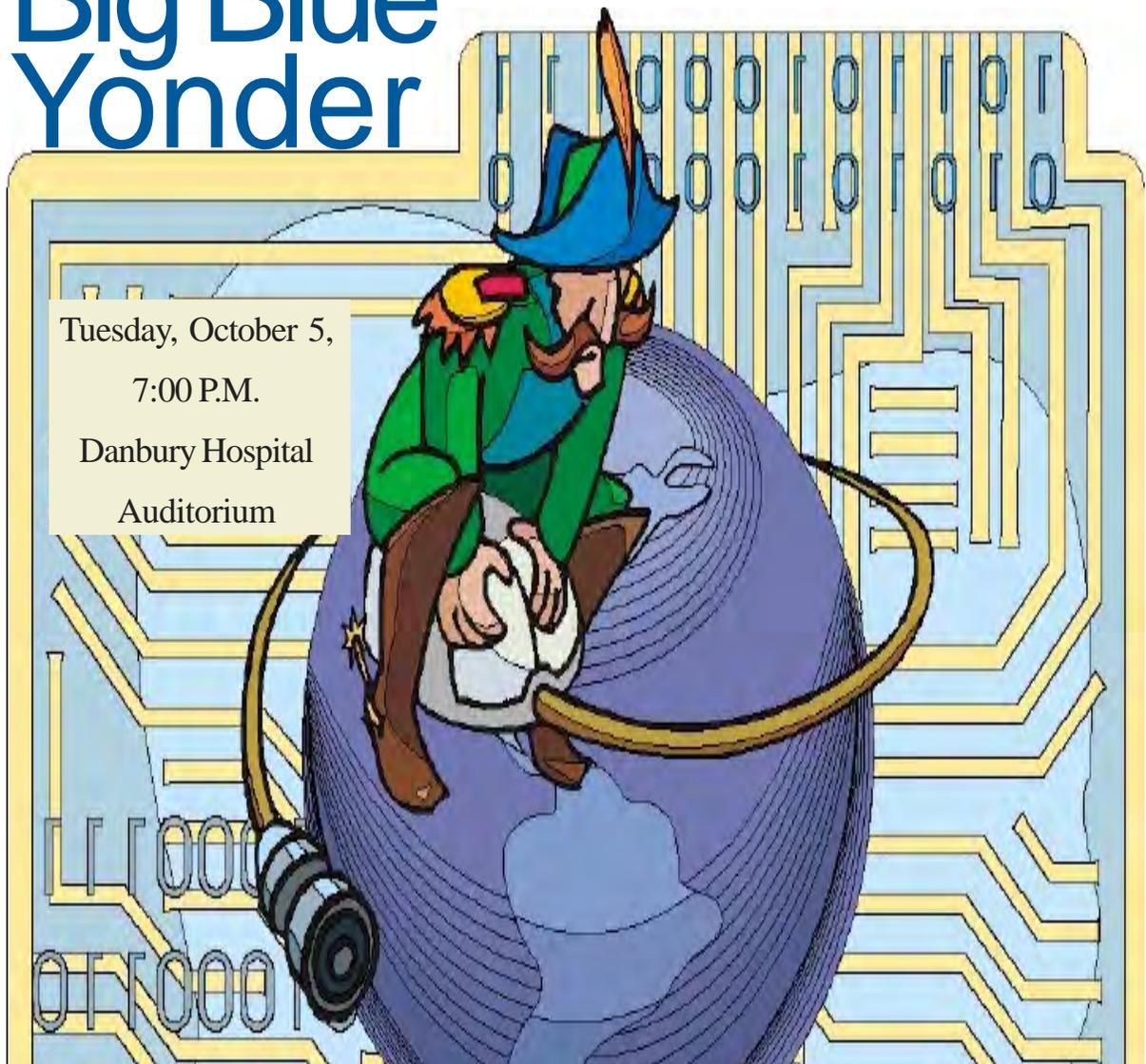


Riding High, Plugging the Big Blue Yonder



Tuesday, October 5,
7:00 P.M.
Danbury Hospital
Auditorium

At our next meeting, IBM Program Director of Internet Technology, William C. Sweeney, will talk about cutting-edge applications his company is developing for broadcast/instant messaging and grid communications.

President's File



PRESIDENTIAL
RAMBLINGS
VERSION 2.4

HAVE YOU seen what \$50 buys today? An ad from Tiger Direct arrived in my email a couple weeks ago. Would you believe a dual format DVD-RW drive for 50 bucks? How about a complete wireless network? They have a US Robotics 802.11G router AND a wireless PC Card for your notebook BOTH for \$50. There is no excuse not to network your computers anymore. How about 256M of RAM? And it's not slow RAM either, but 266Mhz DDR RAM for \$40. Or how about a 512M (as in half a Gigabyte!) compact flash card for your camera? When I joined DOG (Danbury Osborn Group), one of the clubs that became DACS, my computer was a genuine IBM XT. When I purchased that machine in 1984, with its spacious 10M hard drive and 256K of RAM, I went to the credit union for a loan because I didn't have the \$4800 plus a couple hundred more for a monitor. In case you haven't noticed, the values in computing today are incredible. Where do you think we'll be in another twenty? No, I'm not endorsing Tiger Direct here nor do I mean to imply that they have the best prices; and you can do even better than these examples If you look around.

The Hacker Aboveground

A couple of weeks ago I was shopping at Barnes and Noble and noticed a new (to me) hacker magazine. It's called *Black-*

listed! 411 ("censored information" in hacker-speak). The issue I bought is volume 6, issue 5, so it's been around for a while, but this is the first time I've seen it. The magazine's subtitle is "The official hackers magazine", so there is no question about intent. I've mentioned *2600*, *The Hacker Quarterly*, in this column before. *2600* is the seminal hacker magazine that has been published for more than 20 years and is frequently in the news defending your digital civil liberties. Like *2600*, *Blacklisted! 411* is printed in a "Readers Digest" size format, and, unfortunately like *2600*, does not edit the articles for grammar or punctuation. I suspect that many of the authors are fairly intelligent but this sure doesn't show thru their writing styles. If you're paranoid that the FBI will start tracking your movements if you appear to be part of the hacker subculture, just pay cash in the checkout line, like I do, so Admiral Poindexter can't find you in his supercomputer database matching project that Congress banned (yea, sure) last year.

DACS Elections are coming

In December we elect people to serve on the DACS Board of Directors. Board members serve two years. Would you like to help determine how DACS meets the future? Believe it or not, but our meetings are actually fun! Please contact me or any board member by phone or email and tell us that you would like to run.

The 'copy' command is criminal

OK, I'm exaggerating a little here, but not by much. There is a bill pending in Congress that would give a copyright holder the right to sue anyone who creates a product that "induces" copyright infringement. Introduced by Senator Orrin Hatch (R) of Utah, the bill is aimed at the technology underlying peer-to-peer file sharing networks. Regardless of the target, the bill will have a chilling effect on technological development. The old DOS 'copy' command, while it clearly has legitimate uses, can be used to create illegal copies of copyrighted materials. Will this bill make Bill Gates a criminal? Before you jump in with a smart answer that, consider all the other things we use every day that might become targets of law suits under this bill, like FTP or any program that makes "backups" like, well, the Windows backup program!

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
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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) 775-1102	(d e)
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(e)
AutoCAD	Peter Hylenski	(203) 797-1042	(e)
C/UNIX/ObjC	Kenneth Lerman	(203) 426-4430	(d e)
Clipper	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
COBOL	Charles Godfrey	(203) 775-3543	(e)
Dbase/DOS	Alan Boba	(203) 264-1753	(e)
DOS	John Gallichotte	(203) 426-0394	(d e)
Electronics	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	(d e)
Focus	Jim Scheef	(860) 355-0034	(e)
Hardware	John Gallichotte	(203) 426-0394	(d e)
Interface-Instrumentation	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	(d e)
Macintosh OS	Matthew Greger	(203) 748-2919	(d e)
Microsoft Access	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
Multimedia	Ed Fitzgerald	(203) 222-9253	(d e)
Newdeal	Marc Cohen	(203) 775-1102	(d e)
Paradox	Alan Boba	(203) 264-1753	(e)
PASCAL	Duane Moser	(203) 797-2716	(d)
PhotoShop/Dreamweaver	Anna Collens	(203) 746-5922	(e)
Q&A ver 3/4	Anthony Telesha	(203) 748-4478	(d e)
QuickBooks	Bill Sears	(203) 743-3367	(e)
Statistics/Data Analysis	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(d e)
SQL Server	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9996	(d)
Viruses	Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748	(d)
Visual Basic	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9996	(d)
HTML/Java	James Costello	(203) 426-0097	(e)
Windows	Nick Strother	(203) 743-5667	(e)

Directors' Notes

A REGULAR MEETING of your Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on September 13, 2004. Present were Messrs. Berger, Bovaird, Cohen, Gallichotte, Keane, Preston, Scheef and Setaro. Also present was Larry Buoy. Jim Scheef, President, presided. Larry Buoy, Secretary, kept the record. Minutes of the meeting held on August 9, 2004 were approved.

Treasurer Charlie Bovaird reported current cash assets of \$17,010.98, consisting of total bank and postal accounts in the amount of \$16,913.48 plus postage on hand of \$97.50. Subtracting a liability of prepaid dues in the amount of \$6,012.50 left a net of \$10,998.48. Charlie also reported current membership of 384.

With regard to upcoming presentations at General Meetings, it was confirmed that Bill Sweeney, Program Director, Internet Technology and Operations, Prototype Internet Applications at IBM was set for October and that, for November, a possible presentation by Microsoft was in the works with Mike Kaltschnee's (January) program on blogging as a backup, followed by John Patrick in December.

Next explored was the possibility of cooperation between DACS and the Senior Net with the conclusion that expanding the fixed curriculum of Senior Net would be difficult, and, probably, unproductive.

Marc Cohen reminded the meeting that, at the next General Meeting, volunteers should be sought to serve on the Board of Directors in anticipation of the Annual Meeting of the Membership and Jim Scheef advised that he had received no response to his pleas for volunteers to serve as DACS officers.

Jim Scheef remarked that Microsoft's Mindshare program had been reactivated by a new manager with expected improvement in user group care packages, followed by a general discussion of said program.

Also briefly discussed was progress in revising the DACS brochure.

—LARRY BUOY



Voting Machines in Connecticut

Since last month I've been trying to contact the office of the Secretary of State in Hartford to get the latest poop on new voting machines in Connecticut. Moments ago a 'staff attorney' finally returned my call with answers to many questions. Last year several towns participated in a study of electronic touch screen voting machines. The test involved voting machines from several manufacturers. [You can read the reports issued on this test on the Secretary of State web site, www.sots.state.ct.us.] All of the machines tested print a paper report that details how each voter cast his ballot. This report is printed in a "random" manner so that a particular ballot cannot be linked to any particular voter to preserve the anonymity of a secret ballot. However, only one of the machines in the test printed a ballot that the voter could confirm as correct. None of these machines will be used in the coming election, even in the towns that participated in the test. That means that Connecticut voters will use the same voting equipment we have used for decades. In New Milford that means the old mechanical voting machines that can no longer be repaired except by cannibalizing other

machines. A few towns use paper ballots that are scanned and recorded electronically. This is the same technology used for the SAT and other "machine scored" tests.

It's most important that all new voting machines purchased in Connecticut provide a voter-verified paper audit trail. Presently there is no law or regulation requiring that new machines meet this standard. In fact, current law only requires that one touch screen voting machine be available in each polling place for the 2006 general elections. Federal tax-payer funds are available to help towns meet this requirement. Legislation setting voting machine standards was introduced in Connecticut General Assembly during the last session but failed to reach a vote. Bills in Congress appear headed to a similar fate. Connecticut may have only five electoral votes, but we must be certain that we do not become another Florida. You can help. Make sure the people we elect at all levels of government this November support legislation that will ensure that all elections – local, state and national – are fair and accurate for all offices. We can't afford to have another President elected by a vote of 5 to 4.

—JIM SCHEEF

dacsprez@dacs.org

Let DACS Promote your Business

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

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

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

Next Meeting

Into the Big Blue Yonder

By Marlene Gaberel

AT THE NEXT DACS meeting, October 5th, the main presentation will be on the topic of "Accelerating the adoption of new IT applications at IBM." As one DACS officer put it, a little bit out of the beaten path but however an attention-grabber.

The speaker will be William C. Sweeney, who is IBM Program Director of Internet Technology. In that capacity Bill "manages a team with a mission to accelerate the adoption of Internet technologies inside IBM by identifying promising new technologies, establishing prototypes and moving these prototypes into production." Bill Sweeney says that

he "will provide an overview and demonstration of several applications his team is working on at IBM" and "Applications to be discussed include a broadcast/instant messaging based collaboration application and a grid computing application."

Before working in his current position, Bill was the Project Executive for a strategic outsourcing contract encompassing data center, application services, helpdesk, and deskside support. Bill has also held network services planning and strategy assignments in Advantis, the U.S. provider of the IBM Global Network. Bill was part of the team that launched IBM's Internet services in-



cluding dial, leased line, web hosting and custom solutions." Bill joined IBM in 1979 as a design engineer working on the 3090 high-end multiprocessor, and since then has worked on various aspects of computer hardware and software development and network services. He has also led efforts to define the market opportunity and services for IP telephony, video conferencing and other emerging technologies.

It would be interesting to find out what is in the work for instant messaging and broadcast and what the future hold for those technologies. The October 5th meeting will hopefully bring some insights. The meeting will be held at the Danbury Hospital Auditorium starting at 7.00 p.m. with a question and answer session, followed by short club announcements. The main presentation will be held at 8.00 p.m. For additional details and direction to the Auditorium, please check Danbury Area Computer Society web site at www.dacs.org.

Marlene Gaberel is a DACS board member and VP for Public Relations. You can e-mail her at marlene_gaberel@yahoo.com

Traveling With Technology

by Mike Kaltschnee

I DO SOMETHING FEW people would consider doing: I commute up to 5 hours per day, 3 days a week, to work in Manhattan. I offset the horrible commute by telecommuting 2 days (gotta love the 6 minute commute and working in pajamas), but the 5 hours can be tedious. To pass the time I carry a wide variety of toys and gadgets in my bag.

I figured I'd start with the bags first. I have two that I use, and my primary is the Olympia backpack computer bag from Casual Gear. I picked this up on sale for \$20 and it's the best bag I've carried. It's not fancy or made from Italian leather, but it holds a ton of stuff and is very comfortable to carry (I sometimes walk the mile from Grand Central Station to my office). The padded shoulder straps and computer area protect my back and my computer nicely. The second bag is made by Port and is also a backback, but it's bigger and the design is a bit awkward to wear.

I used to carry a relatively heavy Powerbook, but now I am partial to a very old 21b HP Jornada handheld computer (I love the excellent keyboard, 11 hour battery life, and compact flash storage). I use it for writing, and in fact I'm writing this story on the Jornada. I still bring the Powerbook in from time to time, but since the train doesn't offer wireless service, I can't check my e-mail or surf the Web. I also carry a wireless network detector from www.Wifiseeker.com to find open network connections (I do not break into networks).

My Palm IIIc finally died, so I replaced it with a HP iPaq 2215. The iPaq took a bit of getting used to, since I was a "Palm guy" for so long, but I'm starting to enjoy the Microsoft Pocket PC 2003 way of doing things. It has us-

able copies of Word and Excel, and also doubles as a MP3 player. The iPaq can accept a wireless card, so that's next on my list. I'd love to be able to check my e-mail from anywhere I can get a wireless connection, and the availability of free wireless is growing.

All work and no play is boring, so I sometime carry a small portable DVD player. It has a 5.8" screen, which is actually decent for watching movies. I will bring the Powerbook in to watch special movies since it has a

14" high-resolution screen. I used to carry a Rio MP3 player, but since I got the iPaq I'm thinking of giving the old 128mb MP3 player to my wife. I carry a decent pair of Sony headphones to listen to music or watch movies.

In case I need to charge my cell phone, connect a computer to the Internet, or use a mouse I carry retractable cable products (www.Tiger

Direct.com has a good selection of these cables). They save space and helped to eliminate the cable mess in my bag. I also carry a 128mb USB flash drive for backing up important documents—they are the new floppy disk.

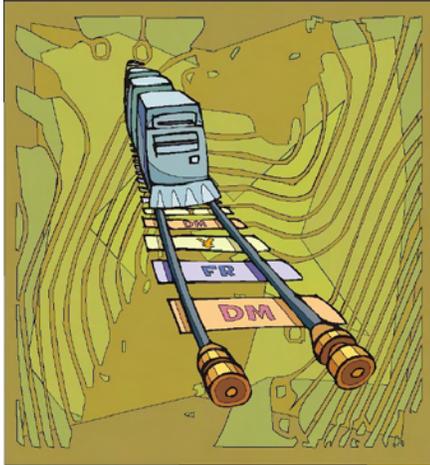
I also carry a few "personal" items like aspirin, Immodium, Sudafed, and even a few band-aids. I always have a bottle of water, several "Think Thin" bars (I've lost 40lbs and don't want to gain it back), and some mints in my bag. I rarely leave the house without a book or a couple of magazines to read. An umbrella is strapped to the outside of my bag to guard help me deal with the unpredictable New England weather.

I probably carry too much in my bag, but it's worth it. I'm productive when I need to be, able to relax when I need to, and the bag even doubles as a pillow.

What's in your bag?

The concept for this story is based on the "What's in Your Gadget Bag" series on www.Gizmodo.com.

MIKE may be a propeller head, but he takes his beanie off when he enters a building.



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Meeting Review

Plain English Spoken Here

By Jim Scheef

HELP ME NOW. There was something radically different about the September general meeting, but I can't quite put my finger on it. We have never before had a meeting that talked about a magazine, so in that regard, the September meeting about *Smart Computing Magazine* and its sister publications and *SmartComputing.com* web site was different

from anything we have ever had in the past. But that wasn't the key difference. As we entered the meeting, everyone was offered a package that contained the current issue of *Smart Computing* (not a back issue!) and some promotional material. At the end of the meeting, we were offered the opportunity to buy subscriptions to the various magazines, but we've been offered products in the past. No, that wasn't what made this meeting so different.

I've enjoyed a subscription to *Smart Computing In Plain English* (the magazine's complete name) for the past year. When I first saw the magazine and learned that it was oriented to "ordinary users", I thought it would be too elementary for me. I admit that I've been a "propeller head" since I was a kid. Right now my favorite computer publication is *Windows IT Pro*, a magazine for enterprise networking professionals. The writing is good, and the depth of the content sometimes leaves me looking for other resources to explain what I don't understand. As our speaker at the September meeting explained, you won't have that problem with their magazines. It is their policy to explain every acronym when it is first used, and this is typical of how their magazines are written.

Of the other magazines offered by Sandhills Publishing, *PC Today*, *Your Windows Authority*, is Windows oriented;

CPU (Computer Power Users) goes for more technical depth without being overwhelming; and *CE – Consumer Electronics Magazine* – covers topics like home theaters and other home and personal electronics without becoming bogged down in game consoles. Web site access to the content from all four magazines is included with a subscription to any of the maga-

zines, and this is a key part of the value of these publications. The Web site is well-designed and offers easy searching, so finding relevant material is a snap.

All of these publications are attractive – wait, something clicked. That's the key word, attractive. There was something attractive about the September meeting. Yes! The presenters were all attractive! One could even say pretty

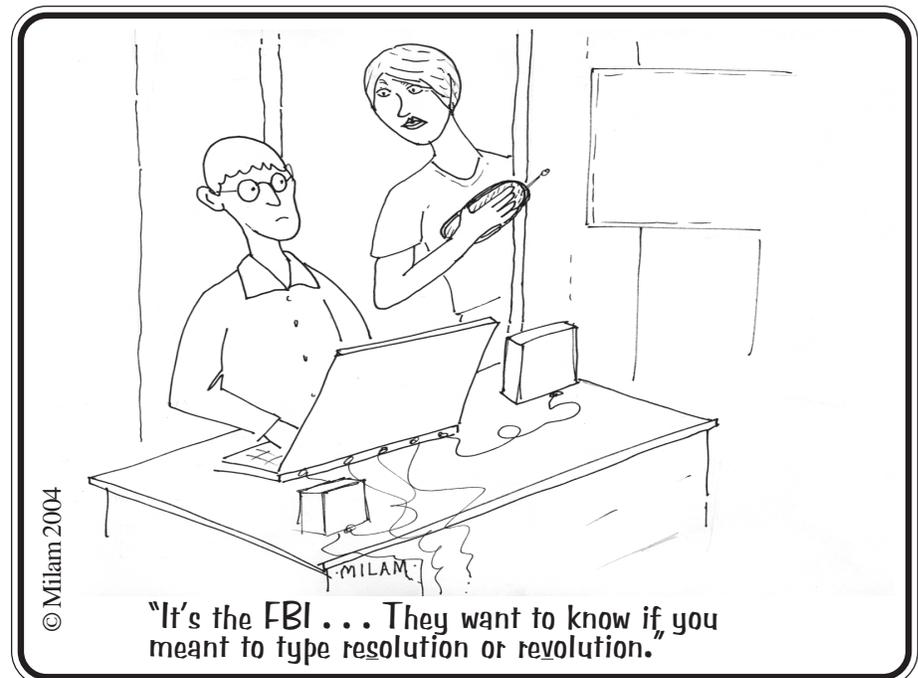
or cute! As a guy, this is something I've never been able to say about a presenter. The representatives from *Smart Computing*, Jen Clausen, Amber Coffin, and Sheila Allen are all attractive young women. [OK, I apologize for these blatantly sexist, even chauvinistic (but accurate) remarks].

To say that our September general meeting was different, or unusual, is actually missing the point, Jen Clausen, who gave the actual presentation, did an excellent job explaining how *Smart Computing* and the other publications offer excellent value to the typical DACS member. I agree with Jen on that and recommend *Smart Computing* or *CPU* as worthy of your time.

JIM SCHEEF is DACS president.



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Computer Privacy

A quick and dirty guide to hardening Internet Explorer against Spyware

By Jeffrey A. Setaro

SPYWARE HAS BECOME one of the most common problems facing users of Microsoft's Internet Explorer web browser today. The following is a quick and dirty guide to hardening Internet Explorer against spyware.

1. Make sure your computer is free of spyware before beginning this process. Spywareguide.com offers a free on-line scanner to help you identify and remove spyware from your computer. If you have a slow connection or would prefer to work off-line you will need to download and install Ad-aware and/or Spybot Search & Destroy and then scan your computer with them.

2. Visit to <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com> and installing all the critical updates.

Note: if you are using an older version of Internet Explorer you really should upgrade to IE 6 Service Pack 1 or later.

3. Next check the security settings in Internet Explorer. To do this start IE and select Tools > Internet Options to open the "Internet Options" dialog. See Figure 1.



Figure 1

Select the Security tab and verify that the "Internet", "Local Intranet", "Trusted Sites" zones are set to Medium. See Figure 2.

Next select the Restricted Sites zone and click "Custom Settings" and set everything to "Disable". Anything that can't be set to Disable should be set to "Prompt". See Figure 3.



Figure 2

Now select the Advanced tab on and make sure that "Enable Install On Demand (Internet Explorer)" and "Enable Install On Demand (Other)" are disabled. See Figure 4.



Figure 3

4. Visit <http://www.spywareguide.com/blockfile.php> and download the ActiveX block list and import it into the registry.

5. Visit <https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/ehowes/www/resource.htm#IESPYAD> and download the IE-SPYAD block list and install it.

6. Periodically check for updated versions of the block lists and install them.

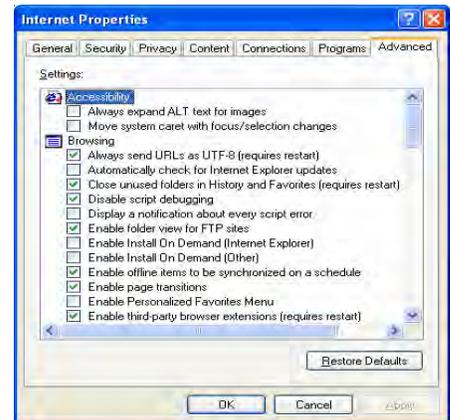


Figure 4

7. Last but not least install service pack 2 for Windows XP when it becomes available. Service pack 2 includes several important security improvements that can greatly enhance your on-line safety and security.

JEFF SETARO is DACS Webmaster, and a frequent commentator on PC security issues.



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.

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: OCTOBER 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: OCT 12

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: OCT 13

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: OCT 6

Digital Imaging. All about digital cameras, retouching and printing.

Contact: Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 (*graffic@bigfoot.com*).
Meets last Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: OCT 27

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: OCT 21

Linux. Helps in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. OCT 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: OCT 20

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: OCT 7

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: OCT 26

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

Contact: Jim Scheef (*jscheef@teleAUGksys.com*)
Meets 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.
Next meeting: OCT 14

Visual Basic. Develops Windows apps with Visual Basic.

Contact: Chuck Fizer, 203 798-9996 (*cfizer@snet.net*) or Jim Scheef, 860 355-8001 (*JScheef@TeleAUGksys.com*).
Meets 1st Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: OCT 6

Wall Street. Examines Windows stock Market software.

Contact: Phil Dilloway, 203 367-1202 (*dilloway@ntplx.net*).
Meets on last Monday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: OCT 25

Web Design. Explores popular applications for designing and creating Web sites.

Contact: Anna Collens, 203-746-5922 (*acvo@annagraphics.com*).
Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: OCT 19

SIG News & Other Events

dotNET. Our meeting began with some random questions requiring extended answers. The first question concerned the MSDN subscriptions to systems produced by Microsoft. The recommended procurement source is this one: Online—*www.softwaremoreusa.com*; phone—800-944-9931. Several options are available in the list of subscriptions, and a phone call can clarify content and rebates. Some service call chits come with a purchase. Among the good buys is MSDN Professional 7.0. Subscribers are generally well pleased with these offerings.

We then moved to what appeared to be a simple issue for our main discussion. Here was our starter question: In a browser, how do you make items line up on a list box in an interface with a form? The goal is to have a tabular array such as Customer Number, Name and Phone. One approach is to have a fill character such a period to fill the space between list items. The underlying code can be adjusted for each list item in the list. Another approach is to buy a data grid in which the extra code for perfect alignment has been supplied. Yet another approach which was described in the discussion was to use a table to hold the elements of each line item, as is done in FoxPro.

We examined at length the code Chuck had built to support his interface form, Customer Account Information. While we could see the merit for network management to have actions coded for operation only in the browser, we were advised to be aware that HTML going into an outputstream may not work correctly.

As a postscript, we had a spirited discussion of the differences between a drop box and a combo box. One test of a drop box is to try to type into it, when you find it cannot be done.

VB.NET. A random question launched our session: For network security, what is the difference between the parameters "Trusted connection=True" and "Integrated Security SSPI"? It depends on the network security implemented in the network and the operating system. These details are highly context dependent.

This opening question sparked a spirited debate on security issues and spam prevention. We reviewed options available in VB and other languages. We dug into details of domain permissions in contrast to workgroup permissions, and cruised through those extensive adjustments made possible in Microsoft systems. Sometimes not even Microsoft's higher echelons of support experts can provide satisfactory answers.

An added debate ensued concerning what to do about Microsoft's new Service Pack 2 (SP2) for Windows XP. Words of caution filled the air concerning the damage to applications which could ensue in an environment of a business network. Clearly these are daunting issues not to be grasped by the faint-hearted network administrator. Firm answers are yet to be established.

In a context of security matters, we were reminded to keep at hand our knowledge of regular expressions in the group RegEx. There is a good reference from O'Reilly publications on this topic.

Macintosh. There seemed to be a lot of questions at the September meeting. One member described receiving an e-mail with an attachment and a message indicating an e-mail had been returned to sender. He had not sent any e-mail recently! I explained that this was probably an example of an e-mail virus. If you receive such an e-mail and you haven't just attempted to

SIG NOTES, Continued on page 15

October 2004

Danbury Area Computer Society

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Computers and Creativity

Part 2: Order out of chaos

by Richard P. Ten Dyke

IN PART 1, WE USED a missile design problem to understand the basic elements of an optimization: having a goal, having a way of achieving trial solutions, and having a way of measuring the quality of our solutions against the goal. The problem was easy to solve because we could follow a continuous path from a poor starting point to an optimum design using a missile flight simulator.

For this stop on our journey we look at a problem, simple to describe but with new difficulties. We will meet the barrier of local optima, and our path to success will be discontinuous.

The new problem is to find a magic square that is greater than 3 by 3. As a reminder, a magic square is a square array of numbers, in sequence, arranged so that the rows, columns, and diagonals add to the same total. Last month, we showed a magic square that was three by three. Here, for the fun of it is a computer generated square that is 4 x 4:

```
13 2 11 8
7 12 1 14
4 15 6 9
10 5 16 3
```

This is not the only solution to the problem; others exist that differ in ways that are not simple rotations or reflections of this one.

If there were space, we could print several magic squares with larger dimensions: 6 x 6, 12 x 12, 20 x 20, or whatever size you might wish to choose. A computer can make them up quickly. Our question: how do we program a computer to do it, and what do we learn in the process?

We will follow the same process used with the missile optimization problem. The

goal is clearly defined — the rows, columns, and diagonals must add up to 34.

We start by creating an initial trial solution to the problem by randomly arranging the numbers from 1 to 16 in the array. Next, we add up the totals for the rows, columns and diagonals. Of course, they do not each add up to 34. Some totals are higher and others are lower. We next add up these errors as if they were all positive numbers; an error of +3 for one row and -5 for another adds up to a total of 8. We sum the error values for all rows, columns, and diagonals, and this sum is our total error value. Our process will seek to reduce this error value to zero. When we start the process, however, the total of all these errors is a large number.

The next step is to create a new square, similar the previous one, but with a small random change. We create the new square by selecting a pair of numbers at random, and swapping them.

We will calculate the total error again, and note whether the new total is more or less than what we had before. If it is more, we return the swapped pair to the original positions. If less, we keep the swap. We repeat the process of swapping pairs and evaluating the errors.

Initially, swapping pairs will often result in a better solution. As time goes on, and we get closer to a final answer, it becomes more and more difficult to find a pair to swap that will reduce the error. When we get to a total error value of 4, that is two rows or columns that add to 35, and another couple that add to 33, we can keep swapping forever, and never get the error to zero. If this happens, and it happens quite often, we have found a "local optimum." That

is to say, no matter how long we let the process run, we will never achieve an error value of zero, because our swapping technique is only able to look in the immediate neighborhood of the local optimum.

What is the next step? What is your guess? It is clear that we need a way to get off of this local optimum and start again somewhere else. We are simply on the wrong mountain, and we have to drop ourselves somewhere on the landscape where we may be on a bigger one.

As in life, it is sometimes necessary to take one step backward in order to make two steps forward. And that is the case here.

We could just start over, and completely randomize the entire square. On the other hand, we really have made quite a bit of progress, and the higher mountain may be not that far away.

Instead of starting over, we randomly and arbitrarily select one pair of values and switch them. This will increase the error, but not so much as starting over. We can then restart swapping with the goal of reducing error. After a good number of trials with no solution, we will do an error-increasing random swap again.

The computer may have to increase error several times. However, at some point, we find on a path that leads to an error of zero, which is a solution to the problem.

In computer programming terms, we have an inner loop and an outer loop. The inner loop seeks to find the next better solution while the outer loop stops everything and starts over in a new location.

It works. Here is another, different from the first:

```
7 9 2 16
14 4 11 5
12 6 13 3
1 15 8 10
```

What has this problem shown?

Comparing it to the missile design problem, the path from a bad solution to the best one is not continuous. We had to jump from one possibility to the another on a discontinuous path. While each new trial solution was randomly created from a previous one, they were not totally random because each new one retained much of the old one.

Key to finding a solution was that we could measure some distance from



where we were to where we wanted to be. Once we had an improvement, we would continue from that point to the next improvement. This operates on the belief that surrounding the perfect solution is a large number of trial solutions that are close. We constrain our searching to those that are close, rather than to start over from the beginning after a failure.

Even for this small problem, several trillion number arrangements can be found in a 4 by 4 grid. At one million per second it would take a day of computer time to evaluate them all. On our slower computer the method takes less than a minute. It is quick to progress from a bad solution to one that is good, and longer to go from one that is good to one that is perfect. We kept searching for perfect because we believed we would find it. (An important point.)

The method works because we are able to follow a constant, even if discontinuous, path of improvement, and in doing so, able to ignore trillions of options that are of little value.

Also, with more than a little irony, we demonstrated that random behavior can be used achieve order.

For our next stop on the journey we will visit "The Black Box."

RICHARD TEN DYKE, a member of the Danbury Area Computer Society, has previously contributed to this newsletter on the topic of Digital Photography. He is retired from IBM and can be reached at tendyke@bedfordny.com. All opinions are his own, and he welcomes comments.

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New Members

from 8/26 to 9/21/2004

- 1) Patricia and Robert Hauver
- 2) Don Wright
- 3) Ed Frazer
- 4) Bob Espinosa

THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

EXP 07/2004

or earlier

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

Computers and Creativity, computer programming and mathematics

by Charles Bovaird Jr.

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN is composed of many apparently consistent processes, which we attempt to discover.

A key tool of discovery is mathematics. Mathematics is a language whose foundation is extremely rigorous and consistent. It is a tool of scientists, engineers, doctors, and philosophers. Computers can process mathematical procedures with amazing speed and can be used to produce programs (or procedures) to simulate real world processes.

During the process of designing programs (sometimes called algorithms) the analyst discovers ways to address the solutions to many problems s/he was previously unaware. Looking at a process from a different perspective increases the likelihood of new discovery, that is, the creation of a new useful way to look at the world.

In the Sept. 2004 DACSDOC Richard Ten Dyke posed a 3 x 3 magic square using the integers 1 through 9, and then challenged you to come up with a 4x4 magic square. Following that feat you were challenged to develop a process for generating more magic squares and commit it to a computer program.

There is a simple procedure for generating "the basic 3x3 magic square" he posed. This exercise is left up to the reader using the following "basic 3x3 magic square".

```
8 1 6
3 5 7
4 9 2
```

Understanding the procedure will not directly help you solve the 4x4 matrix however basic concepts can be discovered by playing with this simpler problem on paper and in your mind. Later on we can address writing a program (i.e. committing the process we discovered to a computer program). That is not to say we can not use a computer as a tool of our thinking process. Used properly, computers are more reliable than your brain (at least mine) in remembering what has transpired in the past.

Assuming you have discovered the process to generate "the basic 3x3 magic square", and

thinking outside the box, low and behold you find the process can generate magic squares with sides whose length is a positive odd number (e.g. 5x5, 11x11,

etc.). You will also discover this process does not apply to generating even numbered (4x4, 8x8, etc.) magic squares.

Next you will find our basic 3x3 magic square, if viewed from a different angle (in our 3 dimensional world) has seven more perspectives.

For example, take 9 children's blocks, the first block representing the number 1, the second block representing the number 2, etc.

Place them on a glass top table to form the basic 3x3 magic square. When we look at the magic square from each side of the table we see four views of the same magic square. Now do the same looking at the underside of the table. Considering all rotations you should come up with a total of eight **unique** views of the "basic 3x3 magic square" illustrated below.

basic 3x3	rotate	rotate—
816	618	492
357	753	357
492	294	816
turn base -90 degrees		
672	276	834
159	951	159
834	438	672
turn again -90 degrees		
294	753	618
turn again -90 degrees		
438		
951		
276		

Problem 1: Can you create a 9x9 magic square (with integer numbers 1 though 81 other than 1,2,...,9)?

Problem 2: What is the maximum number of odd sided magic squares that can be generated?

Problem 3: Can you create a 3x3 magic square (with numbers other than 1,2,...,9) that add up to 16?

Problem 4: Here is one solution to a 4x4 magic square. Can you come up with a procedure for generating other even sided magic squares?

```
16  3  2 13
 5 10 11  8
 9  6  7 12
 4 15 14  1
```

CHARLES BOVAIRD retired from IBM. He is presently Treasurer of DACS. You may contact him at treasurer@dacs.org.

File Management

The Perfect Backup Approach

By Gene Barlow
User Group Relations

BACKING UP YOUR HARD drive is the most important thing you should do to protect your computer system. Yet, I am constantly surprised to find that as few as 10% of my smart user group audiences have a good backup procedure in place. Hard drive crashes are quite common and it is very painful to rebuild a computer system after a hard drive crash. Anti-virus software may offer some protection, but fast moving viruses can get through this protection and crash your hard drive. It may take you days or weeks to recover from a hard drive failure and your important data files are gone forever. So, protect your computer by backing up your hard drive on a regular basis and avoid the pain of a hard drive failure.

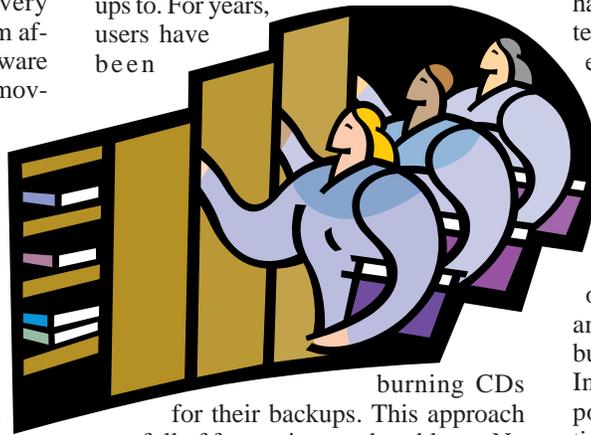
For the past few years I have recommended a sophisticated backup process that would adequately backup all aspects of your computer system. Using a file backup utility, I suggested you backup your important data files at the end of each day. Then, to protect your full system, I suggested you should backup your entire hard drive using a full system backup utility each month. I also suggested that you separate out your data files into a different partition on your hard drive to further protect these important files. This approach is outlined in an article that I wrote titled, "Backing Up your Hard Drive". You can read it on my web site at www.ugr.com/n10102.html.

While many of you followed my suggestions on backing up your hard drive, many of you are still not doing anything to protect your hard drive from failure. Perhaps my backup approach was too complex to understand or too difficult to follow. Fortunately for you, technology has made some dramatic advances in the past couple of years and now there is a better and easier way of doing your backups. This article will show you the best way to backing up your hard drive and tell you what hardware and software products to use to follow this approach. It is so easy that everybody should start to backup their hard drive. All you have to

know is the secret of how to do it, and your computer can be safe and secure.

Backup Hardware:

The first step to having a successful backup procedure is choosing the right backup hardware to use to save your backups to. For years, users have been



burning CDs for their backups. This approach was full of frustrations and problems. No wonder folks hated to do backups. First, it seems that creating a backup and then burning it to many CDs could overtax many computer systems. If anything went wrong, the entire backup process could cancel, leaving you with several burnt CDs, but not the complete backup you needed. Worst than that, the backup might appear to be complete, but the CDs were corrupt and would not restore properly. Thank goodness, CDs have been replaced with a much more reliable backup media.

A couple of years ago, external hard drives entered the computer marketplace in large numbers. Today, an external hard drive is the ideal backup media to use. Instead of sitting by your computer for hours to feed it another blank CD, all you need to do is to attach your external hard drive and forget about it. Your backup will be taken automatically without your being involved. No more drudgery of making backups to CDs.

Why are external hard drives the ideal backup media? First, they are large enough to backup your main hard drive on one device. You do not need to backup to multiple CDs, so the whole process can be done without your involvement. Second, backing up to an external hard drive is many times faster than burning CDs. An external hard drive is almost as fast as

the internal hard drives on your computer. Third, external hard drives are much more reliable at saving your important files. CDs can easily become scratched or flawed and not protect your important backups. Finally, external hard drives are relatively inexpensive to buy and use. You may actually save money over the cost of burning a lot of CDs.

What should you look for when buying an external hard drive for backup purposes? External hard drives come in two basic flavors - USB2 and Firewire. One is just as fast as the other and both will do an excellent job of backing up your main hard drive. You will need to attach the external hard drive to your computer using either a USB2 port or a Firewire port on your computer. Most computer today come with a USB port on them, so these are the more popular type of external hard drives. Just be sure your computer doesn't have one of the older USB1 ports on it instead of the faster USB2 ports. If you have an older USB1 port, you can still attach and run your USB2 external hard drive, but it will run at the slower USB1 speed. In this situation, you can add a USB2 port to your computer for a small additional price.

The external hard drives come in a couple of sizes - miniature and standard drives. The miniature external hard drives have a 2.5 inch laptop computer hard drive inside a small case. These drives are small enough to fit in your pocket and are very light to carry. They do have a couple of disadvantages to them that you should be aware of. First, they only hold 20GB, 40GB, or 80GB of backup files. This may not be big enough to backup your 300GB main hard drive. Second, you will pay quite a bit for the small size of these miniature drives. The 20GB drives cost about \$160, the 40GB drives are about \$200 and the 80GB drives are over \$300. So, you end up paying a lot for the small size.

If you don't mind having a slightly larger external hard drive, you can get one with much more capacity and for less money. These larger external hard drives contain standard 3.5 inch hard drives inside the case and are available in capacities starting at about 80GB and go up to 300GB and larger. An 80GB or 120GB external hard drive is an excellent size for most backup needs. If you watch for sales on these drives, you may find an 80GB hard drive for under \$100. I have seen them as low as \$69. The 120GB external hard drives will be more expensive, but can be found for as low as \$99. So, check the ads

in your local paper and you may find a great deal on external USB2 hard drives.

Backup Software:

The second part of having the perfect backup approach is using the right backup software product. There are two basic types of backup software available - file backup utilities and full system image backup utilities. Older file backup utilities would backup individual files. These utilities were slow since they had to use the operating system to find and retrieve each file separately. We have hundreds of thousands of files on our hard drive and so working on individual files, one at a time, is very slow. A better backup utility will backup your entire hard drive (a partition at a time) and does this at the hard drive sector level. These types of backup utilities create backup images of your hard drive that you can save to your external hard drive. To conserve space, these images are compressed to about half their normal size which permits you to keep many backup images on your external hard drive. So, the first think to look for in your backup software is the ability to create compressed images of your entire hard drive.

While an image backup utility is a major step in the right direction, it is not the ultimate solution. With full backup images, you still end up backing up your entire hard drive each time, even if only a small portion of the drive has changed since the last backup. So, the images contain a lot of unchanged files that do not need to be backed up again. So, the secret is to find an image backup utility that can do incremental backup images. With the incremental backup image approach, only the changed sectors on a hard drive are backed up and not those parts of the hard drive that have not changed since the last backup. Incremental backup images are much smaller in size and complete much quicker than a full backup image.

A little calculation at this point may help you understand another reason why the incremental backup image feature is so important. Let's say you have a 120GB main hard drive that is a third full. That means it has about 40GB of files on it. A full condensed image of this hard drive would be about 20GB in size (with a compression of about 50%). That means that you could store four separate full backup images on an 80GB external hard drive. Using the incremental backup image approach, you may be able to store 30 or 40 separate backups on the same 80GB external hard drive. Because you can keep

more incremental images on your external hard drive, you can make your backups more frequently than if you were limited to only four full backups. Hence, your backups would be more current with the incremental image approach versus the full backup approach. This means less lost files since the last backup. This is of major importance when considering a backup approach.

So, the secret to choosing the best backup software is to look for a full system backup utility that can do incremental backup images. There have been a couple of expensive enterprise software products that offer the incremental backup image feature (for example, Symantec's V2i Protector Desktop Edition v2), but there is only one consumer backup utility that I am aware of that offers the incremental backup image feature and that is the Acronis True Image 8.0 product. This excellent backup utility was awarded PC Magazine's Editors Choice award as the best backup imaging utility on the market. PC World calls True Image the leader in the field of incremental backup images. Using this excellent backup utility with an external hard drive will provide you with the most perfect backup approach available today.

How to Backup your Hard Drive:

To complete this article, let me suggest how you would do your backups using an external hard drive and an incremental backup image utility. I would suggest that you set up a regular schedule to make your backup images. For the average user, I would make a full backup of your hard drive at the beginning of the month and then an incremental backup image at the end of each week that follows. So, you would have one full backup image and 3-4 much smaller incremental backup images each month. At the beginning of the next month, make another full backup image and follow this again with weekly incremental images. Save all of these images on your external hard drive and don't delete any of the older images until you start to run out of space on the drive. If you have a very active computer system, you could make a full backup at the beginning of the week and incremental backup images at the end of each day. Most users will not need to do the backups this frequently, but some may want the extra protection of more frequent backups. Either way, the approach is the same, just the frequency is changed. With True Image 8.0 you can set up the software to make these backups automatically. So, set it up and forget it. Your backups will occur as scheduled.

If at any time, you need to restore one or a few of your files, you can simply copy these files out of your compressed image files using a facility in True Image. If you need to restore your full hard drive, you can do this also, even if the main hard drive is empty and not bootable. True Image will boot from a special CD to permit you to quickly restore the entire hard drive from the image files. So, you can quickly restore a few files or your entire hard drive using Acronis True Image 8.0.

Finally, you may be wondering why I recommend keeping all of your full and incremental backup images on your external hard drive and not deleting them after you make a new image. You need to understand that the full image you make at the beginning of the month and the incremental images that follow it each week go together in a set. True Image needs all of them to restore your hard drive to the way it was when you made the last incremental image. During the restore, it will combine the beginning full image with each of the incremental images to recreate the hard drive. It does this very quickly whether you are retrieving a few individual files from the image set or recreating the entire hard drive. Now, let's suppose that a stealth virus got on your hard drive and was captured in the last incremental image you made. You certainly do not want to restore your hard drive with this virus on it. So, instead, you indicate to True Image to restore your hard drive from the incremental image you made just before the image containing the stealth virus. That restores your system to a point in the past when it was still clean of the virus.

Over time, you will build up a collection of backup images on your external hard drive that will let you see what files were on the drive at any point of time in the past few months. If you deleted a file some months ago and now want to get it back, you can indicate to True Image to look in a backup image before you deleted the file and you can copy it back to your hard drive from the image files. Having a history of all of the files that have been on your hard drive is a very powerful and useful function. Only with an incremental backup image software product could you afford to keep all of this history on a modest external hard drive. Acronis True Image 8.0 with an external hard drive is the perfect way to backup your main hard drive.

How to Order Acronis True Image 8.0:

Acronis is offering this excellent product to user group members and their

Back-up, Continued on page 15

Random Access

September 2004

Bruce Preston, Moderator

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

Q. (AskDacs) I have problems with getting a lot of popups when I am using Internet Explorer (5.5 on Windows 98SE). If I bring up Task Manager with the Ctrl-Alt-Del combination, I see an application named hostak.exe. I don't know where it came from or how it got there. If I delete it the popups are reduced, but eventually they (and hostak.exe) comes back. Can anyone tell me what it is, where it came from, and how to get rid of it?

A. Several had reported seeing similar, and all thought that it is related to a web browser add-on “Cool Web Search”. It is suggested that you run AdAware and SpyBot, CSW Shredder and HiJack This – these are all programs that identify spyware, malware etc. With HiJack This, you will get a log that you post onto various online forums where you will get instructions as to what to remove.

Q. I am having problems getting into secure web sites – I don't get any pages that require HTTPS access. I get 'timed out' error messages only. I am using Charter Communications to access the internet, ZoneAlarm firewall, McAfee anti-virus. This has been for a week now.

A. There were several suggestions: You may have activated the McAfee firewall with ZoneAlarm also running. You may have a worm installed that has hammered your TCP/IP protocol stack (usually implemented in winsock.32 or wsock32.dll) You may have SSL disabled (see TOOLS/INTERNET OPTIONS/ADVANCED and work down to the SECURITY section and make sure that you have the SSL components turned on.

Q. When I do a backup of my C: drive, I see hundreds if not thousands of

files in TEMP folders being backed up. Shouldn't these files have been deleted by whatever process created them?

A. Yes. Any file in a TEMP folder with a create date prior to the time of your last boot is fair game for deletion. Programs should delete them, but seldom do. Most programs figure that Windows will do the clean up once the space consumed by temp files reaches the level set by your options. Additionally, your web browser will put many files in the cache in anticipation of your returning to the web page and thus needing the image files again. You can clean this up via your internet options (TOOLS / INTERNET OPTIONS / GENERAL tab click on the DELETE FILES to get rid of them. In settings you can control how much space to allocate to the cache.

Q. Has anyone installed XP's Service Pack 2, and if so, have there been any problems with installing it or with applications?

A. Several had reported that they had done the download (about 80MB) and done the installation. There were no reported problems. Microsoft has a page that lists known problems: <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?kbid=884130>

Q. Lots of programs want to put their files somewhere within the “My Documents” folder. That's on my C: drive which is getting crowded. I have a huge D: drive that none of them want to use. Can I change this?

A. In Windows XP, right-click on the My Documents folder and select Properties. There will be a field which points to the actual location. Below that is a “Move” button which will let you change its location, such as to your D: drive. Alternatively, most programs let you

control the default location via a properties page, which might be under the FILE or the EDIT or the TOOLS menu.

Q. Not a question but rather a “you might be interested in this” item: I will be traveling with a digital camera and really don't want to take a notebook computer with me. There is a new device by MicroSolutions called “Roadstor”. It is an all-in-one device that is a card reader, CD-burner, DVD-player. It can drive a TV for viewing. You have options of zooming, rotating etc. images as you view them.

Q. I get a “Disk Full” message from Word 97 when there are several giga-bytes available.

A. There are several things that are known to cause this. For example, if you are running AT&T's mail it runs a task bgmail.exe, or if you have corrupted files on the drive. See KB article 137918. It can happen if you have corrupted image files as part of your document. But perhaps the first thing you should do is see if you have installed the service packs for Office 97—you can still get it at <http://www.softwarepatch.com/office/officesr2.html>.

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.



Back-up, Continued from page 13

friends at a special discount price of just \$34. To take advantage of this special price, you need to go to <http://www.usergroups.tore.com> and click on any of the yellow "Buy Now" buttons. This will take you to the secure web order form where you can order your copy of Acronis True Image 8.0 at the user group discount. Complete the form including the special order code of UGNL0804 and submit the form. Your product will be processed in a few hours and will be delivered in 2-3 days.

If you have any questions about this article or how to backup your hard drive, please contact me at barlow@ugr.com. I will get back to you shortly with the answers to your questions. I would like to see everyone's computer protected with a good backup approach. The method outlined in this article should do exactly that for your computer. Don't be sorry. Backup your computer today.

GeneBarlow

User Group Relations

PO Box 911600

St George, UT 84791-1600

gene@ugr.com

This is one of a series of monthly technical articles that I plan to distribute on a regular basis in the coming months. Watch for them and learn more about your computer and its hard drive.

Post Your Biz on *dacs.org*

We would like to post a directory of our members' business services on the DACS web site.

These would preferably be computer related, hardware and software solutions, Web design, etc., but can include Accounting, Travel, Advertising, Public Relations, or any other business service that you might be able to provide to all our members.

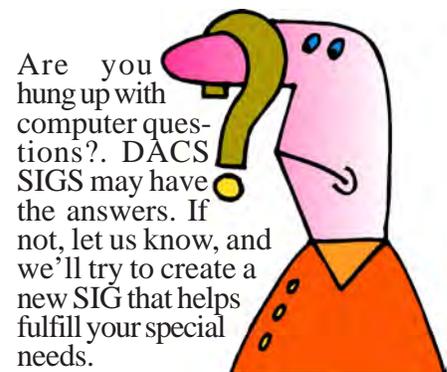
At some future date we may include the directory in our newsletter.

To get your listing, post your name, business, phone, e-mail and Web address to dacsprez@dacs.org.

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.



Are you hung up with computer questions?. DACS SIGS may have the answers. If not, let us know, and we'll try to create a new SIG that helps fulfill your special needs.

SIG NOTES, Continued from page 8

send something, just delete the questionable e-mail without opening it.

Another member described problems networking a Mac OS 9 machine and another machine running Mac OS X 10.3. If the second machine was booted into Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X 10.1, the machines could see other, but not if the second machine was booted into 10.3. It seems that question will need further investigation.

Finally we covered the planned topic to demonstrate an outbound software firewall called Little Snitch from Objective Development for \$24.95. (See <http://www.obdev.at/products/littlesnitch/index.html>.) This is a great little program that does one job well. It installs as a new component in the System Preferences, and complements Mac OS X's inbound firewall which is found as a tab under the Sharing component of System Preferences. If you click on the Little Snitch icon in System Preferences, you'll see the starter set of rules that allow pro-

grams like Safari and Mail to establish outbound connections to the Internet. The rules specify which ports a program can use and/or which IP network addresses it can contact.

Internet traffic tends to flow between machines over certain well-known ports. For instance your Web browser receives Web pages over port 80 (http) or, for secure Web sites, 443 (https). Your mail client may use port 110 to download POP (post office protocol) mail, or port 25 (smtp) to send mail. If a new program not in the rules tries to establish an Internet connection, you'll be notified and asked if you want to allow or deny it just this once, until the program exits, or forever. Your decision will be recorded in the firewall rules.

As you use various applications, you'll find out which ones contact the Internet. Some you would expect like chat programs, but others you may not because they are designed normally to open or work with files on your own machine. Quite often such a program will make an Internet connection when it starts up to check for an updated version of itself. With

Little Snitch you have complete control on what contact your Macintosh makes with the Internet.

In the next meeting on October 7 we will demonstrate iTunes, and if time permits, try some networking between OS X and OS 9.

Web Design. After a summer break, the web design SIG started again on September 21 with a look at the basics of setting up a website. The importance of planning ahead was stressed, taking into consideration domain name registration, server choices, the targeted audience, content and goals for a successful website.

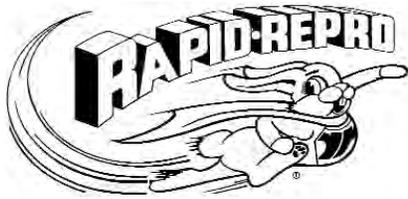
At the next meeting, on October 19, we will take a look at the intricacies of Cascading Style Sheets, and how they can help maintain the consistent look of a page - regardless of browser or operating systems.

If you are creating a website, join the meetings, ask questions, and pick up some helpful tips!

Visit www.annagraphics.com/sigsite for more information, links and notes of previous meetings

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Future Events

October 5 • Bill Sweeney • IBM Prototype Internet Applications
November 2 • TBA

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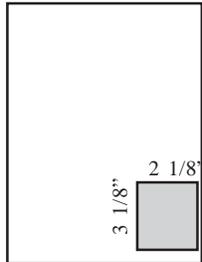
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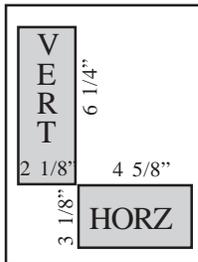
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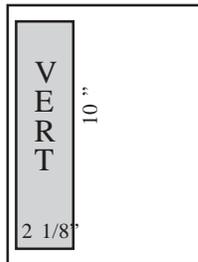
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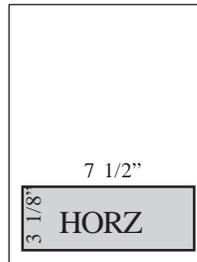
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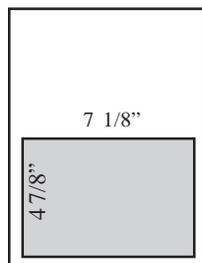
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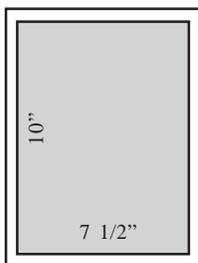
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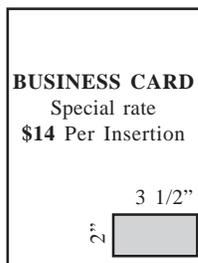
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We sponsor or participate in community support projects by collecting, repairing, and redistributing used computer equipment and software to community service providers such as schools, libraries, and patient/client support groups. DACS members provide pickup, refurbishing, installation, and training assistance as needed. Firms or individuals with equipment to donate should leave a message on the DACS Infoline (203-748-4330). or send an email to recycling@dacs.org.

The Voice for Joanie program was created in 1992 through the initiative of DACS member, Shirley Fredlund. This program provides computer-assisted speech for victims of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis ("Lou Gehrig's Disease"). DACS members have contributed volunteer time and technical assistance since the program began. Voice for Joanie and DACS have earned national computer industry recognition and financial assistance for this vital collaboration.

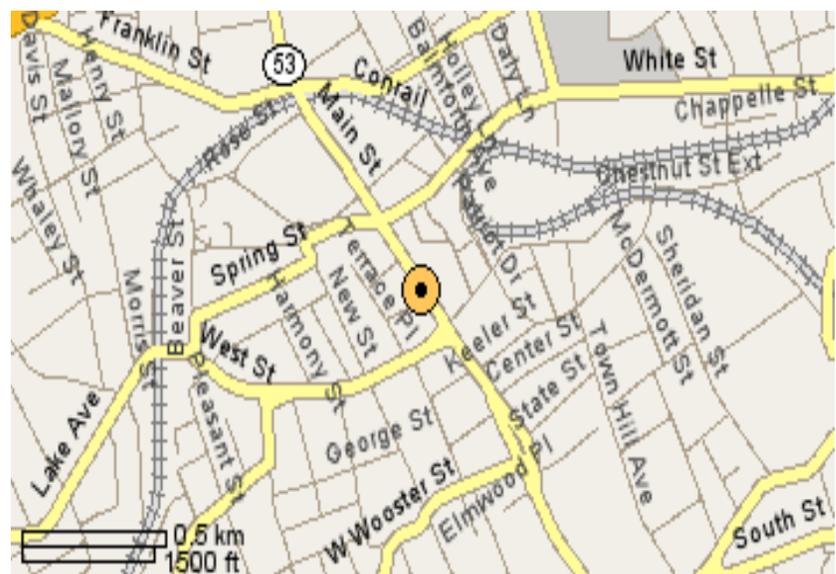
Our general meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month in the Danbury Hospital Auditorium at 7 p.m. These meetings are open to the public. The main presentation is scheduled from 8-9:30, preceded by casual networking, announcements and Random Access, an informal question and answer session. A free product raffle is often held at the conclusion of the main presentation.

In addition to the general meeting, DACS sponsors many special interest groups (SIGs) where members can learn and share information about a specific topic. Each SIG plans its own meeting schedule and program topics.

Our newsletter, *dacs.doc* is published monthly for our members, and mailed to arrive before the general meeting. It features articles written by members and others on timely topics including product and software reviews, issues and trends in personal computing and "how-to" articles on sound, video, digital photography, etc. In addition, each issues includes the calendar of meetings, announcements on SIGs and other DACS events. *dacs.doc* has won numerous prizes over the years for its design and content.

Through its activities, DACS offers numerous opportunities to network both professionals and computer hobbyists. Our Special Interest Groups are an excellent way for members to both learn and share application or hardware knowledge. Any DACS member can form a special interest group on any topic where there is interest. Most SIGs meet in our Resource Center in downtown Danbury.

If you have concerns, requests, or suggestions regarding DACS or its programs, please contact dacsprez@dacs.org. DACS officers and board members' phone numbers are listed on page 3 of *dacs.doc*.



The DACS Resource Center is in Ives Manor, Lower Level, 198 Main Street, Danbury, CT 06810 (203-748-4330).



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