

**WHERE WILL DIGITAL PHOTO  
TECHNOLOGY TAKE YOU  
THIS HOLIDAY  
SEASON?**



**EXPLORE THE  
POSSIBILITIES AT OUR  
NEXT MEETING, NOVEMBER 2**

## From the Editor

### You're The Boss!

By Patrick Libert

#### Elections!

Did the titles peak your curiosity? That was my intention.

Two crucial election events are about to happen:

- The National midterm election
- The DACS Board Director election

I am always puzzled by the lack of interest in and the poor turnout for elections in the USA.

Unlike the situation

in my native country, France, which is currently rocked by violent demonstrations and protests against upcoming major changes in social programs, we are totally able as US citizens to choose what we want by VOTING! We hem and haw, rant and rave about politicians and their policies yet when it comes to voicing our opinions effectively, we stay home and often say, "My vote won't make any difference."

**HORSE FEATHERS!** We are a country of more than 300 million persons of which approximately 260 million are eligible voters. In most elections, we are barely able to get 50% to show up at the polls. In the last major French election, 84% of the voters participated! Just imagine how much we would be able to change if 218 million US voters let their politicians know how they felt. Among the many things I learned in the US Marines Corps is the fact that there is no such word as "can't." When your thoughts drift towards the ex-

cuse of "I can't do this", give it a second thought. Your country depends on you more than ever.

This leads me into the second election event, the DACS Board of Directors annual election in December. Serving as a DACS Director is a great privilege and allows you to steer this Society in the direction you prefer. It is not a demanding position requiring only a monthly meeting commitment. Plus, having this participation show on your résumé is most favorable.

I have been a Director for four years and you would not believe how much I have learned just from the discussions at the Board meetings.

We would like you to be involved. Email us this month at [dacsboard@dacs.org](mailto:dacsboard@dacs.org) with any suggestions and applications for this position. We welcome you with open arms.

#### Presto!

As if by magic, Xmarks disappears and reappears once more. Referring to Jim Scheef's current column, Xmarks announced earlier that they were not going to survive and I promptly removed this useful software from my hard drive. They're ba-a-a-ack! Shall I re-subscribe or wait to see if it will last? Can I trust a company who may have used sneaky marketing tactics? It's puzzlement!

#### Apple, Please Stop! I Can't Take It.

I was just beginning to recover from my iPad drooling envy when Steve Jobs announced a new and improved MacBook Air at Tuesday's presentation.

Budgetary constraints and functionality had convinced me that it would be wise to wait for the iPad with built in camera which will probably surface in the Spring of 2011. Now there is another attractive possibility, albeit more costly, to satisfy my craving for a solid-state machine that can be taken anywhere without fear of hard drive failure. Weighing 2.3 pounds and not quite 12 inches wide with high resolution and a built in camera, it may cause me to seek treatment for chronic drooling.

#### Smile, You're on Candid Camera!

November's presentation is always one of my favorites. Gary Spring from Ritz Camera (<http://www.ritzcamera.com>) on Plumtrees Road in Danbury usually arrives with an entourage of photographic equipment worthy of a modern Ansel Adams.

*From the Editor, Cont. on page 5*

## Membership Information

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### Postmaster

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## Editorial Committee

Managing Editor:	Patrick Libert
Associate Editor:	Allan Ostergren
Production Editor:	Marc Cohen
Copy Editor:	Patrick Libert

## Contributors

Charles Bovaird	Richard Corzo
Richard DiFranco	Drew Kwashnak
John Lansdale	Rob Limbaugh
Bruce Preston	Jim Scheef
Joseph Tobin	Annette van Ommeren

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



Patrick Libert  
APCUG Liaison  
[plibert@dacs.org](mailto:plibert@dacs.org)



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## Officers

**PRESIDENT:** Richard Corzo (203) 797-1518 [dacsprez@dacs.org](mailto:dacsprez@dacs.org)  
**VICE PRESIDENT PROGRAMS:** Chris Furey  
**SECRETARY:** Bruce Preston • **TREASURER:** Charles Bovaird

## Directors

[dacsboard@dacs.org](mailto:dacsboard@dacs.org)

Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	<a href="mailto:cbovaird@dacs.org">cbovaird@dacs.org</a>
Richard Corzo	(203) 797-1518	<a href="mailto:rcorzo@dacs.org">rcorzo@dacs.org</a>
Drew Kwashnak	(203) 910-6605	<a href="mailto:akwashnak@dacs.org">akwashnak@dacs.org</a>
Patrick Libert	(860) 567-9586	<a href="mailto:plibert@dacs.org">plibert@dacs.org</a>
Rob Limbaugh	(203) 648-9176	<a href="mailto:relimbaugh@dacs.org">relimbaugh@dacs.org</a>
Bruce Preston	(203) 431-2920 (days)	<a href="mailto:bpreston@dacs.org">bpreston@dacs.org</a>
Jim Scheef	(860) 355-0034	<a href="mailto:jscheef@dacs.org">jscheef@dacs.org</a>
Jeff Setaro	(203) 648-9925	<a href="mailto:jasetaro@yahoo.com">jasetaro@yahoo.com</a>
Joseph Tobin		<a href="mailto:jtobin@dacs.org">jtobin@dacs.org</a>
Annette van Ommeren	(914) 232-0149	<a href="mailto:avanommeren@dacs.org">avanommeren@dacs.org</a>
Andy Woodruff	(203) 744-9588	<a href="mailto:awoodruff@dacs.org">awoodruff@dacs.org</a>

## Committees

**NEWSLETTER:** Patrick Libert: [dacseditor@dacs.org](mailto:dacseditor@dacs.org), (860) 567-9586

**PROGRAM:** Chris Furey ([VPrograms@dacs.org](mailto:VPrograms@dacs.org))

**WEB MASTERS:** Richard Corzo ([rcorzo@dacs.org](mailto:rcorzo@dacs.org)), (203)797-1518  
 Annette van Ommeren ([avanommeren@dacs.org](mailto:avanommeren@dacs.org)), (914)232-0149

**MARKETING AND PR:** Position open ([pr@dacs.org](mailto:pr@dacs.org))

**APCUG LIAISON:** Patrick Libert ([plibert@dacs.org](mailto:plibert@dacs.org))

**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/E-mail	
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	( e )
ASP.Net	Chuck Fizer	<a href="mailto:cfizer@dacs.org">cfizer@dacs.org</a>	
C#, VB	Chuck Fizer	<a href="mailto:cfizer@dacs.org">cfizer@dacs.org</a>	
Electronics	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	( d e )
Interface-Instrumentation	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	( d e )
Adobe Web & DTP	Annette van Ommeren	(914) 232-0149	( e )
Statistics/Data Analysis	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	( d e )
SQL Server, MySQL-5	Chuck Fizer	<a href="mailto:cfizer@dacs.org">cfizer@dacs.org</a>	
Malware	Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748	( d )
VB.Net, Visual Basic	Chuck Fizer	<a href="mailto:cfizer@dacs.org">cfizer@dacs.org</a>	

## Directors' Notes

**B**oard Meeting of Wednesday, October 13, 2010. Meeting called to order at 7:10PM by Richard Corzo, President

Attending: Richard Corzo, Patrick Libert, Charlie Bovaird, Jim Scheef, Andy Woodruff, Bruce Preston, Drew Kwashnak

The minutes of the last meeting were presented and approved

### Treasurer's Report:

Cash in Bank	\$6,105.62
Postal Inventory	\$38.33
Total Assets	\$6,143.95
Less Pre-Paid Dues	<u>\$80.00</u>
Net	\$6,063.95

Membership 163

Newsletter 59 mailed to members;  
 160 members have valid e-mail addresses

### Old Business

#### 1. General meetings

October: E-book Readers - Bruce Preston; Review: Richard Corzo

November: New Trends in Digital Cameras - Gary Spring of Ritz Camera. Preview: Chris Furey, Review: Andy Woodruff. We Need to get something to Rich DiFranco for the press release as soon as possible.

December: DIY 3D Printing and Rapid Prototyping - CT Hackerspace. Preview: Rob Limbaugh (un-confirmed), Jim Scheef (backup), Review: Jim or Patrick depending on who writes the Preview.

January: tentative - Music Workshop - com - position/editing/mixing – possible presenters: Andy Woodruff/Sean Henderson? Andy will contact Sean.

February: State of the Internet - John Patrick (remote from Florida) Preview: Andy, Review: OPEN

Other topic(s): Virtualization: Chris Furey had suggested that this might be an interesting topic for a general meeting. We will follow up with him

General Meeting dates for 2010: 11/2, 12/7  
 General Meeting dates for 2011: TBD (Danbury Hospital books the schedule for the meeting rooms in December)

#### 2. Open positions - Charlie has provided descriptions for the first two as follows:

**Backup/replacement for Treasurer**  
 Charlie says: "Not a heavy requirement – we primarily need a person who uses Quicken" – we should try to solicit someone for the position during the GM break.

**Membership Chairperson** - primarily

*Directors' Notes, Cont. on page 5*

## Meeting Preview

### Holiday Sneak Peek at Digital Cameras and Personal Electronics

By Chris Furey



AS THE JOKER ONCE asked about Batman, "Where does he get all those wonderful toys?"

To help provide a sneak peek at what should be in your letter to Santa this year, DACS is pleased to welcome back Gary Spring, our local camera and electronics expert from Ritz Camera (<http://www.ritzcamera.com>) in the Plumtrees Plaza in Danbury. You may recognize his name. That's because Gary is our "go to guy" on the subject of digital cameras and taking great pictures, and he's been a favorite presenter in months past.

It seems there are more choices than ever when shopping for a digital camera. But today, features that used to be exclusive to high-end cameras have trickled down to even entry level models. Gary will show off some of his most sought after holiday wares and answer questions so you can find out which model is right for you.



He'll bring along some of his favorites from the realm of personal electronics too. And he'll share his thoughts and opinions on what's hot and why among smart phones, and where they fit as multi-purpose devices for the casual digital photography enthusiast.

This would be a great time to invite your friends, colleagues, and neighbors, and join us Tuesday, November 2nd at our next general meeting.

DACS meetings are held at the Danbury Hospital auditorium. Activities begin at 6:30 p.m.

with registration and casual networking. The meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. with annual members meeting and other regular features. The main presentation begins at 8:00 p.m. The meeting is scheduled to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

DACS General Meetings are free and open to the public. Members and prior attendees are encouraged to extend invitations to anyone interested in this topic.

Danbury Area Computer Society (DACs) is a registered nonprofit and has been serving the region since 1990. Members receive an award-winning newsletter, members-only workshops and events, and access to volunteer phone support.

### PC Music Production Workshop

The fourth Annual PC Music Production Workshop will be held on Friday, November 19, from 7-10 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center. Sean Henderson will report on the History of computer music, followed by a survey of selected DAW software/hardware, including Audacity and Anvil Studio. Remaining time will be spent on a hands-on project.

Admission will be free to DACS members, with a Small fee for the general public.

Contact: Sean 203-837-7068, or Chris Furey, VP Programs

## Meeting Review:

### E-book Readers

By Richard Corzo

THIS IS DEFINITELY the year of the electronic book readers. Of course, the Amazon Kindle has been out since 2007. The Sony Reader, sitting quietly in the background, was actually introduced in 2006. Barnes and Noble came out with their Nook late last year. And this year Apple introduced their iPad, which has the iBook app and iBookstore. So with all these choices longtime DACS member Bruce Preston couldn't have been timelier with his presentation on e-book readers.

Bruce explained that there are two display technologies: reflective, low-

power E Ink used by the dedicated readers and LCD used by the iPad. Downloading of electronic books can be through a USB connection, Wi-Fi, or 3G wireless.



Then, there are different e-book formats to consider. ePub is widely supported except on the Kindle. Amazon's Kindle books are mostly supported only on the Kindle device but can also work on more general-purpose devices like the iPad through a Kindle app. PDF documents

are universally supported, and some devices support text, HTML, or Word documents.

If necessary, you can convert documents using an application like the free Calibre (<http://www.calibre.org>), which runs on Windows, a Mac, or on Linux. Calibre can also be used as an e-reader and to download free books.

With e-book readers you can subscribe to magazines and newspapers as well.

Bruce also demonstrated the text-to-speech feature on the Amazon Kindle and Apple iPad. This is handy for the sight-impaired and you can even adjust the speed to get through a book faster.

Bruce also showed us a Sony Reader, which is the third device he owns, and offered his impressions of the Nook, which he had a chance to try. He mentioned that you might be able to try out some of these reader devices at your local library.

It was great for Bruce to explain all the options in the marketplace, and of course very timely with the holidays coming up!

*Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 3*

lobby greeter, sign-in, maintain list - but not a recruiter.

Managing Editor DACS.DOC, as of Jan. 1, 2011 (replacing Patrick Libert)

3. December Board Elections - half of the Director positions are up for renewal. Richard will contact the current Directors whose terms are ending to see if they are running, but we will probably have at least one open position needing to be filled.
4. Using Drupal for the DACS Web site - no change of status reported
5. Scholarship committee - no change of status reported
6. Membership info required when member joins using PayPal - resolved, tested, working.
7. TechFest report - Dave Mawdsley, Charlie Bovaird, Drew Kwashnak, and Jim Scheef attended - The DACS booth was well received with a good turnout and lots of interest. Family membership feature of DACS was a draw.

**New Business**

We have two issues - receiving e-mail addressed to <somebody>@dacs.org, and sending out e-mails as a FROM: <somebody>@dacs.org. The receiving can be done trivially as it only requires a forwarding capability; this is often a no-cost option, as it doesn't require any server space. The services we are currently using at Mags.Net will shortly become unavailable as they are on a server that is being replaced, and the e-mail server software will not support the old configuration. Our requirements include handling multiple aliases (one externally visible e-mail address expands to multiple delivery addresses.) Rob has suggested ZoneEdit, Jim will need to investigate.

Andy proposed building a wood tabletop frame to run the length of the RC conference table, which would organize the AC power and Cat-5 cabling. He asked for collective design suggestions.

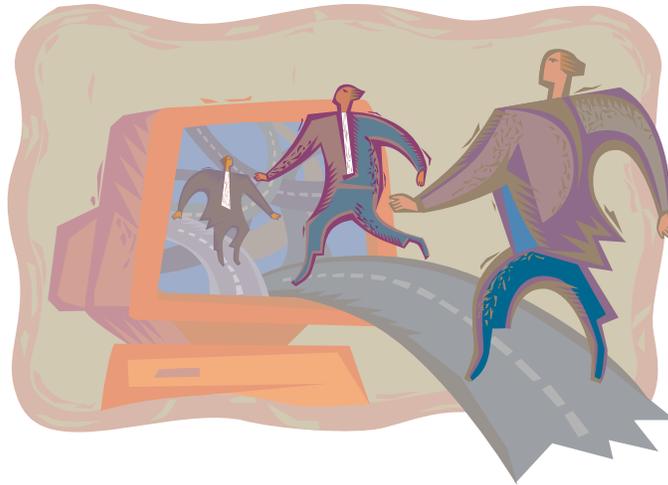
The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

—Bruce Preston

*From the Editor, Cont. from page 2*

Digital photography evolves daily. Having an expert such as Gary to bring us up-to-date is a privilege. His knowledge of the current models and trends will be very useful, especially if we are thinking of giving or upgrading our own photographic equipment at the time of the holidays.

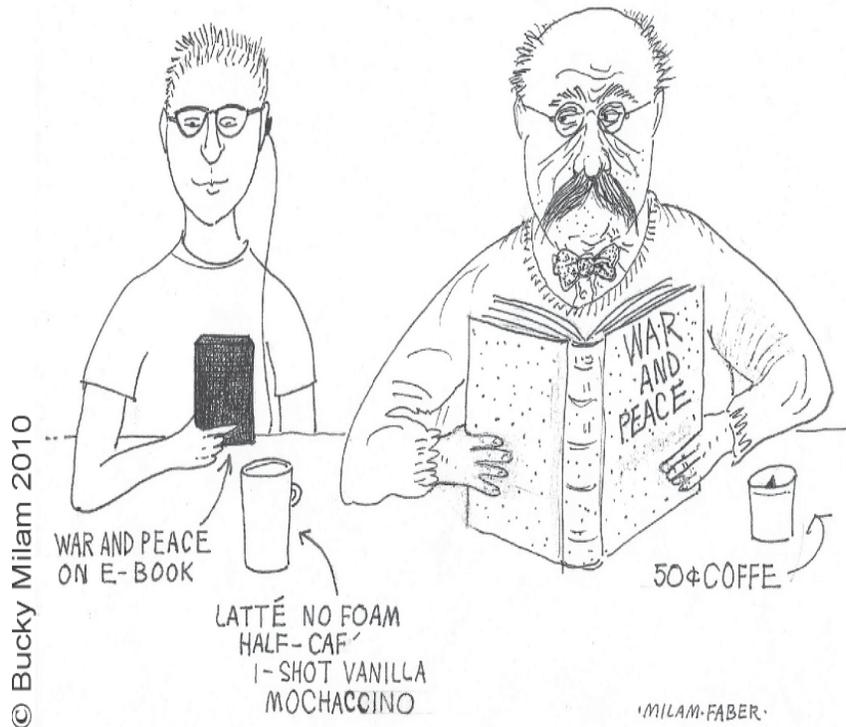
I will look forward to seeing you at the General Meeting on Tuesday, November 2. Vote first, then enjoy the meeting.



## Leadership has its Rewards

Do you want to get more from your membership?  
Join the DACS board

From the dawn of personal computing, DACS has been at the forefront of the new technology, with an award-winning newsletter and Website and national recognition for its programs. As member of the board, you can share your leadership skills and ideas, and have access to a thriving network of information and opportunity.



# Special Interest Groups

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## SIG NOTES: November 2010

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

**Contact:** Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920 (*bpreston@dacs.org*).

Meets on 2nd Tuesday, 7p.m., by virtual connection.

**Next meeting:** November 9 (check Website for technical details)

**ASP.Net.** Focuses on Web site/server application development using Microsoft Visual Studio, C#, VB, Javascript and SQL Server programming tools. Starts with Random Access, followed by a programming discussion with examples.

**Contact:** Chuck Fizer (*cfizer@dacs.org*).

Meets 1st Wednesday, 4-6 :p.m. and 6-8 p.m. in a virtual session. (Note change below)

**Next Meeting:** November 3 at DACS Resource Center

**Drupal.** Covers all things on Drupal, the open source content management system (CMS).

**Contact:** Jim Scheef (*jscheef@dacs.org*).

Meets on the second Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center, or go to the DACS Community Forum (<http://www.dacs.org/forum/>) within the Members-only area.

**Next meeting:** November 11

**Digital Imaging.** 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:** November 24

**Jobs.** Networking and jobs search

**Contact:** Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 (*aam@mags.net*).

Meets by e-mail.

**Next meeting:** TBA

**Linux.** Provides Help in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. Also of interest to Apple owners using OS X.

Contact: Jim Ritterbush, *linuxsig@dacs.org*

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

**Next Meeting:** November 17

**Mac.** Focuses on all aspects of the Mac and iPhone operating systems.

**Contact:** Richard Corzo (*macsig@dacs.org*).

Meets 1st Thursday, 7 p.m. at DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** November 4

**PC Maintenance.** Review of PC hardware and OpSys maintenance and use.

**Contact:** Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 (*aam@mags.net*).

Meets irregularly, announced by e-mail.

**Server.** Explores Back Office server and client applications, including Win NT Servers and MS Outlook. SIG is on hiatus and presently merged into the Drupal SIG.

**Contact:** Jim Scheef (*jscheef@telemarksys.com*), or go to the DACS Community Forum: <http://www.dacs.org/forum/>, within the Members-only area

**VB.Net.** Focuses on Smart Client Windows application development using Visual Studio, VB, C# and SQL Server programming tools.

**Contact:** Chuck Fizer (*cfizer@dacs.org*) or Greg Austin, 845 494-5095 (*greg.austin@ryebrookpba.org*).

**Next Meeting:** November 3

**Web Design and DTP.** Learn about Adobe software for web, graphics and desktop publishing.

**Contact:** Annette van Ommeren (*avo@annagraphics.com*).

Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

**Next Meeting:** November 16

## SIG News & Events

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**Drupal.** In October, Andy Woodruff, Drupal SIG regular and new DACS board member, demonstrated Mail Chimp (*mailchimp.com*), a website service for email list management. Andy plans to use it to promote his music web sites.

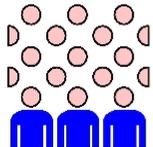
Mail Chimp, free for lists of less than 1000 addresses, allows you to build and manage your email list, design HTML email campaigns, send emails that comply with the CANSPAM Act, and track your campaign results. It seems easy enough to use and the process for people to sign up for your email list can be integrated into a Drupal website.

Andy's presentation filled the void when I discovered I had no access to my network and thus no access to my development server. My predicament stemmed from my recent change in ISP from MagsNet to Charter. Yes, it would appear the Dark Side has seduced me. I still recommend MagsNet for home DSL connections when you want a service that allows you to do things that are more difficult to do on other ISPs – like host a website or run your own email server. Charter has already renegeged on promises made during the sales process. Next month we can discuss some of the lessons learned.

*SIG Notes, Cont. on page 11*

# November 2010

## Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																														
	1	 <p>6:30 P.M. GENERAL MTG</p>	 <p>4 PM ASP Net 7 PM C# VB.Net Chuck Fizer 203 798-9996</p>	 <p>Macintosh 7:00 PM Richard Corzo macsig@dacs.org</p>																																																																																																																
7	8	 <p>MS ACCESS 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Bruce Preston bpreston@mags.ne</p>	 <p>7:00 PM Board of Directors</p>	 <p>7-9 PM Drupal Jim Scheef 860 355-0034</p>		 <p>DACS.DOC Deadline</p>																																																																																																														
14	15	 <p>Web Design Annette van Ommeren 914 232-0149</p>	 <p>7:30 PM Linux Drew Kwashnak 203 910-6477</p>		 <p>PC Music Production Workshop Sean Henderson 203-837-7068</p>	20																																																																																																														
21	22	23	 <p>7:00 PM Digital Imaging Ken Graff 203 775-6667</p>		26	27																																																																																																														
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# Commentary

## Circuit Writer Version 8.2

By Jim Scheef

**T**HIS IS A VERY special month: if I finish writing this promptly and newsletter production goes as planned, you will receive this issue the day before Election Day. Therefore we need to talk about voting.



### An Important Election – Trite, but True

Lately, every election seems to be the most important ever and while that may sound trite, it is true this time again. From the news

and all the advertising on television, you would think this election is about taxes and big government. Well, you would be wrong. This election is about the Supreme Court. Back in January, the Justices nominated by Bush 43, who pledged they would abide by settled law and would not be “activists on the bench”, overturned nearly a century of precedent and ruled that corporations have the same rights to political speech as an individual. (Funny how I didn’t hear a single Republican complain about judicial activism during the confirmation hearings for Elena Kagan.) They made this ruling even though a corporation cannot vote or run for office and the individuals that made up the corporation already have full access to political speech.

You are now seeing the results of this ruling on your television screens – political ads (ones that tell you specifically for whom you should vote or vote against rather than “issue” ads) running one after another. At the end of the ad there is fine print and a soft voice saying the name of the organization that paid for the advertisement you just saw. If the ad was paid for by an organization other than a candidate or a political party, odds are it was funded by money from anonymous donors. It is this anonymity behind which corporations can hide as they push candidates friendly to their agenda. There has been much talk about how this is an avenue for money from

foreign corporations or even foreign governments. Is Exxon a U.S. corporation? Most of its facilities are overseas. BP has more facilities in the U.S. than does Exxon, yet they are a foreign corporation. CITGO is a U.S. company owned by the government of Venezuela thru a chain of corporations. The biggest problem with political campaign finance law right now is that so much money is funneled through anonymous channels that we just don’t know who is funding this advertising. Big Oil is just the tip of the iceberg. How much do you want to bet that the healthcare and banking industries are spending millions on campaigns right here in the Fifth District of Connecticut?

I hope you donated to the candidates of your choice. For more election cycles than I care to admit, I let “the other guy” fund political campaigns. This meant I had no one to blame but myself if my candidate was the loser come election night. Unfortunately, money is speech so now I put my money where my mouth is and donate what I can to the candidates I support. Volunteering your time is another way to take action. Candidates always need people to canvas either by phone or door to door. Because DACS is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit, federal regulations prohibit me from making specific endorsements here in the pages of DACS.doc – something the Supreme Court has yet to overturn.

When you distill all this down the choice really is quite clear: do you want to return to the policies that got us in this mess or hang in there for the change we really need?

### Facebook Apps Selling Your Personal Information

Do you use any Facebook apps? Do your kids (or your grandchildren)? This is widely reported breaking news and especially timely given the discussion about Facebook during AskDACs at the general meeting this month. According to the reports, all the ten most popular Facebook applications gather your name and user id along with the names and user ids of your Facebook friends and then sell that

information to third parties. The fact that Facebook is not doing this directly is only semantic as application developers pay for access to Facebook. The initial report appears to have been in the Wall Street Journal but since most people don’t have access to the WSJ website, here are links to a blog on Ars Technica, “Popular Facebook apps found to be collecting, selling user info” by Jacqui Cheng ([tinyurl.com/28dkhgd](http://tinyurl.com/28dkhgd)); the New York Times, “Facebook Acknowledges Privacy Issue With Applications” by Miguel Helft ([tinyurl.com/328jd84](http://tinyurl.com/328jd84)) and on the WSJ, “Facebook in Privacy Breach: Top-Ranked Applications Transmit Personal IDs, a Journal Investigation Finds” by Emily Steel and Geoffrey A. Fowler ([tinyurl.com/27fnslp](http://tinyurl.com/27fnslp)). The WSJ article includes a video. Among the “bad” apps is the popular and seemingly innocuous Farmville, so you can’t judge an app by the animals it keeps.

### News on Xmarks Breaks Fast

Many times the questions and discussion during AskDACs has centered on how to synchronize Internet Favorites (in Windows-speak) or Bookmarks (everywhere else). Many times members mentioned a service called Xmarks ([xmarks.com](http://xmarks.com)) that was not only cross browsers, but also works between Windows and the Macintosh. So my surprise was probably no greater than that of the thousands of Xmarks users when I received a notice that Xmarks would shut down operations on January 10, 2011, apparently due to a lack of funding. Gosh, imagine that a free service on the Internet could suffer from a lack of funding! To test support, they asked users to register their willingness to pay \$10 per year to save the service. Since I had just set up two machines to test this out, I removed the browser extensions and deleted my account. That was last week. Read “No more Xmarks!? No!!” by Steven J. Vaughan-Nichols on ZDNet ([tinyurl.com/2vjp2hy](http://tinyurl.com/2vjp2hy)) for a typical reaction. Now this week we learn that Xmarks has been rescued in “Xmarks Lives!” ([tinyurl.com/36q2ojy](http://tinyurl.com/36q2ojy)) from the same blogger. My cynical bet is that this ploy revived the developers’ original business plan which was never to build an actual viable business but to sell the application to someone else. The resurrection announcement does not specify the buyer.

### Comments on my commentary

Recently I ran into someone who said he really enjoyed reading my column, but had recently allowed his DACS member-



ship to lapse. While I like hearing that readers enjoy what I write (even if you don't always agree), I'm troubled when those readers drop their membership. Over the years, we have resisted the temptation to limit the newsletter to members only. So as we continue to make the newsletter available on the website for the world to enjoy, please keep in mind that someone must produce this newsletter each month. The team of people who publish this newsletter – twelve issues each year – are all dedicated DACS members. We watch the membership slowly shrink each month and wonder how much longer the club can remain a

viable organization. When you drop your membership, you are voting and your vote tells us that our efforts are no longer worth the effort. If the club is not worthy of your support, for whom are we writing, editing, formatting, printing and mailing this newsletter?

This election cycle I have tried to avoid overtly political columns. Generally I tie things to a theme of computing technology, your rights to use the digital music and movies you buy, and your on-line civil liberties. As politics has become increasingly polarized, these issues have sunk out of sight behind the discourse over issues that no one

can define, like “big government.” I believe the blind anger expressed by some people is fueled by the talking heads on television and radio that compete with each other to make increasingly extreme statements to drive their ratings so they can make more money. If someone paid them more to be liberals, they'd switch sides in a heartbeat. There was an article in the Styles section of the New York Times ([tinyurl.com/3xo6349](http://tinyurl.com/3xo6349)) about how Ann Coulter, the devil in a black cocktail dress, is remaking her image because she has been out flanked on the right! I'd be rich if I could make this stuff up, but unfortunately I can't.

## Print Technology

### A Font of Knowledge

By Dave Chrestenson



AVE YOU EVER gotten a small print from your camera or cell phone and thought it looked pretty nice? And decided to have an 8x10 made? And discovered that diagonal lines stair stepped across the page and everything else looked like they were made of colored Legos? And realized why that happened? It's because all pictures are made out of pixels, this is called bitmapped, and there were not enough pixels in your image. So, when it was enlarged, you saw the individual pixels. Now, try an experiment. Open Word (or your favorite word processor,) select Times New Roman, size 6 point, and put an “s” on a page. Now change the size to 60 point and put another “s” on the page next to it. Now add a third “s”, this time at 600 points. Now print the page out. Look Ma, no pixels! What happened? Why don't characters pixilate also? Welcome to the wonderful, and confusing, world of typography. Let's see why, and learn a bit about what's going on.

First, a given character set, or typeface, is contained in a file and is called a font. Now, if you've ever thought about it, you probably assumed that there was a bitmap for each character in the font, and when you pressed a key the system found that bitmap and printed it. Not so easy. If that were the case you would get pixilation. And that was the way it was done, once upon a time, and there are a few cases where it is still useful. (I'll get to those later.) Instead, each character is stored as a set of formulas, or equations. If you remember your analytic geometry you will know that any equation can be plotted as a line or curve. So, for a character, there is a set of equa-

tions, each of which defines a part of the outline or the character. A straight dash would be easy, four equations, one for each side. A dollar sign would be more complicated. When you key in a character the equations are adjusted to define the point size you specified, then the outline of the character is created, then it is filled with the color you selected. (For those seeking more enlightenment, Google “Bezier curves.”) But it gets a lot more complicated. For each character there is more than one set. Bold type is not just fat type, if so the “counters” (the little openings in letters like e and o) would get filled in. So the typographer has to design an entirely unique shape for each bold character, one that looks like the normal one, but is heavier. Italics? Same thing. Another design. Italic Bold. Yep, another design. And so on. And how many characters are there? Well, let's see. There's the 26 letters of the alphabet of course, 10 digits, and, say, 14 special characters. That's fifty. But how about upper and lower case. Add another 26. Small caps. Another. But just 14 special characters? Did you know there are four different dashes? And points of ellipsis. And umlauts. And so on. In fact, one of the formats for storing fonts can contain more than a million characters, and it's not uncommon for a well designed font to have over one thousand.

Back to you pressing a key. What happens? First, the character formulas are selected. Then a kerning table that's also built into the font is read. This compares the character you selected with the character immediately before it. Certain combinations of characters have to be printed closer together or farther apart to look correct; this is the function of the kerning table. Next

another table is checked. It's been found that if exactly the same shape of character is printed in two different sizes they won't look the same to the eye. So this table looks at the point size you selected and adjusts the character thickness appropriately. (Larger sizes are thinner and closer together.) Then a “hints” table is referred to. This is used when the character is going to a device with low resolution, such as a monitor. (It adds anti-aliasing to reduce the “threshold effect.”) It also makes adjustments to the character to make it display more legibly. Finally, after some more manipulation which I won't take the space to go into here, your character appears somewhere.

Now, all of this is the responsibility of the font designer. And good ones take all of the above into consideration. It's certainly possible to skip some of the above. Ever seen these CD's “Thousand's of fonts for \$29.95?” I seriously doubt that they've put much time into each of the above factors. You get what you pay for.

And lastly, I had mentioned above that there are still a few bitmapped fonts around. Why? Because regular fonts, no matter how well designed, have problems with legibility when displayed at small sizes on a monitor. This is a common problem in web design. Bit-mapped fonts are specifically designed for this purpose. So, the next time you key in “Dear Sirs,” take a few seconds to think and appreciate the over-worked, under-appreciated font designer who spent many sleepless hours to let you make your document look pretty.

Still curious? There are many books on the subject; the one to start with is “The Complete Manual of Typography” by James Felici.

*DAVE CHRESTENSON is a member of the Fox Valley PC Association, Illinois. It appeared in the May 2010 Issue, Fox Tales; [www.fvpc.org](http://www.fvpc.org) / [deanholste@sbcglobal.net](mailto:deanholste@sbcglobal.net)*

# Ask DACS

October, 2010

Moderated and Reported by By Jim Scheef

**W**E WELCOME QUESTIONS FROM the floor at the start of our General Meetings. In addition, members who are not able to attend the General meeting may submit questions to [askdacs@dacs.org](mailto:askdacs@dacs.org). We will ask the question for you and post the reply in *dacs.doc* and on *dacs.org*. Please provide as much information as possible, since we can't probe during the session.

**Q** – *When I look in Task Manager at the list of running processes, there are often items that I do not recognize. I found a website called Process Library ([processlibrary.com](http://processlibrary.com)) that offers an analysis of what is running on your computer. We have discussed here how many of these sites are not safe, so is it safe to allow this site to scan your computer?*

**A** – There was much discussion that can be summarized as “I am not comfortable allowing any website to run such a scan of my computer.” No one in the room offered any direct experience with allowing the Process Library website to scan their computer. Personally, I have used Process Library as a reference when I find an unfamiliar executable name on a computer. For example, *lvcomsx.exe* is running on my computer. What is it? I paste that name into Yahoo search and find [processlibrary.com](http://processlibrary.com) is the third item in the search results. Following that link I find that *lvcomsx.exe* is used by my Logitech webcam. A little further down the list I find File Inspect Library ([fileinspect.com](http://fileinspect.com)) that confirms that the file in question is from Logitech, which gives me some confidence in the information. Running the Process Library scanner makes me nervous for several reasons that start with the fact that the scanner is an application that you must download and install. Once installed, it will have access to the innermost recesses of your computer and this application is from a website that you just found on the Internet. In other words, you are surrendering your computer and everything on it to this website. Normally we do everything we can to prevent this exact scenario! So the entire question boils down to do you trust [processlibrary.com](http://processlibrary.com) to not

do bad things to your computer? They may be totally legitimate, but once you run that scanner, it is too late to change your mind. One member noted that a scanner showed inconclusive results and then offered to sell an “upgrade.”

**D** - *The original questioner said the Process Library scanner showed processes that are critical parts of Windows and other malware files with the same name. How do I know which is on my computer?*

**A** – Look where the file is installed. Critical Windows process will be in your *\Windows\System32* folder. Naturally there are exceptions, but the first question would be ‘is the process installed in a logical location?’ I once found a process on a client’s computer running from one of the hidden folders where Windows Updates stores undo files. This was obviously a malware program.

**Q** – *One of my coworkers thinks her computer may have been infected by something from Facebook. Is this possible?*

**A** – The short answer is “yes”. Advertising from any website can carry malware. In the worst case, just visiting your Facebook can infect your machine. Facebook applications seem to carry the most risk due to the fact that they are written by third parties and are not vetted by Facebook. Giving an application access to your Facebook account normally gives the application complete access to everything. Earlier this year Facebook changed their default setting from ‘completely open’ to ‘no sharing at all’. This means that you can open up your account to share just what you want to share with just the friends (as in Facebook friends) with whom you

want to share. My June, 2010, column in *DACS.doc* covered Facebook security ([dacs.org/archive/2010-06/feature1.htm](http://dacs.org/archive/2010-06/feature1.htm)).

**Q** – *In my Gmail account there seems to be a different behavior when I’m on Windows 7 versus XP. The difference is when I attach pictures to an email. On XP I could select multiple pictures and click OK and all of the selected pictures would be attached to the email. On Windows 7 this does not work. Is there a change in Windows 7?*

**A** – The discussion first determined that the questioner is using Internet Explorer in both cases with the regular web client for Gmail so the difference centers on the ‘file open’ dialog that is part of Windows. At the meeting the consensus was the problem may be caused by using different versions of Internet Explorer but that does not make sense because the problem is on Windows 7. This one really went undetermined.

**Q** – *I have a Logitech wireless laser mouse that seems to “lock up” on my desktop occasionally. What could cause this?*

**A** – While laser mice tolerate surfaces that would clog a conventional mouse (one with a roller ball), they will stop or behave erratically on some surfaces. Clear or shiny surfaces do not work well. The table on my deck has a glass surface so I use a mouse pad. A member suggested updating the device driver. Another member asked if a 2.4GHz cordless phone was near the computer. The phone will interfere with the radio signals for the mouse. Another suggestion was to move the mouse dongle (the receiver) to the front of the computer.

**Q** – *I was searching online for a less expensive place to buy Microsoft Office and found several places with drastically lower prices than any stores in the area like Best Buy or Staples. I assume these versions of Office are legitimate. Why are these so much less than the prices in the stores?*

**A** – These sources are likely not legitimate. They may be “high quality” copies but there is no way to determine this for

sure before you give your credit card number to the vendor. If you are able to activate the software after the installation, then keep your fingers crossed.

**Q – Does anyone use a surge suppressor when using a laptop?**

**A –** Yes. I use one from APC and there are others. It is one more thing to carry, but it can't hurt!

At the start of the meeting I mentioned that something had come in by email but I did not have it available. That topic was the imminent demise of the Xmarks password synchronization service (*xmarks.com*). See the Circuit Writer column for more on this topic.

Disclaimer: Ask DACS questions come from members by email or from the audience attending the general meeting. Answers are suggestions offered by meeting attendees and represent a consensus of those responding. DACS offers no warranty as to the correctness of the answers and anyone following these suggestions or answers does so at their own risk. In other words, we could be totally wrong!

#### **SIG Notes, Cont. from page 6**

The next Drupal SIG meeting will be Thursday, November 11 at 7pm in the DACS Resource Center.

**Mac.** In October, we explored several short subjects starting with the new Extensions feature of Safari 5. You can look for them at Safari Extensions Gallery under the Safari application menu. You can peruse the different categories in the gallery and install an extension right from the page. They will show up under a new Extensions tab in Safari preferences.

Member Patrick Libert described the extensions which he chose: 1-Click Weather; Widgets which installs a toolbar with weather, RSS feeds, and a world clock; and WOT (Web of Trust) which indicates the safety of each page you visit.

Patrick also explained the application Google Voice and how you can manage which of your phones ring when you receive a call at your Google voice number.

Later, as a follow-up to the general meeting on e-readers, I wanted to show how you could use Pages to export a document to ePub format. I dragged the ePub file into iTunes and synced with my iPhone. I then showed the document on my iPhone inside the iBook app.

## Tips & Tricks

### Best Windows Shortcuts

By Vinny La Bash

**O**NE OF THE BETTER qualities of a good operating system like Windows is that there is almost always more than one way to do something. There are items you can select from a file menu, use a shortcut or execute some kind of keystroke combination to carry out an action.

There are some things you do almost every time you use your computer. The six following shortcuts all use a similar series of keystrokes. If you don't know about these shortcuts you probably haven't been using computers for very long, and you don't know what you're missing.

It doesn't matter whether you're working with music files, photos, videos, documents, spreadsheets or portions of a document. Simply highlight what you want with your mouse, hold down the **Ctrl** key, then press and release the indicated key. Don't forget to release the Ctrl key when you're done.

- For example, to copy a file, some text or any object: Highlight or select the item with your mouse and then hold the **Ctrl** button down, press the **C** key and release. **Ctrl+C**
- To paste the copied item or items: **Ctrl+V** (P was already taken for Print)
- Sometimes you want to move an object from one location to another: **Ctrl+X**
- Select everything on a screen or in a folder: **Ctrl+A**
- Print something: **Ctrl+P** (This is why you can't use this combination to paste).
- Oops, I shouldn't have done that: **Ctrl+Z** (Undoes your mistakes)

Now that we've covered the basics, we can move on to some good stuff. Microsoft introduced something called the Windows key when it announced Windows 95 back in the Stone Age. Also known as the Super key, Windows logo key, the WinKey, the Start key, and sometimes the Flag key, it has been with us ever since. Tapping the Windows key opens or closes the Start menu. If that were all it did there would be nothing else to say. There are several dozen shortcuts that you can easily use with the Windows key in combination with other keys to call up common functions. Here are a few of them:

- Win+D: Shows the Desktop
- Win+F: Opens the search function
- Win+L: Locks the Desktop and lets you switch users

- Win+M: Minimizes all open windows
- Win+R: Opens the Run box so you can type DOS like commands
- Win+P: Very useful with multiple monitors or an external projector
- Win+Spacebar: All open windows become transparent so you can see through to the desktop.

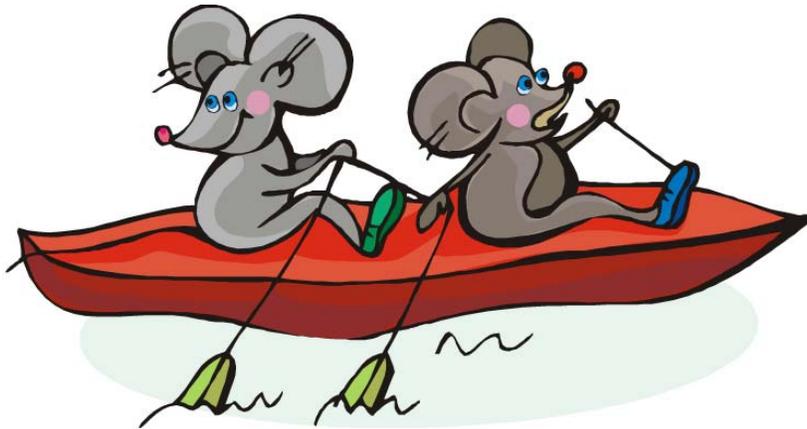
There are many others, but these are probably the ones most computer users would invoke most of the time.

Microsoft sometimes does something really terrific, but for whatever reason doesn't tell anyone about it. The company has created an alternate control panel which blows away any tool I've previously seen. Why the company keeps it a secret is beyond me. To create this tool you will need to create a folder, name it, put in a period, and type something called a Globally Unique Identifier (GUID). A GUID is a special type of identifier used in software applications to provide a unique reference number. The value is represented as a 32 character hexadecimal character string. All you need to be concerned with is to type it accurately. Let Microsoft's engineers worry about the details.

1. You can create the folder anywhere, but the most logical place for it is on the Desktop. Make sure you're on the desktop and all windows are closed or minimized.
2. Right-click on an empty area of the desktop and choose New/Folder.
3. Name the folder. It doesn't matter what you call it, the magic is performed by the GUID.
4. After the folder name, type a period.
5. After the period type the GUID {ED7BA470-8E54-465E-825C-99712043E01C} (No spaces are allowed).
6. Press Enter

Open the folder and you have complete control over Windows 7. You might need several hours to count how many things you can do without having to hunt through layers of screens to access an important, but obscure function.

**VINNY LA BASH** is a regular columnist of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc. This article was Sarasota PC Monitor, May 2010 Issue/[www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org) ;[vlabash@comcast.net](mailto:vlabash@comcast.net).



When you come to the next DACS meeting  
Why not bring a friend?



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Joanie**

Help give the  
gift of speech  
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Fredlund  
at 203 770-6203  
and become a  
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# Future Events:

**November 2**

New Trends in  
Digital Cameras  
Gary Spring

**December 7**

DIY 3D Printing and  
Rapid Prototyping  
(Tentative)

**January**

TBA\*

**February**

John Patrick  
(Remote from Florida)\*

\*Meeting dates in 2010 to be determined