programmer must tell the computer what to do in excruciating detail, one instruction at a time. Early personal computer programmers called this "programming down to the metal". IBM offered companies a way to escape from this Herculean effort, and when combined with the IBM sales force, the result was industry domination. Today, IBM still dominates the mainframe industry and, yes, there is still a mainframe industry—how do you think credit card authorizations are done is less than a second?

So did anyone learn from this lesson? Well, golly yes! Intel knew from the get-go that the x86 instruction set was the key to controlling the market for processors in desktop computers. So still today, when you first turn on a computer with a 286, 386, 486, Pentium®, II, III, IV – even the Zeon® processors in high end servers—all boot up as a simple 8086, running the same instruction set as the first IBM PC. Once things are running, the software (generally the operating system) switches the processor into its "native" mode so it sheds the limitations of a chip introduced roughly 30 years ago.

Now mighty Intel has had trouble gaining acceptance for the new Intel® Itanium® 2 processor because it runs a new instruction set. Yes, it can run x86 software in an emulator, but this saps away some of its speed. Right now it looks like Advanced Micro Devices, Inc. (AMD) has a winner in its 64-bit Opteron® processor. In a most ironic twist, IBM has introduced a workstation that runs—can you guess?—the AMD Opteron! The more things change, the more they stay the same—or—it ain't over 'till its over. I'm sure one of those applies here.

One last item: this month I got a new digital video recorder (DVR) and I can attest that they are marvelous devices. No, I didn't buy a TiVo, or a ReplayTV. I ordered Charter Communication's DVR. For an extra \$9.95 per month, you get a Scientific Atlanta Explorer 8000 in place of your 'regular' digital cable box. Physically, the Explorer 8000 (the name reminds

Ramblings, *continued on page 4*

## Membership Information

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Applications & Hardware to enhance *dacs.doc* are welcome.

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Don Neary  
APCUG Liaison  
203-746-5538

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**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)
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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 your Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on Monday, April 12, 2004. Present were Messrs. Berger, Bovaird, Cohen, Gallichotte, Preston, Keane, Scheef and Setaro. Also present was Larry Buoy. President Scheef presided, Secretary Larry Buoy kept the record. Minutes of the last meeting, held March 8, 2004, were approved.

Treasurer Charlie Bovaird reported current cash assets of \$16,693.34, consisting of total bank and postal accounts in the amount of \$16,528.28 plus postage on hand of \$165.06. Subtracting liabilities of prepaid dues in the amount of \$7,402.08 left a net of \$9,291.26. He also reported current membership of 403.

The usual first order of business was discussion of forthcoming presentations for General Meetings. President Scheef and Bruce Preston announced that Ed Heere had agreed to present a program on his company's development of an imaging system whereby physicians, hospitals and other health care givers could exchange MRIs, etc via a Web Site or other electronic transmission. Jim also announced that Amber Coffin, of Smart Computing Magazine, would present a program for the August meeting. Bruce Preston confirmed that he would prepare a program on establishing a home WiFi network for the July meeting, assuming the cooperation of the Hospital in utilizing one of its Internet connections or networks.

Howie Berger announced that he had obtained a tentative commitment from Professor William Joel of WesConn's Computer Sciences Department to present a program on graphics, or animation or computers in society. Following discussion of probable appeal to the general membership of these proposed subjects, Howie agreed to meet with Mr Joel and firm up a presentation for the July meeting, obtaining more detailed descriptions of each subject's content to allow a more informed choice.

Briefly discussed was progress in drafting the proposed new Bylaws, with Larry Buoy stating that he would appreciate more time to research the fine points thereof before submitting them to counsel.

Charlie Bovaird discussed with the other directors our possible cooperation with SeniorNet in some of its programs.

Howie Berger apprised the meeting of his conversations with members of Science Horizons regarding how DACS could par-

*Directors' Notes, Continued on page 4*

**Ramblings** *continued from page 2*

me of the brooms in Harry Potter) is a little thicker than the box it replaced, which made it difficult to fit into the available space in my TV stand. After removing a piece of the stand I was able to fit the 8000 on top of the VCR/DVD player. The cables were a one-for-one swap with the old cable box.

In operation, the 8000 uses the same digital cable menu and you pick shows in exactly the same way as with the standard box. Naturally, they moved some of the buttons on the remote control, so my thumb is still climbing the learning curve. Like a TiVo, you can tell the 8000 to record every episode of any show on television. I immediately set it to record every episode of *West Wind* (my favorite show) and have been rewarded not only with the current episodes on NBC but all of the reruns on Bravo as well. It would be nice if you could tell it to record just the new episodes or limit it to a specific channel. Recording *The Screen Savers* is even worse, as that show is repeated three times a day!

Is Charter's DVR a good value? At ten bucks a month, it will be many months before it equals the cost of a TiVo or ReplayTV purchase. By that time, I might want to move to HDTV so this keeps my options open. Of course some parts of the country get this same service for half the price.

Naturally, I checked out the hacking possibilities. A Google search for 'Explorer 8000' yielded several discussion boards. The people on Broadband Reports ([www.dslreports.com](http://www.dslreports.com)) do not hold out much hope for hacking the 8000. Right now, there is no way to move a recording off the 8000 and on to other media, like a DVD. While there are both USB and Firewire ports, these are unsupported at present. The hard disk is partitioned in some proprietary way. There is no ethernet port, although the setup screen shows places for two IP addresses. One of these is used to address the box over the Charter digital network for configuration changes, pay per view, etc. The other is, so far, unsupported. Wouldn't it be nice if a future upgrade allowed a USB ethernet adapter to connect the 8000 to your home network? This is a really new device so we'll see what happens. In the meantime, a DVR really does change the way you watch television.

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

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

ticipate in its programs, other than as judges in the annual Science Fairs or as mentors to students. Particularly emphasized was the need for help in improving the judging process, the online registration program and in holding symposiums on high level projects. In final analysis, it was felt that DACS could help in improving their online registration process and, second, that a list of the categories of projects be prepared and that the DACS membership be canvassed as to its members' talents and willingness to participate in Science Horizon's programs.

—LARRY BUOY

## New Members

6/14/03 thru 7/24/03

- 1) Peter Windesheim
- 2) Andy Luckey
- 3) John Licari
- 4) J.F. Klingener
- 5) Dan Damoth

### THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

**EXP 02/2004**

**or earlier**

You need to renew your DACS membership

**NOW**

## DACS Joins Science Horizons

Science Horizons, a local organization that runs science fairs and symposiums for high school students, has accepted DACS as a member of its Planning Committee. Science Horizons made headlines recently when a New Milford High School student went on to win the Intel Corporation national competition. Science Horizons Inc., an independent non-profit organization, is a partnership of education and industry in the Danbury, CT region. It was established in 1984 through the efforts of the Math/Science Initiative of the Danbury Areas School Superintendents Association, Boehringer Ingelheim, Union Carbide and others.

Through this association, DACS members will have the opportunity to participate in Science Horizons as mentors, and judges, along with numerous other possibilities. The Science Horizons web site is [www.sciencehorizons.org](http://www.sciencehorizons.org).



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.

## Next Meeting

### At Medicine's cutting-edge the wired O/R

By Marlène Gaberel

**A**T THE MAY 4 General Meeting, Ed Heere a DACS veteran and past board member, will talk about the services that his company CoActiv Medical Business Solutions offers to the medical world. The company was formed in 2003 to “develop, market, install and service digital radiography software, systems and services aimed at both independent imaging centers as well as hospital imaging departments.”

Ed and his staff realized that while servicing and supporting the IT departments of several large, multi-site radiology practices, that there existed

a need in the industry for a whole new method of getting radiology images, reports and other data to referring physicians. The company works with several large, and small, practices in the Connecticut and New York area to understand their specific requirements and to develop a design specification for a product to fill this need. According to Ed, “a surgeon or other specialist is often waiting for critical clinical information in order to make potentially life saving decisions regarding a patient’s immediate



medical care. Often this information is requested to be sent “stat”—the term de-

fines the information as being required immediately to make medical treatment decisions.” CoActiv fulfills this need. In addition, Ed points out that “in the case of radiological images, the size of the data files are often huge and can take significant lengths of time to transmit to the treating physician’s location. Also HIPAA regulations, as well as proper professional practice, demands that this information be transmitted in a manner that maintains patient privacy and in a manner that assures that the data is securely and reliably transmitted - all without compromising the need to transmit the data in a “stat” manner.”

At the DACS General Meeting, Ed Heere will elaborate on how the information is being transmitted and used. The May 4th meeting will take place at Danbury Hospital Auditorium. Activities commence at 7 p.m. with a computer related question and answer session, followed by brief club announcements. The presentation by Ed will start at 8 p.m. All General Meetings are free and open to the public. For directions to the Auditorium and additional information on the meeting, check Dacs web site: [www.dacs.org](http://www.dacs.org).

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

## Last Meeting

### Investment Strategies

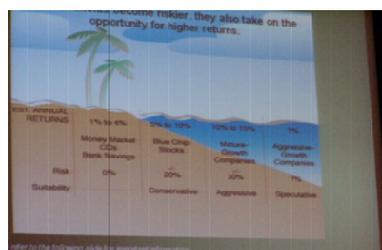
**A**T THE APRIL General Meeting, Jeffrey Simpson, Vice President of Investments at A.G. Edwards, talked about Four Steps to a Stronger Port-

folio. He emphasized the importance of starting to save early, so that time is on your side. Long-term stock holdings perform better than bonds and CDs. The Roth

IRA was favored as a retirement funding vehicle.

Members who had expected a presentation on digital investing were somewhat disappointed, as Jeff focused primarily on strategies, adding that you can find much of your information on the Web, and particularly on Google.

Jeff has been with A.G. Edwards for the past 11 years and in the financial field for 17 years. The presentation was followed by a lively discussion by all participants.



# Special Interest Groups

## SIG NOTES: May 2004

**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:** MAY 11

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

**Contact:** Bill Keane (*wbk@mags.net*) 203-438-8032.  
Meets 2nd Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.  
**Next meeting:** MAY 12

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

**Contact:** Chuck Fizer (*cfizer@snet.net*).  
Meets 1st Wednesday, 4-6 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.  
**Next Meeting:** MAY 5

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

**Contact:** Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 (*gtraff@bigfoot.com*).  
Meets last Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.  
**Next Meeting:** MAY 26

**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:** MAY 20

**LINUX.** Helps in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. MAY 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:** MAY 19

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

**Contact:** Richard Corzo (*macsig@dacs.org*)  
Meets 1st Thursday at DACS Resource Center at 7 p.m.  
**Next Meeting:** MAY 6

**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:** MAY 25

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

**Contact:** Jim Scheef (*jscheef@teleMAYksys.com*)  
Meets 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.  
**Next meeting:** MAY 13

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

**Contact:** Chuck Fizer, 203 798-9996 (*cfizer@snet.net*) or Jim Scheef, 860 355-8001 (*JScheef@TeleMAYksys.com*).  
Meets 1st Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.  
**Next Meeting:** MAY 5

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

**Contact:** Phil Dilloway, 203 367-1202 (*dilloway@ntplx.net*).  
Meets on last Monday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.  
**Next Meeting:** MAY 31

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

**Contact:** Anna Collins, 203-746-5922 (*acvo@annagraphics.com*).  
Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.  
**Next Meeting:** MAY 18.

# SIG News & Other Events

**dotNet.** This evening we were intrigued by a close view of an application to manage the performance of advertisements published in Yellow Pages of a telephone directory system. Chuck reviewed with us his recent creation, a programmed aspx report, which is now under development. What is shown by this application is a bar chart and pie chart which is color-coded.

A customer can review telephone calls received through each published phone number in an advertisement that will be seen in a given locale. Clearly, the greater the number of calls received per time period, the greater the effectiveness of the advertisement. Phone numbers which capture less traffic are less effective. Thus a customer, such as an insurance company or a septic pumping company can do an intuitive cost benefit assessment of its investment in advertisement. An opportunity is given as well to assess the merit of the salesman who recommended an advertisement in one or another locale. The benefit of a sales recommendation is implicitly given in the display. This display is to be presented as a Web page. Greg Austin made a suggestion to construct an array of chart displays in a collection. Chuck was pleased to receive this explanation of improvement to the application, and placed on his agenda development of this expanded option for displays.

In Session 2, we fielded a number of questions related to web programming. In review it seems strange that we take for granted that the web page will be produced while we are deeply immersed in the detail of its construction. We talked again about the nature of a browser request and what the appropriate response should or will be. For example, if an image tag is sent to the browser, the browser subsequently makes another request from the server to provide the "image". The effect at the browser is to only expect a single return transmission, that being the bytes constituting the image. In effect, the browser couldn't care nor know how the image is constructed. In our example, the original image tag however, does not use a named specific file name like *image.gif*. Instead we use a page name, for example such as *xxx.aspx?f=1*. Now the server doesn't know that the browser thinks it is to receive an image, it only knows that a web page not a .gif file, is requested. In our example, the *xxx.aspx* web page is specifically designed to make an image. Which one, depends on the value of *f*. In this example *f=1*, so therefore the *xxx.aspx* page will make image 1. In our case, image 1 happens to be a chart.

The significant value of this approach is the dynamic nature of the image. The image needn't be prepared in advance and waiting on the server just in case it may be referenced. Here, it's only made if it's needed, and it lasts in memory only until it is delivered to the browser. The other significant aspect of this approach is that a browser requests an aspx page which can be protected by a login and the use pattern of the application program. So in this case, the *xxx.aspx* page only makes the image if it had a previous invocation of another page submitted the page to the browser. This essentially eliminates the ability for someone to indiscriminately suck out images from you server.

**Macintosh.** The April 1 meeting started with some questions from a Mac OS 9 user whose machine keeps locking up. When this happens it's not possible to click on the desired button in the force quit dialog, because the mouse cursor is frozen. I demonstrated how to use the reset button, which on the Resource Center's old iMac required the insertion of

SIG NOTES, *Continued on page 11*

# May 2004

## Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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# Software

## With software, sometimes you get more than what you paid for

By Mike Kaltschnee

IS THERE SUCH a thing as a free lunch? I think I've found the closest thing - free software. Don't get me wrong; I have paid for more software than most computer users. I really like using "legal" software, but I have several computers setup at home now (like many of you), and to buy a separate copy of software for each one would be prohibitively expensive. So what can I do?

I've used shareware since the 80's, and I've even paid for many of the programs I found useful. At work we use shareware to solve problems that would take hours or days to do by hand. We always pay for the stuff we use—somebody worked hard to create it and should be compensated.

There has always been "free" software, as long as I can remember. Some of it was truly free, others required buying a book (Graphic Converter), sending a postcard, or even sending what you thought it was worth if you felt like it. Some of it was good, some bad, and some just amazing. However, the new class of "free" software is beyond anything I expected.

Linux, FreeBSD, and the other variants are probably the best-known examples of free software. You can download and install an entire operating system for free. With the latest versions of Linux they are getting much closer to the usability of Windows. They might still require an "expert" user to configure and use them, but it's getting close to being something I could give my Dad to use.

If you want to see the true potential of free software, spend some time with Apple's OS X product. The interface may be Apple's, but under it lays a heart that is free and based on Unix. I figure Linux is about 1 - 2 years behind OS X. If you have a second machine and don't

want to buy a copy of Windows for it, you can download, for free, the entire operating system. Rather than debate which version of Linux is better, visit [www.linux.com](http://www.linux.com) and learn more.

Once you have your operating system on the second computer, you need some basic software, such as word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. OpenOffice 1.1.1 is something I'm playing with on a machine I built. It has very respectable programs, and from

my limited (but growing) experience with it, the programs are more than I need for typical home chores such as letters, basic spreadsheets, etc. It looks a lot like Microsoft Office, but lacks the \$200+ price tag. OpenOffice runs on Windows and Linux computers.

Most Web browsers are still free (I'm expecting them to charge for them someday) and typically come installed with your operating system. The "standard", if there is such a thing, is Microsoft's Internet Explorer, but you can download Mozilla for most operating systems for free.

I have paid for several Zip utilities over the years, but I recently found myself in need of a program to decompress files on my 2nd machine. Rather than buy yet another program, I downloaded 7-Zip ([www.7-Zip.org](http://www.7-Zip.org)) and it worked like a charm. Totally free.

On Windows we have two pesky problems most people don't know about: firewalls and spyware. If you're connected to the Internet, you need a firewall. It stops most hackers and mali-



cious software from getting to your computer. Until recently, Microsoft admits they didn't focus enough on security. Very soon they will be providing tools to help users with this problem; but in the meantime, and if you're running an older version of Windows, I recommend downloading the free version of Zone Alarm ([www.zonelabs.com](http://www.zonelabs.com)).

Spyware is software you pick up online or through running some programs that include an "extra gift." Most spyware is not dangerous, but it does track what you do on your computer and has the potential to capture important personal information. There are several programs to scan for and remove spyware, but the one I use is Ad Aware from LavaSoft ([www.lavasoftusa.com](http://www.lavasoftusa.com)).

I actually bought programs to play music on my computer, but Apple has released iTunes for Windows and I now have one program (free!) for all of my Windows and Macintosh computers to play music and stream radio over the Internet. I know that there are dozens of free music programs out there, but you really have to use iTunes to see how easy and elegant free software can be.

So who creates this "free" software? It varies. Some programs are created by one person, working alone and doing it for fun, to learn how to program, or to enhance their resume. Other efforts, such as Linux, involve hundreds or even thousands of people who believe that software should be free. Either way, most software for home or small business use is becoming extremely affordable.

Be careful downloading and installing software from the Internet.

Make sure you have spyware and virus-detection software installed, because sometime free has a hidden price tag.

Free software, combined with the low cost of computers, enables us to have a 2nd or 3rd computer to play with, learn on, and not worry about breaking—or breaking the bank setting up.

**MIKE** is a DACS member who is a cheapskate with software, but who writes brilliantly for free. You can contact him online at [mikek@demorgan.com](mailto:mikek@demorgan.com).



## E-mail is 32 years old

By Jim Smith

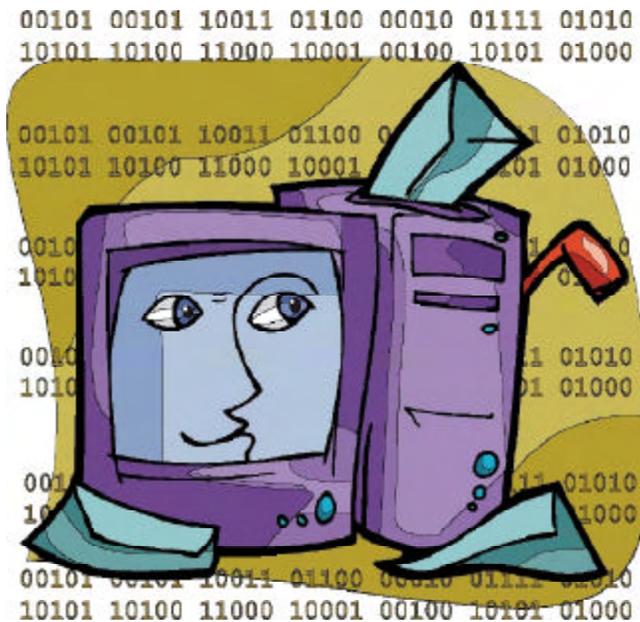
**S**PRING HAS FINALLY arrived and the winter weather is starting to give way to warm, sunny days. March was the anniversary of Email. Yes, in March of 1972 the very first basic e-mail program was written and the "@" sign was chosen for its "at" meaning. Here it is 32 years later and email is a mainstream means of communication and an normal tool for most businesses and for personal use.

Naturally with this handy mainstream concept comes those wanting to abuse it. I would hope that most of you are aware of some of the tricks and hoaxes that can be offered via email. For the others, I'd like to review some of the more common ones so you won't be tricked.

First, there are the obvious scams trying to get you to buy endless supplies of gimmicks that promise to make many of your body parts larger or somehow enhanced. Less obvious are sites that promise prescription drugs for bargain rates and ones with Hormone Growth solutions, or great mortgages on-line or credit repairs and many others. Much like the snake oil sales team of yesteryear, most of these are scams. The occasional one that is legit should also be considered suspect since anyone desperate enough to jump on the wagon with the snake oil sales team is not likely to be around for long enough to deliver anyway. Businesses that use unsolicited commercial email (spam) to sell their products should be viewed with great caution.

Then there are hoaxes that alert you to something that request that you spread it to everyone in your email address book. Any time you get an email that tells you to spread it around, think about it first! Most likely it is a hoax. The most recent one I've seen is the one that asks everyone to not buy gasoline from the big producers in order to prove a point. Search-

ing on-line will give plenty of reasons why this is a farce but it still doesn't stop people from continuing to send it around. Of



course there are plenty of hoaxes around about viruses that will eat your computer unless you send it along to everyone else you know. There are jokes that beg to be sent to everyone and there are emailed chain letters that promise doom and gloom for breaking the cycle. Don't continue to clutter up the email system with these.

Here's something to consider — if you do what you are told and send these to everyone in your address book, and they turn around and add the addresses from their list, and it goes through that for a while, eventually it will likely land in the hands of someone that will sell all of those email addresses to junk emailers who will delight in sending a huge assortment of get-rich-quick and body enhancing scams to everyone listed. I get enough of those spams without friends adding my email address to those lists.

The other popular email hoax is the endless variation on the Nigerian widow with too much money from her late husband and looking for a trusting American with a bank account ready to enter into a business deal in exchange for a

percentage. These scams have been around for longer than email has but, rather than using US Postal Service and phones to deliver the pitch, email is a much cheaper way to fish for unsuspecting victims.

Speaking of fishing, there is another hoax that is known by its variation, "Phishing". Phishing is when someone tries to get you to divulge credit card or passwords by pretending to be legit. If you get an email from PayPal asking you to "Click Here" and confirm your account info or from Citibank asking you to verify your credit card number, or from EBay asking you to type in your password so they can keep your account active, these phishing trips are hoaxes! Do not fall for them no matter how legit they appear to be. If you are not sure of something like that, be suspicious. Assume first

that it is a phishing expedition rather than assuming it is legit. With a keen sense of skepticism, many of these hoaxes will become obvious. They prey on our not thinking too much but just doing as we are asked. Most people that fall for them are thoroughly embarrassed after it is over because they realized that if they had stopped to think about it they would have realized the absurdity of it. Don't be hooked in a phishing expedition!

So with 32 years of emailing behind us, there are many wonderful things about email and some things to watch out for. I've given you a few of them... it is up to you to stay alert to many of the other ones that are out there. BPMUG is a great resource for those wanting to find out whether something that sounds too good to be true, is true or not. Don't be taken in. Stop to ponder it first and then verify it. Then if you find an amazing

deal to get rich quick that you just know will work... don't share it with me. I probably won't believe it anyway.

Now get out from behind your computers for a few minutes and have a wonderful Spring!

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**JIM SMITH** is President, Business and Professional Microcomputer Users Group, Inc. (BPMUG), Connecticut.

This article is provided by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

# Random Access

April 2004

Bruce Preston, Moderator

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

**Q. I have Microsoft XP Home edition on two machines at home. They are connected to the internet via an SMC Barricade router which connects to my broadband connection. They each can see the internet without a problem, but they can not see each other. How do I get them to see each other so that I can share printers and files?**

A. That you can see the internet from both machines indicates that you have 'connectivity' set up correctly—presumably the router is providing the IP addresses and DNS addresses and gateway information to the individual machines via its DHCP service. So the problem is going to be in the individual machines, possibly in several places.

First, see if you have the same WORKGROUP name in each of the machine's network identification. They must match. Next, each machine must be offering some sort of service before it will be seen by other machines—for example, you may have to go to properties on the printer and establish sharing, or open up the network wizard on the machine(s) and activate folder sharing. Third, you may have as many as three firewalls active which could be causing a problem. The Barricade router provides a firewall that prevents unauthorized access from the internet. There is a built-in firewall in Microsoft XP which will block the machines from seeing each other. You may have to configure these to tell them that machines on your intranet (the same basic IP address—i.e. things that start with 192.168.\_\_\_\_ if your Barricade is administrating the 192.168 subnet) are 'friends' and to be trusted. Fourth, there is a chance that you may have a third-party software firewall installed in the machine such as ZoneAlarm. It too must be told who to trust.

There are some utilities on your

machine that may be of use in identifying the problem. First, in Windows XP, open a command window—START/RUN/CMD then OK. You will get a DOS command prompt "C>". Type WINIPCFG/ALL and you will get a list that displays the TCP/IP configuration for your machine. It will show the IP address for the machine. Do this on each machine. Then on one machine, type PING xxx.xxx.xxx.xxx Where the xxx.xxx.xxx.xxx is the address of the OTHER machine. You should get responses. If not, then there definitely is a firewall issue that is preventing the interconnection.

Another suggestion was to add the NETBEUI protocol to both machines. This is a non-routable network protocol, that is, it can't get out to the internet, but it lets intranet machines talk to each other with less configuration issues.

A third suggestion was to use the wizard built into Windows XP that creates a file on a diskette that you may then carry to other machines. It contains settings that the corresponding wizard on the other machine reads and uses to configure your network.

**Q. Be advised that Microsoft has issued a CD that is available for free which has all of the "hot fix" security patches issued for Windows 98, 98SE, NT4, 2000, Me, and XP.**

A. You can get more information, such as how to order the CD, at this site: <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;833242>

**Q. Has anyone found any reference to something called PTSnoop?**

A. There is a "backdoor" program whose purpose is to give a hacker RAS access to your machine, if you are running with RAS active. (Not typically the case for a home user.)

Note that some older modem programs had a utility/configuration program named Ptsnoop, but this is not the backdoor program. You can find out what it is and how to get rid of it at <http://www.f-secure.com/v-descs/ptsnoop.shtml>

**Q. I installed Netscape 7.01, and since then it keeps loading and reloading—I can't get it to stop.**

A. The consensus is that your installation may not have properly finished, so it is still trying to finish the install. One member reported it to be a problem related to profiles - that you must establish at least one profile before Netscape finally gives you control of your machine. Other suggestions were to get into FILE then PREFERENCES within Netscape and remove "Quick Start", and then AOL Instant Messenger and ICQ.

**Q. I have a bunch of MP3 files on my son's machine, and for whatever reason, they are marked as "Locked". I can't move them, I can't rename them, I can't delete them. What's that all about?**

A. Files will be locked if they are being used by an application, and will be released when the application finishes. Further questioning indicated that at one time the machine had the peer-to-peer music sharing system "Kazaa" on the machine—it may have marked the files as being locked. There are other file locking mechanisms out there—a search on Google using the 'advanced search' limited to the last 3 months and the search string "mp3 files locked" revealed 6,000 plus hits. Browsing some of them showed several utilities that may be used to lock down files and folders. Until you can identify what utility locked them you may have a problem.

**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).

## Notice

Because of a scheduling conflict the DACS General Meeting for the month of June will be on Tuesday, June 8th, the Access SIG will meet on Tuesday, June 1st.

**SIG NOTES, Continued from page 6**

a paper clip into a small hole. Once the machine reboots the disk first aid utility runs. Since this has happened a number of times on the user's machine at home, we'll need to do some more troubleshooting in the future.

We finally got to explore a few of PantherOs features, including the new Font Book and the iChat messaging application. I also showed how to enable the auto-hiding option on the dock. The subject of the next meeting on May 6 will be digital photography on the Mac, or if our Mac OS 9 user volunteers to bring in her machine, we'll try some hands-on troubleshooting.

**Server and Networking.** We had a fun meeting, where random access lasted all evening. Discussion topics included NTFS file permissions and how to change them, the changing value of MCSE certification, and various UNIX-like commands available on Windows possibly making life easier between Windows, Linux and the UNIX underpinnings of Mac OS X.

NTFS file permissions seem to be more granular than UNIX file permissions. This discussion came from my investigation of the Cygwin environment compared to the Windows Services for UNIX Ver. 3.5 (SfU) that we installed on the server the prior month. Both Cygwin and Windows SfU provide a POSIX programming interface on Windows. Cygwin is open source ([www.cygwin.com](http://www.cygwin.com) <<http://www.cygwin.com>> ). SfU is a Microsoft product largely licensed from MKS Software, Inc. Naturally each of these products seems to map UNIX file permission to NTFS slightly differently. Once you know the code, UNIX commands like the perfectly intuitive "chown 777" are probably very easy to use, but I continue to try to use the Windows interface to file permissions even for files created under Cygwin.

Both products have at their core, the goal to make it easier to port UNIX programs to Windows. They both do this in a DLL that maps UNIX system calls to the Win32 API. Ironically, there is some open source support for the SfU, although you won't find on the Microsoft web site.

In previous meetings I've demonstrated the Cygwin XFree86 X-Windows server (also open source)

which allows some really cool cross platform operations. There is no X server in SfU.

Server and Networking SIG will take a month off in May. Our next meeting will be Thursday, June 10th at 7pm in the DACS Resource Center. See you then.

**Web Design.** The April meeting of the DACS web design sig looked into the animation software: Macromedia Flash MX.

In addition to a quick tour of the interface, the pro's and con's of using Flash were discussed. Depending on the content and purpose of a web site, the dynamic and sometimes interactive nature of a Flash animation can enhance and captivate the viewer - or - it can turn them away with long download times; the need for the plug-in; and/or a roadblock to the inner content of a site.

This animation program has plenty to offer, and although it takes some effort to become comfortable with the interface, once the basics are mastered, anyone can start to create Flash movies. Starting with simple time-line movement, one can advance to creating action scripted content. No need to hand code - the action script panel gives the designer a multitude of available actions at the click of a mouse.

It is becoming more common to see entire sites created with Flash. Unlike HTML pages, (and browsers different interpretations of HTML) this format gives the designer greater control over the visual effect of the

final web page. Used judiciously, and with good reason, a Flash animation can greatly enhance a site. 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 Templates. We will take a look how Dreamweaver, GoLive and FrontPage handle templates, and the timesaving convenience they offer. Join us on May 18th!

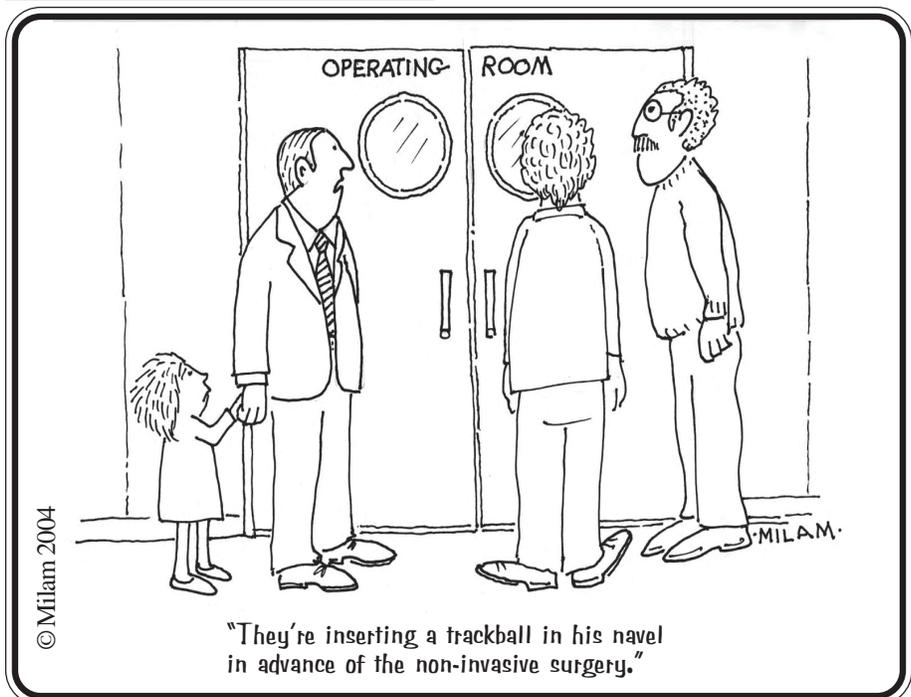
**FREE CLASSIFIEDS**

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.

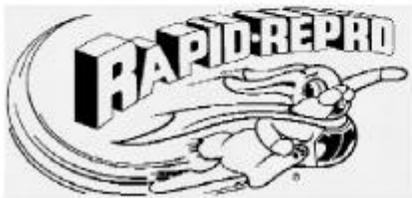
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## Future Events

May 4 • Ed Heere - New Medical Imaging Technologies

June 8 • TBA

July 6 • Bruce Preston & Jim Scheef - Setting up a Home Network

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