

The snow is over . . . But the show will go on!

LIVE MUSIC RECORDING,
TUESDAY DECEMBER 6, 7 PM
AT BROADVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL



See page 3 for details



Directors' Notes

A meeting of your board of directors was held on Wednesday, November 9, 2011. The meeting was called to Order at: 7:08 p.m. Attending were Richard Corzo, Jim Scheef, Elizabeth Talian, Andy Woodruff, Patrick Libert, Drew Kwashnak; guest: Charlie Bovaird

The Minutes of the last Meeting were Accepted.

Treasurer's Report

Balance on hand 10/1/11	\$5,795.17
INCOME	
Dues	\$195.00
Bank Interest	\$0.49
Total:	\$195.49
EXPENSES	
Resource Center Phone	\$70.48
Newsletter Printing	\$85.00
NL Postage (Nov. and Dec.)	\$97.28
Renewal Letters Postage	\$11.60
Newsletter Supplies (clip art renewal)	\$67.98
Auditorium Rental	\$149.66
Router and VGA Cable	\$41.97
Total:	\$523.97
Balance on hand 10/31/11	\$5,466.69

Membership Report

	SEP	OCT	NOV
Meeting date	9/6/11	10/4/11	11/1/11
Paying members	147	142	142
w/ email addresses	144	137	137
New members	0	1	(NA)
NL printed	100	100	100
NL mailed	76	76	76
NL mailed-memb	56	56	56
NL mailed-other	6	6	6
NL mailed-free lib	14	14	14

Attendance

Date	SEP	OCT	NOV
Meeting date	9/6	10/4	Cancelled
Seat Count	30	35	NA
Mbers sgn in	23	28	NA
Visits sgn in	3	7	NA

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Old Business

1. General meetings

- December 6: Andy Woodruff and Sean Henderson-Recording and Editing Live Music, Preview: Drew Kwashnak, Review: Bruce Preston.

- Possible future topics:

- January 2012? - Drew suggested "How is it done with <fill in OS>?" We could use Mikogo to demo the same operations for Windows, Mac and Linux to flip between environments. Drew was to test the newly released Mikogo for Linux with Bruce. Bruce and Richard successfully tested Mikogo on Windows and Mac, respectively. Drew - Linux, Richard - Mac, Jim - Scheef

- January 2012? - Andy contacted Google and they are willing to provide a speaker. Request Google Apps (free components), Calendar, Sites, and Voice. Request that privacy issues be addressed.

- IBM has declined a request for presentation on Watson, but we could do our own presentation based upon published information. We could also add the new AI capabilities in iPhone 4S etc.

- Andy would like a Windows 7 Maintenance - how-tos for tuning the O/S-Safe Mode, MSCONFIG, turning off unneeded services, Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper (Beta), etc. We will only discuss Windows 7.

- Smart Computing Magazine "Presentation in a box"

- David Pogue - he's finishing a book, call in December to get on schedule

- Opera browser - looking for a NY-area representative - no time frame.

- Music Services - iTunes Match, Pandora, Spotify, LastFM, Internet radio etc.

- Robotics - Drew knows some kids, who are involved, perhaps a demonstration that also might be a presentation with mutual benefit.

2. Open positions

- We confirmed with Sean Henderson that he will be conducting his workshop on November 18 at the RC so that we can add it to the website calendar.

- Bethel Library exhibit will be set up for month of January. The size of the exhibit case is smaller so we will

Directors' Notes, Cont. on page 3

Membership Information

dacs.doc, ISSN 1084-6573, is published monthly by the Danbury Area Computer Society, 27 Ole Musket Lane, Danbury, CT 06810-8232. Annual subscription rates: \$45 to regular members, \$30 electronic access (included in dues).

Postmaster

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

Editorial Committee

Managing Editor: Ahmad Asgharian
Production Editor: Allan Ostergren

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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The editors welcome submissions from DACS members. Contact Ahmad Asgharian (dacseditor@dacs.org). Advertisers, contact Charles Bovaird at (203) 792-7881 (aam@mags.net)

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dacs.doc is prepared using PageMaker 7.0 and Acrobat 7.0. Software packages used to publish *dacs.doc* include: Microsoft Windows XP, Office 2003, TrueType fonts, Calendar Creator 8.0 for Windows. Internet access provided by *Mags.net*

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



Patrick Libert
APCUG Liaison
plibert@dacs.org



Officers

DACS GENERAL NUMBER: (203) 744-9198
PRESIDENT: Richard Corzo dacsprez@dacs.org
VICE PRESIDENT PROGRAMS: vpprograms@dacs.org
SECRETARY: Bruce Preston • **TREASURER:** Dave Green

Directors

dacsboard@dacs.org

Richard Corzo	(203) 797-1518	rcorzo@dacs.org
David Green	(203) 797-8682	dgreen@dacs.org
Drew Kwashnak	(203) 910-6605	dkwashnak@dacs.org
Patrick Libert	(860) 567-9586	plibert@dacs.org
Rob Limbaugh	(203) 648-9176	relimbaugh@dacs.org
Bruce Preston	(203) 431-2920 (days)	bpreston@dacs.org
Jim Scheef	(860) 355-0034	jscheef@dacs.org
Jeff Setaro	(203) 648-9925	jasetaro@yahoo.com
Elizabeth Talian	(203)-733-2805	etalian@dacs.org
Annette van Ommeren	(914) 232-0149	avanommeren@dacs.org
Andy Woodruff	(203) 744-9588	awoodruff@dacs.org

Committees

NEWSLETTER: Ahmad Asgharian: dacseditor@dacs.org,

PROGRAM: vpprograms@dacs.org

WEB MASTERS: Richard Corzo (rcorzo@dacs.org), (203) 797-1518

Annette van Ommeren (avanommeren@dacs.org), (914) 232-0149

MARKETING AND PR: Position open (pr@dacs.org)

APCUG LIAISON: Patrick Libert (plibert@dacs.org)

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR: CHARLES BOVAIRD: aam@mags.net

RESOURCE CENTER: (203) 748-4330 • **WEB SITE:** <http://www.dacs.org>

HelpLine

Our former telephone HelpLine has been replaced by our web-based DACS Community Forum at <http://forum.dacs.org>. We have topic-specific forums where DACS members can post questions. Questions may be answered by SIG leaders or other DACS members. If none of the categories fit your question, just post it to the Ask DACS forum.

Topic

Microsoft Access
.NET Programming
Digital cameras/scanners/image processing
Content Management Systems
Linux
Mac and iPhone/iPad/iPod touch
PC maintenance
Virtual machine software
Desktop publishing and website design
Windows

Forum

Access SIG
ASP.Net and C#VB.Net SIG
Digital Imaging SIG
Drupal SIG
Linux SIG
Apple SIG
PC Maintenance SIG
Virtual Computing SIG
Web Site Design SIG
Windows SIG

Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 2

have to do some modifications of the materials and placement.

3. We are now ready to retire the old DACS website which was hosted on Jay Ferron's server. Richard will notify Jay Ferron with thanks for standing by us.
4. Shall we renew APCUG membership? A major reason for renewing is to maintain access to content for DACS.DOC from 'push' articles. Motion made, seconded and passed.
5. Which board candidates whose terms are up are planning to seek another term? Bruce Preston, Jim Scheef, Annette von Ommeren and Drew Kwashnak are planning to return. Jeff Setaro is not. Lisa Leifels has expressed interest, Richard will confirm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

—Bruce Preston



The November DACS meeting was cancelled, due to storm damage and power outages. The program: Recording and Editing Live Music using a Personal Computer, has been rescheduled for Tuesday, December 6 at the Broadview Junior High School, 72 Hospital Avenue in Danbury.

Look for updates on our meeting location, as the Danbury Hospital auditorium will not be available during renovation.

Workbench

External USB Drive Enclosures

by Bruce Preston

ON THE NEWS THIS morning (Nov. 24 2011), it was mentioned that the availability of hard disks for computers will become scarce for the next six to nine months. That's because of the flooded factories in Thailand, where roughly 40% of consumer-grade hard disks are manufactured. So it was recommended that if you are about to purchase a PC, or increase your capacity by purchasing a new hard disk, that you do it now while there is still inventory.

I have had many people ask how to retire an old desktop or notebook computer, with emphasis on maintaining the privacy of data stored on the computer. For many years, DACS refurbished donated computers, wiping the hard drives and installing fresh copies of the Windows operating system. However the price of new computers has fallen so far that it is no longer cost effective to do so, and with essentially no market for used computers, in many cases you will have to pay environmental disposal fees.

I was thinking about this when I also remembered that at the Ask DACS sessions for recent General Meetings, the topic of external USB drive enclosures came up, and that for many there appeared to be a lack of awareness of these devices.

Thus the inspiration for this article—to describe USB external drive enclosures using two relatively inexpensive models as examples:

**Inland 3.5" IDE to USB
Hard Drive Enclosure.
SKU: 763276 \$17.99 + S/H
from MicroCenter.com**

3.5" IDE (Integrated Drive Electronics) hard drives were the standard desktop IDE drive technology from about 1990 to the present – although SATA drives are now becoming more prevalent. The 3.5" refers to the diameter of the disks within the



Photo 1: USB 2.0 External 3.5" drive enclosure. Uses USB 'printer' cable

drive—the drive itself is designed to fit in the 5" drive bay. If you are retiring a desktop, it probably has a 3.5" hard drive (or two!) They are usually attached to the chassis of the computer in either of two ways:

1) "rails" – the drive slides out the front of the chassis. To remove it, open the case, then pull the ribbon cable out of the rear of the drive, followed by the 4-conductor power connector. This connector is usually very tight, but rocking it side to side will eventually loosen it. Pop the face plate out of the case, pinch the (usually green) tabs and slide the drive out. Remove the rails from the drive body.

2) Fixed mounting brackets. Open the case, and disconnect the ribbon cable and the power connector as above. Then remove the 4 screws (two on each side) that hold the drive in the cage and either slide the drive out to the inside of the chassis, or pop the face plate and pull it out the front. Remove any mounting brackets from the drive.

Installing the drive in the enclosure: remove the end cap that has the On/Off switch, the power connector and the USB data socket. Connect the power plug that is on the inside of the end cap to the drive and the ribbon cable to the drive. It is not necessary to change any jumpers on the drive. Slide the drive into the enclosure and fasten it using the four screws provided. There is a pair of trim strips that cover the drive mounting screws. Fasten the end cap to the enclosure using the four screws provided. Plug in the external A/C power adapter (the usual "wall wart" transformer) and connect the USB cable to your computer. The computer should immediately recognize the drive and assign it a drive letter such as E:. You may now use the drive as you would any other hard disk. For best throughput, you want to connect it to a USB 2.0 port, although it will work at reduced speed with USB 1.1. You do not need to re-partition the drive or format it; your data will be there. However, if you don't need the data, you might consider deleting the partition(s), create new partition(s), and format it with NTFS format.

**Inland u-Jam 2.5 Hard
Drive Enclosure USB/IDE
SKU 392670 \$5.99 + S/H f
from MicroCenter.com**

The most common hard disk in notebooks older than about 2 years is the 2.5" IDE drive. Commonly, it is accessible via

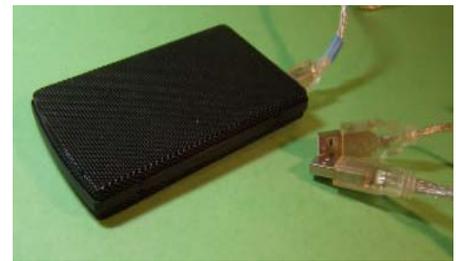


Photo 2: USB external enclosure for 2.5" hard drive. Note 'dual USB plugs that connect to the computer.' a hatch on the bottom of the machine. Remove the hatch cover, and you will usually find the drive in a metal "caddy" that can be flipped out. Remove the drive from the caddy, and remove any right-angle adapter at the connector edge of the drive. There is no separate power connector.

The external drive enclosure is about the size of a deck of cards, although a bit thinner. Remove the 4 small screws that hold the cover plate to the frame, plug the single ribbon connector into the drive, and seal it up. This enclosure makes use of a three-ended USB cable. The end of the cable that attaches to the computer has two plugs, so that the drive may draw power from two USB sockets. While the drive's power consumption is low enough that it doesn't require an A/C power adapter, it needs just a bit more power than is available from a standard USB port. By using two ports, there is enough power for the drive.

Connect the drive to your computer, and the operating system should identify it and assign it a drive letter. As described above, you may immediately make use of the drive as is, or repartition it and format it if you like.



Photo 3: USB External enclosure for 2.5" drive. (Cover removed) It is hardly larger than the drive, which just snaps into place.

I make use of my external drive enclosures several ways:

1) They can handle transferring files or collections of files that won't fit on my largest flash drive.

2) They lend themselves to making backup copies of files, and you may 'walk

the drive' from one machine to another to perform multiple backups.

3) When I am presented with a machine that has malware or virus infections such that it won't even boot, it helps to be able to access the drive from a known to be clean computer. Since the infected drive is not used to boot the system, it can't load the malware or vi-

rus (such as a root kit) into the machine that is doing the scan, thus giving me a better chance of cleaning the drive.

4) My router (LinkSys/Cisco WRT610N) has firmware within it that supports the user of an external USB drive as an NAS (Network Attached Storage) device. This makes the drive available to any device attached to my network, either wired or WiFi.

What you don't get by using a ready-made external hard drive is the software that is often bundled with such a package. Such software offers "One Touch Backup." This can be convenient, but I don't find it to be a compelling reason to go out and purchase a new drive, when you may reuse a drive that otherwise might end up in a land fill.

Book Review

Two Books About Apple with Insights Into Steve Jobs

By Jim Scheef

Revolution in The Valley, By Andy Hertzfeld. O'Reilly Media, 2005.
Return to the Little Kingdom, How Apple and Steve Jobs Changed the World, By Michael Moritz. The Overlook Press, 1984 & 2009; Prologue and Epilogue 2010.

AS CHANCE WOULD have it, I was reading Andy Hertzfeld's book when Steve Jobs passed away in October. Andy's book, *Revolution in the*

Valley, is the story of the creation of the original Macintosh, a process which we all know Steve Jobs led to fruition; but there is more - much, much more to the story. Andy Hertzfeld is generally credited

with writing the original Mac operating system, although he denies that throughout this book. Jobs's passing made the parts about Jobs all the more interesting when compared to the stories in the news at the time. This book is atypical in many ways. First it's a collection of vignettes written by Andy, plus five other members of the Mac design and development team. Thus the book really has many authors, and each tells their recollections of events in their own words. As you read, you learn a lot about the culture of Silicon Valley and the desire of the people to be a part of something they believed in, and how they wanted the end product to be the best there is. It also becomes obvious how difficult it was to work for Steve Jobs.

Another thing atypical about this book is the fact that you can read it without buying it. The website www.folklore.org has

the stories in the book plus a few more added since it was published. In many ways the website is better than the book, because it's indexed by topics, authors and characters. If you have a tablet computer of some sort, you can even take it to the men's room. There are also links to other early Mac websites.

Story #53 (on the website) tells about how Steve Jobs wanted the history of Apple documented. Apple's historian was to be Michael Moritz. Jobs decreed that Moritz have free access around Apple. In 1982, Jobs ejected and banished Moritz from Apple after Jobs was removed at the last minute as the Time Magazine Man of the Year. Instead, the title went to "the computer" and Jobs thought Moritz had leaked... (you have to read the book). Anyway, Hertzfeld says that Moritz's book *The Little Kingdom*, published in 1984, remains the best book about the early days at Apple.

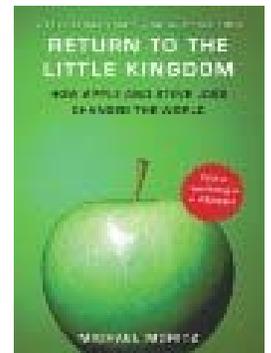
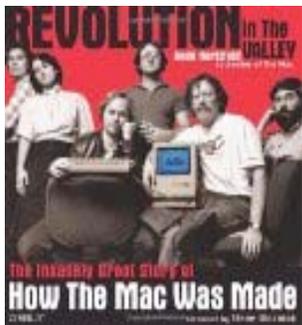
Naturally, that had to be the next book on my reading list, and a quick trip to abebooks.com found it selling at rare book prices. A search as I write this review finds two copies offered at \$277.16 and \$899.99. Just a few weeks ago, copies were selling for less than \$100. Fortunately, a brand new copy of the version you really want (the one for "the rest of us"?)—the paperback published in 2010—is available for \$4, delivered to your mailbox. Unfortunately for Michael Moritz, this was just one year too soon to capitalize on Steve Jobs' untimely passing. The revised and updated book is called *Return to the Little Kingdom: How Apple and Steve Jobs Changed the World*. Be sure you order the paperback, as that one has an updated version of the prologue and epilogue written for the 2009 hard cover. This points out the difficulty of reading about "history" that is still so fresh. Just keep in mind that all such

computer books are merely collections of "facts" that cannot be interpreted without the passage of more time.

Return to the Little Kingdom will answer all the questions and settle all the arguments you have ever had about the early days of Apple Computer - except one. The book is the result of extensive interviews with everyone involved - even both of Steve's parents. Why was Apple Computer successful, when so many other companies founded at the exact same time, like Northstar and Osborn (to pick a name that links this story directly to our club), failed so ignominiously? My summary, after reading these two books, is that Apple was profoundly lucky. Steve Wozniak, a self-taught engineer, could produce designs that were simple enough to be reliable and easy to manufacture. Steve Jobs had the vision to see beyond the Homebrew Computer Club and turn Woz's design for the Apple II into a desirable consumer product. When the Commodore PET had a chicklet keyboard, Apple had a real keyboard. When the Radio Shack TRS-80 Model 1 required an expansion chassis to make it useful, the Apple II had eight expansion slots, with technical specs allowing third parties to add real capabilities to the little machine. Plus, the Apple II had color graphics! Remember, all three of these machines were introduced within months of each other in 1977. Just a few years later we would see how IBM both learned and didn't learn from these examples.

As much as Hertzfeld's book talks about the culture at Apple Computer in the years immediately following the IPO, Moritz's book goes way back to why the area at the south end of the San Francisco peninsula and west of San Jose had the resources needed to nurture a bunch of enthusiasts who would create much of the personal

Two Books, Cont. on page 9



Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: December 2011

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: Dec 8 (check Website for technical details)

Apple. 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: Dec 1

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: Dec 8

Digital Imaging. All about digital cameras, retouching, and printing using various programs.

Contact: Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 (graffic@bigfoot.com).

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

Next Meeting: Dec 28

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: Dec 21

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

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: Dec 20

SIG News & Events

Apple. In November we looked at iOS 5 (<http://www.apple.com/ios/>) for the iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad. We also got a chance to see the new iPhone 4S (<http://www.apple.com/iphone/>).

The new Notification Center is a big improvement over the previous experience of having your work interrupted for each notification and having to dismiss or handle the notification right away. Now notifications appear briefly in a slender bar at the top of the screen. If you want to view all your outstanding notifications at any time, just swipe down from the top of the screen. You can close or view individual notifications at your convenience.

The Messages app now allows sending not only SMS/MMS messages to other phones, but also iMessages to other iOS devices even if they are an iPod touch or iPad. The iMessages on an iPhone use your data plan and not your text message plan. The new Reminders app uses notifications to remind you of anything you want at a specific time, or when you leave or arrive at a location such as work.

Newsstand provides a central place to read your existing magazine app subscriptions. These magazines no longer appear separately on your home screen. You can also subscribe from a store directly accessible from the Newsstand app.

Airplay video mirroring allows you to view anything that's on your iPhone 4S or iPad 2 on your HDTV or projector connected to an Apple TV device. The new 8 megapixel camera in the iPhone 4S is starting to rival point-and-shoot digital cameras, lacking only an optical zoom.

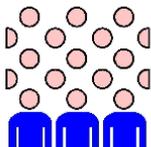
The big new feature on the iPhone 4S is the Siri Assistant. You can ask Siri all sorts of questions using natural language. It can follow a conversation and respond appropriately based on what you said earlier in the conversation. It easily responds to questions like "What's my next appointment?" or requests like "Remind me to pick up a present for my wife after work." If Siri can't answer a question or comply with your request, it may offer to do a web search, or just let you know that it can't comply. The feature requires an Internet connection as some of the voice recognition and artificial intelligence is offloaded to a distant Apple server.

Drupal. After vacation and travel breaks we returned for the November meeting to talk about where we are in our implementation of Drupal for the DACS website. It did not take much convincing for everyone to agree that we should move to Drupal 7 now, rather than later. So we installed Drupal 7 on Bluehost. I also said that I would complete the move of the DACS domain name and DNS to Bluehost.

SIG Notes, Cont. on page 9

December 2011

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
<p>Nov 2011</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>		S	M	T	W	T	F	S		1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				<p>Jan 2012</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>		S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					1	2	3
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4	5	 <p>6:30 P.M. GENERAL MTG Broadview MS</p>	 <p>4 PM ASP .Net 7 PM C#VB .Net Chuck Fizer 203 798-9996</p>	 <p>7-9 PM Drupal Jim Scheef 860 355-0034</p>		10																																																																																				
11	12	 <p>MS ACCESS 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Bruce Preston bpreston@dacs.org</p>	 <p>7:00 PM Board of Directors</p>		16	 <p>DACS.DOC Deadline</p>																																																																																				
18	19	 <p>Web Design Annette van Ommeren 914 232-0149</p>	 <p>7:30 PM Linux John Ritterbusch linuxsig@dacs.org</p>		23	24																																																																																				
	26	27	 <p>7:00 PM Digital Imaging Ken Graff 203 775-6667</p>	29	30																																																																																					

Making Connections

Getting the most out of your home network

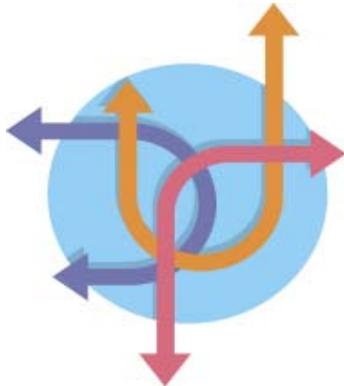
By Bruce Preston

My Wired Experience

LET ME START BY stating that years ago I ‘wired’ the house to have network access everywhere. I might as well describe it before I move on to WiFi considerations.

My office is in a spare bedroom on the second floor. Pre-retirement, in addition to two desktop computers in my office, at one time I had three servers located in the basement. For supporting my mix of clients at the time, I needed a Windows server, a Linux server and a SCO Unix server. This was before the availability of virtual machines. I also needed to support our son’s computer(s) in his room - a desktop and a notebook. My office is where my broadband connection surfaces - originally DSL, now cable connected to a router. Our house, like many in the area, makes use of hot water baseboard heating. The router connected to an 8-port switch, from there I split to the desktop computers and ran a Cat-5 cable around the walls out of sight under the baseboard heating radiators to a closet, through the closet wall and into our son’s room. A second cable ran to the closet and then through a small hole in the closet ceiling to the attic. From there it ran across to the chimney and down through a PVC ‘wire chase’ pipe that luckily was there which provided me access to the basement. In the basement another switch split the signal to the servers, and a work bench that I used for rebuilding or repairing machine. It also fed wires to the family room and living room. All I needed to get into each of those rooms was a single hole up through the floor boards, again under the baseboard heaters so things were out of sight. I just put my holes right next to the cable TV wiring so placement was easy. To do all of this required purchasing a bulk reel of Cat-5/5e cable (1,000 feet for \$43 on eBay, delivered), a cable crimping tool (about \$10 on eBay), a bag of RJ-45 connectors (100 for \$7 on eBay, delivered) and a cable tester (about \$8 on eBay) Attaching the RJ-45 plugs to the cable is the hardest part, as there are 8 wires that must be positioned

properly in the plug before you crimp it. I made a few bad cables at first, if it doesn’t test right cut the plug off and try again. For a total expenditure of less than \$100 and a Saturday I had the place wired and did it without damage to the appearance of the house.



That worked just fine for about 15 years but it wasn’t very flexible when a notebook was being used as you had to be ‘tethered’ to a cable.

Introducing WiFi to the network

When I first converted to WiFi, I put the WiFi router (the very popular LinkSys WRT54G) in my office but found that the signal downstairs at the other side of the house was spotty. It wasn’t at all usable in the recliner, but it was fine if I sat on the fireplace hearth.

About the same time I helped a friend install WiFi in his home. We ran into similar problems. In his case, OptOnline had installed his cable modem/VoIP device in the basement near the power panel - a terrible location. We moved the router to a location on the underside of the stairs, i.e. above your head when going down the basement stairs) such that it essentially was in the very center of his two story house. This gave him excellent signal strength throughout the house. Lesson learned here is the same as the realtor’s mantra: “Location, Location, Location.”

One day the WRT54G just stopped working, we replaced it with a LinkSys WRT610N which is an 802.11n router with dual-band capability - it uses both the 2.4GHz frequency (commonly used by cordless phones) as well as the 5GHz frequency. We noted an immediate improvement in range and signal strength when we made the move from 802.11g to 802.11n. Of course, the computers or printers must also support 802.11n to realize the improvement.

However, let’s suppose that even going to 802.11n doesn’t quite give you the access that you want. Here are some other options to consider:

High-Gain, directional WiFi antenna

The standard signal transmitted by a WiFi device radiates as a sphere - i.e., the signal goes out in all directions. By using a directional, high-gain antenna, the signal power may be aimed in a specific direction with subsequent weakness in the opposite direction. To use this, you need a WiFi router that has at least one removable antenna. There is a standard screw-on antenna connector—you replace the stock antenna with the directional antenna and point it towards the area that needs a stronger signal. Hawking Technologies is a good brand; expect something on the order of \$30 to \$80 depending upon signal pattern.

PowerLine (HomePlug) adapters.

PowerLine is a technology that makes use of the A.C. wiring in your house to move an ethernet signal from one location to another. It consists of a minimum of two devices. The first device is placed near your router. It plugs into a wall outlet, and you connect the device using a standard Cat-5 patch cable to your router. At some other location(s) within your home, you plug other adapter(s) into a wall socket and then connect using a Cat-5 cable to computer, printer, Wii, X-Box, or internet-ready TV. PowerLine adapters may be purchased singly or in kits consisting of a pair. Just as with other ethernet devices, they are available with various connection speeds. An entry-level kit consisting of a pair may be had for about \$70. That’s a lot less than the cost of having an electrician come and string cable. HomePlug is a standard established for PowerLine that assures interoperability between brands. For more information, read the pages at Wikipedia.org. Note that you could use PowerLine to support a WiFi “Access Point” (see next section), such that you could have WiFi support at the “far from the router” location. A side note here - I have a friend who purchased a Panasonic flat-panel internet ready TV that supports WiFi. However, there is no mechanism in the TV’s setup to permit access to a secured WiFi network. We ended up using a PowerLine connection, rather than the WiFi capability, as he did not want to make his WiFi network unsecured.

WiFi Access Point

This device is the transmit/receive component of WiFi. Most consumer-grade WiFi routers have the access point built into the router, but you may also purchase just the WiFi access point as a

stand-alone device. You then need a Cat-5 cable to connect the WiFi Access Point to the router. You thus have one WiFi Access Point in the router, and a second nearer to the location that needs improved service. Note that the router need not have an integral WiFi Access Point, but such routers are now few and far between. A WiFi Access Point (non-repeater, see below) will run about \$40.

WiFi Universal Access Point with Repeater

This device does not require the Cat-5 wired connection to the primary router. Instead, it listens for a WiFi signal from the primary access point (e.g. in the router) and then repeats the signal such that devices out of range of the primary can receive the signal. You would typically locate this device 1/2 to 2/3 of the way between the primary WiFi access point and the devices needing assistance (it can be placed anywhere that it can detect a solid signal from the primary access point). Location, Location, Location. There is a bit of a performance issue when using a repeater. That's because the signal throughput will be roughly halved, since the signal must be packaged in WiFi for transmission between the primary router and the repeater, then disassembled, then re-encoded for WiFi transmission to the ultimate destination. A typical WiFi Access Point with repeater functionality will run anywhere between \$40 and \$80 depending upon speed.

WDS - Wireless Distribution Service

Some routers support WDS - Wireless Distribution Service - such that they function as both a router and support a built-in repeater function. They use WiFi to interconnect the WDS-enabled routers, recognizing each other by pre-authorized MAC address entries. The MAC address is an absolutely unique identifier of the device. The connection is secure. I have personal experience with the Tenda W268R 802.11n 150Mbps Wireless N router with 4 port switch. It is the first router that I have seen that supports WDS, although I have yet to try establishing a WDS configuration. The amazing thing is that this device is sold for \$14.99 + S/H by MicroCenter.com. Again, I know that the router and WiFi work fine, but can't speak to the WDS capability. However, if you currently have only 802.11g, consider that you could get two of these and bump to 802.11n and use the second to expand your range.

Two Books. Cont. from page 5

computer industry. Did your high school have a course in electronics? Or an electronics workshop? With an oscilloscope!? As you read the book, the founding of Apple Computer seems almost preordained. The fact that it survived into the 80's was the result of Steve Jobs realizing that he could not run this company alone, and then having the good fortune to seek advice from the right venture capitalists. *Return to the Little Kingdom* documents the incredible drive and hard work that both Steves and their parents - and even girl friends - put into the first Apple products. The first batches of Apple II's were built by a cottage industry network that centered on the Jobs' home. The financing for the parts was shoe-string all the way, aided in large part by Steve Jobs' now legendary powers of persuasion.

Neither of these books is solely about Steve Jobs; yet together they give as much insight to Jobs as I suspect the new biographies will do. Was Steve Jobs a cheap-skate? No, but he was often super frugal and sometimes down-right stingy both with money for employees and recognition. There were some real hard feelings when the people were chosen to be publically presented as the Mac Design Team. But on the other side of the coin, it was Steve Jobs continually insisting that things could be simplified that led to the original Macintosh. Was the Mac a simplified Lisa? Absolutely not! The Mac project began as an attempt to make the

Apple II as easy to use as a kitchen appliance. When they couldn't get what they wanted using the Motorola 6809 processor and 64k of RAM, they moved to the 68000 and 128K. Remember how much RAM cost in 1984? The Mac's hardware engineer, Burrell Smith, included the ability in the final prototype to address 512k, making possible the "Fat Mac" modification applied to early Macs.

If you're an Apple fan or just enjoy reading about the industry, these books are really fun reading. Highly recommended!

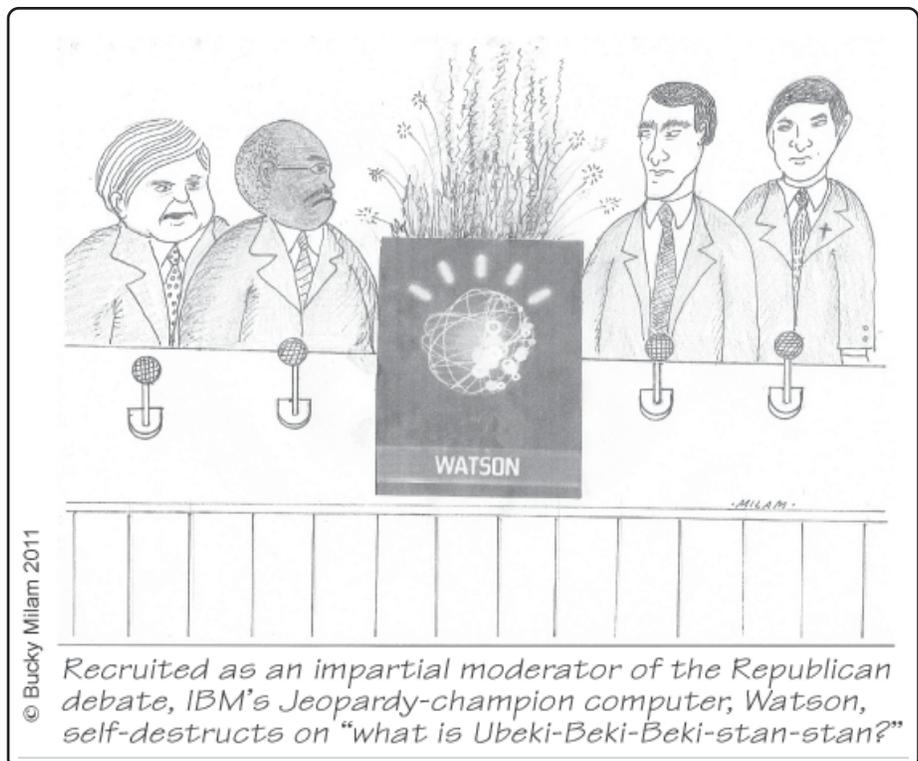
SIG Notes Cont. from page 6

We can discuss DNS and how to manage the various settings whenever there is interest.

The next meeting of the Drupal SIG will be Thursday, December 8th, at 7pm in the DACS Resource Center.

Web Design. At the November meeting of the Web Design SIG we compared some features and similarities between Drupal and WordPress systems. Also the process of customizing a default CMS theme into our OWN design. How to set up a 'child' theme and start customizing CSS and page templates. At the end of the meeting we spent some time troubleshooting a malfunctioning PHP form, tweaking the form code - which, thanks to joint effort, resulted in a successful correction.

Next meeting, December 20, 2011.



Candidates

The following DACS members have been nominated for the Board of Directors for 2012-2014. Please show your support by voting at the annual meeting, December 6, or by volunteering to serve on our Board.



Drew Kwashnak — Waterbury. The year was 1991 when Drew sat in front of a Vax VT100 monochrome terminal and asked "Can I do this for the rest of my life?". Little did he realize what changes were coming around that would turn him back into the computer field by 2000.

In 2004 while getting started with Linux Drew gave himself the challenge "To do everything I can in Windows, in Linux." Within five years between advances with Linux and growth of his own experience he can honestly say mission accomplished.

Since getting a Google Pilot Chromebook in 2010, he is developing a new challenge to find the perfect balance of cloud and desktop computing.

When pursuing his missions he usually ends up trying to wrestle his computer from his children's hands. Often he has to wait until they are in bed.



Lisa Leifels — Newtown. A member of DACS for 12 years, and previously served as the secretary of DACS from 2005 to 2008. She has enjoyed attending both the general meetings and the Microsoft Access Special Interest Group meetings over the years and would like to become a more active participant in the organization.

Lisa is the CEO of ClearViewEdge a software company that services the financial industry. The ClearView Portfolio Manager is their flagship product, which is a tool used by a fund of hedge funds to create, maintain and monitor the performance, exposure and liquidity of alternative investments. She has been working in the computer industry for over 20 years, and is always interested in following the latest technology trends.



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

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

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



Bruce Preston - Ridgefield —was a consultant specializing in PC-based software solutions with emphasis on database applications. He has more than 40 years of experience in such areas as data communications, database management, technical support, and user education. For the past eleven years he has lead the monthly Microsoft Access Special Interest Group. He is a frequent contributor to DACS.DOC and has presented General Meeting programs such as "Building a Home Network". "Buying and Selling on eBay", "Creating a Blog". "Converting Analog Recordings (LPs) to Digital (CD, MP3)" and "eBook Readers" His non-computer interests include digital photography and model railroading



Annette van Ommeren - Katonah, NY (incumbent) . Annette is a freelance Web & Graphic designer, and has run her "AnnaGraphics Design Studio" for the past 12 years. As a past board member, she has worked on the redesign of the DACS Website, and shares the responsibility for the monthly updates.

Annette will continue her involvement with the DACS Website conversion to a "Content Management System". She is also the leader of the DACS Web & Graphic Design SIG and enjoys sharing her knowledge with the DACS members.



DACS Members — Residents of one of our regional towns and members of DACS since joining. are interested in computers, but do not feel they know everything there is to know about them. Attend meetings regularly, and feel DACS should have an important role in educating the public on new computer technologies.

These members have volunteered for local organizations and community service, but so far think their background is not up to the level of those gurus on the board. Perhaps these persons think that computer clubs are different from other non profit community groups that serve beginners as well as advanced users.

If you know anyone fitting this description, or see them when you get up in the morning, say that DACS needs them to serve on the board. And, to think about it - how about YOU?

Ballot

I (we) hereby appoint Richard Corzo or Charles Bovaird proxies to vote in my (our) stead at the Annual Meeting of the members of the Danbury Area Computer Society, Inc. to be held on Monday, December 6, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. as follows:

The election of the following to serve as directors for a term of two years and until successors shall be elected and shall qualify (vote for no more than five):

- Drew Kwashnak
- Lisa Leifels
- Bruce Preston
- Jim Scheef
- Annette van Ommeren

• _____

Signature(s): _____ / _____

_____ / _____ / _____

(Membership in DACS is a family membership. If there are more than one member in your household, all please sign.)

Signed _____

Dated _____

Notice of the Annual Meeting of Danbury Area Computer Society, Inc. to be held at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 6, 2011

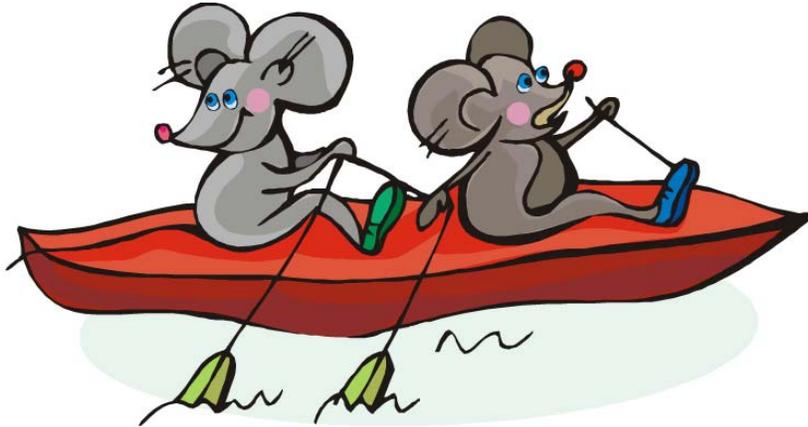
The Annual Meeting of the members of the Danbury Area Computer Society, Inc. will be held at the Broadview Middle School Auditorium, 72 Hospital Avenue, Danbury, Connecticut on Tuesday, December 6, 2011, at 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of electing directors. The number of directors is fixed at eleven individuals in two alternating classes of six and five. Each class serves for a term of two years and, this year, the class of five is to be elected. The individuals named above have agreed to stand for re-election or election to serve until the Annual Meeting of the Members to be held in the year 2011.

If you do not plan to attend the meeting, please return the attached proxy to:

Danbury Area Computer Society
4 Gregory Street, Danbury, CT 06810-4430
to arrive prior to December 6, 2009 and express your preferences.

Your presence in person and participation in the meeting would be appreciated. Come and hear not only what we did this year, but what, with your help, we hope to do in the coming year.

Respectfully,
Richard Corzo, President



When you come to the next **DACS** meeting,
why not bring a friend?



**Voice
for
Joanie**

Help give the
gift of speech
Call Shirley Fredlund
at 203 770-6203
and become a
Voice for Joanie
volunteer
www.voiceforjoanie.org

Future Events:

December

Andy Woodruff and
Sean Henderson
Recording and
Editing Live Music

January

TBA

February

TBA

March

TBA