



Meeting Preview

Protect Your PC with Symantec and Norton

IF YOU HAVE SPENT ANY TIME working on a computer, you have undoubtedly come across the names Symantec and Norton. Long before the scads of antivirus and utility programs ever hit the market, there was Norton AntiVirus and Norton Utilities. Other software titles may get lots of press these days, but Symantec's line of Norton programs is still at the top.

The most up-to-date, state-of-the-art protection, Norton AntiVirus (NAV) 4.0 for Windows 95/NT automatically protects you against today's viruses and tomorrow's unknown viruses. It covers all possible sources of infection, including the Internet, floppy disks, e-mail attachments, shared files, and networks. Designed never to become obsolete, Norton AntiVirus lets you download new virus definitions created by the Symantec AntiVirus Research Center (SARC) with a single mouse click. It's easy to install and works automatically in the background. Users recommend Norton

AntiVirus more frequently than any product of its kind, according to a 1997 Hebert Research Study.

For more than 15 years, computer pros have relied on Norton Utilities for unrivaled problem-solving power and control. Many new and updated utilities now make the Norton programs more essential than ever. Along with the classic power tools, Norton Utilities provides industry-leading crash protection, background problem-solving, basic virus repair, and online updates—plus several new optimization utilities to optimize system performance. A representative of Symantec will be at the May 5 General Meeting of the Danbury Area Computer Society. Find out all about Norton AntiVirus and Norton Utilities, and how they can protect your PC from harm.

The DACS meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. with casual networking at the Danbury Hospital auditorium, 24 Hospital Avenue. The monthly business meeting starts at 7 p.m., followed by the presentation at around 8 p.m.

Meeting Review

Multimedia Magic Out of a Box

Voyetra wows musickmakers with affordable audio MM software and great soundboards.

by Jack Corcoran

BRING THEM UP TO SPEED with the tutorial, dazzle them with the product, then wow them with a demo of what the product will do for them. If the script for a great product presentation goes like this, then the script for the April DACS General Meeting came pretty close to being great.

Our presenter was Frank Powers from Voyetra Technologies, assisted by Mike Kelly, also from Voyetra. The product was Voyetra's software and hardware for creating the audio portion of a multimedia application. Adding audio to a computer display makes it better. Adding custom audio, combining recorded voice, sound effects, and synthesizer music, all selected for and synched to the display, makes it spectacular.

With Mike handling the computer and Frank doing the commentary, the two demonstrated Voyetra's Digital Orchestrator Pro as an impressive software package that easily edits multitrack recordings from various external audio sources. The edited audio was played through a Turtle Beach Pinnacle soundboard on an impressive rig of sound equipment provided by Eastcoast Music Mall of Danbury.

Voyetra has been producing professional-level audio software for computers since 1979. In 1996 the company combined with Turtle Beach, the pioneer of PC-based hard-disk recording, which has taken all the Oscars for high-end soundboards since 1990. This synergistic mating gave rise to Voyetra's Pinnacle Project Stu-

Continued on page 4

President's File

At its April meeting, the DACS board of directors selected a new slate of officers, including myself as president and Wally David as chairman. Jeff Setaro, Frances Owles, Gene Minasi, Marlene Gaberel, and Don Ruffel were chosen as vice presidents. Continuing on as Treasurer and secretary will be Charles Bovaird and Larry Buoy.

I am honored to have been chosen to lead DACS at this time, and humbled by the task of following in the legacy of those who came before. Yet I can find comfort in the support of the dedicated volunteers who serve with me as officers or directors.

During my term in office, I will work to achieve the following:

- Continue to expand our services for beginning computer users through the New-to program and DACS University classes.
- Bring the facilities of our Resource Center to more members through volunteer staffing, fixed hours of operation and new hardware and software.
- Reach out to advanced users through increased coverage of technical issues in *dacs.doc* and by bringing in more programmers and support personnel. Encourage more coverage of different platforms and operating systems.
- Achieve new membership growth through institutional and corporate membership programs and Internet associations.

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- Increase DACS' visibility and services to its members through our newsletter and Web site, with a commitment and professionalism that puts us at the forefront of user groups worldwide.

- Renew DACS' commitment to volunteerism, through continued support of Voice for Joanie, the Danbury Senior Employment Center, Computers 4Kids, Special Olympics, and other volunteer projects that help to bring computer technology to a wider cross section of our community.

These are ambitious objectives but ones which largely continue or build upon progress that has already been achieved. Over the coming months, I will focus in this column on individual issues and the measures that will be needed to make them a reality. I hope many of you will come forward to offer your valuable time and efforts to help relieve our tired volunteers and keep DACS at the forefront of user groups. Even if you don't think of yourself as the volunteering sort or can't decide where you might fit in, expect me to live up to my reputation of drawing out from each of you a potential you may not have known existed. After all, in cyberspace, we're all pioneers of a vast new frontier, where no one can know it all, and everyone has a skill that is in demand.

Most of all, I want to hear from you. The e-mail address below is YOUR suggestion box.

Perhaps our greatest achievement and the hallmark of our success has been a commitment to excellence. This commitment is manifested in our award-winning newsletter and Web site, and the national recognition we have achieved through our volunteerism on behalf of Voice for Joanie and other worthwhile causes. At a time when many user groups are suffering decline, recognition such as this builds membership and gives our member volunteers a pride of achievement and an incentive to strike out in new directions. DACS is people helping people, and when DACS shines, its members, and particularly its volunteers, bask in the radiance.

—ALLAN OSTERGREN
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dacs.doc

Membership Information

dacs.doc, ISSN 1084-6573, is published monthly by the Danbury Area Computer Society, Inc., 12 Noteworthy Drive, Danbury, CT 06810-7271. Annual subscription rates: \$25 to regular members, \$20 to students (included in dues).

Postmaster

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

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DACS, its officers and directors assume no liability for damages arising out of the publication or non-publication of any article, advertisement or any other item in this newsletter.

The editors welcome submissions from Dacs members. Contact Frances Owles, at 860-868-0077 (jones@ct1.nai.net) or Allan Ostergren at 860-210-0047 (dacseditor@aol.com). Advertisers, please contact Brad Altland 203-357-4007 (brad.altland@gecapital.com)

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dacs.doc is prepared using AMSYS Pentium/133 and an HP LaserJet 4 Plus printer

Software packages have been provided to *dacs.doc* staff by:

Microsoft Windows 95, Office 7.0, TrueType fonts

Adobe PageMaker 6.5, CorelDRAW 6.0, Calendar Creator Plus for Windows, *dacs.doc* file transfer security

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



Jeff Setaro
APCUG Liaison
748-6748

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Web Site: <http://www.dacs.org> • **BBS:** (203) 791-8532

HelpLine

Volunteers have offered to field member questions by phone. Please limit calls to the hours indicated below. Days means 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; evening means 6 to 9:30 p.m. Please be considerate of the volunteer you are calling. HelpLine is a free service. If you are asked to pay for help or are solicited for sales, please contact the *dacs.doc* editor; the person requesting payment will be deleted from the listing. Can we add your name to the volunteer listing?

d = day e = evening

Program	Name	Phone #	
Alpha Four	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
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Directors' Notes

The monthly meeting of the DACS Board of Directors was held on April 13, 1998, at the Resource Center. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Buoy, David, Gingras, Heere, McIntyre, Ostergren, Preston, Setaro, and Mrs. Owles. Also present was Don Ruffles. Ed Heere presided and Larry Buoy kept the records of the meeting. The minutes of the March 9, 1988 meeting were approved.

Finance & Membership

Treasurer Charles Bovaird reported current checking and postal balances of \$12,439.80, postage on hand of \$215.52, and receivables of \$71 for a total cash balance of \$12,726.32. He also reported current membership of 677.

Election of Officers

The board reviewed the nominees for officers to serve for the upcoming year and their responses to commit to the various offices. The slate following officers were elected:

Chairman – Wally David
President – Allan Ostergren
VP of Public Relations – Marlene Gaberel
VP of Facilities – Gene Minasi
VP of Publications – Frances Owles
VP of Membership – Don Ruffel
VP of Programs – Jeff Setaro
Treasurer – Charles Bovaird
Secretary – Larry Buoy.

Outgoing officers expressed their appreciation of the cooperation given them during their terms.

Access SIG to change venue

Bruce Preston announced that he was considering moving his Access SIG to the Resource Center and the reasons for such a move. The move was deemed amenable, and Bruce expressed appreciation to Ed Heere for providing the present facilities.

Media

A general discussion ensued about expanding the content of the calendar of events in *dacs.doc* and improving the graphical content of our Web Page and newsletter. This was followed by discussions of the programming of general meetings and of upcoming "New to ..." sessions. The possibilities of expanding our Web services beyond those possible as an

Continued on page 4

Directors' Notes, from page 3

adjunct to the library's server were explored.

UG conferences

The directors were brought up to date on the forthcoming InterGalactic and APCUG meetings to be held in New York City in conjunction with PCExpo and DACS' participation in those events.

— LARRY BUOY

Spring PC Expo Events

This June will find APCUG in New York City.

We are holding our first event in conjunction with PC Expo. This APCUG Event is different from our Comdex events in several ways. We have reduced the surcharge for non-APCUG-member groups to just \$25, in an effort to reach out and attract other PC and Macintosh groups to see what APCUG does. In addition, this event is not only the two days before a major tradeshow, it also follows a major regional computer event, NYPC User Group' InterGalactic 11.

So if you come in Friday evening, June 12, you can catch the one day InterGalactic event on Saturday, June 13, and then two days (June 14 and 15) of APCUG RoundTable sessions on various topics of interest to User Group officers, followed by three days of PC Expo (June 16-18), with APCUG Vendor Events in the morning and in the evening, and you will have all day at the show, and not have to leave to come back to the hotel for a lunch event.

For more information on this event, please see <http://www.apcug.org/events/pcexpo/spring98.htm>

Don Singleton djs@ionet.net
(918) 622-3417 President, Tulsa Computer Society <http://www.tcs.org>

Chairman, APCUG Spring PC Expo Events <http://www.apcug.org/events/pcexpo>

Voyetra from page 1

dio, a coordinated package of editing software and soundboard. While there are more expensive systems on the market, Frank and Mike made a pretty convincing case that Project Studio can handle most anything this side of Hollywood. Street prices for Digital Orchestrator Pro are about \$135, the Turtle Beach Pinnacle Pro soundboard is about \$380, and the bundling of the two plus various extras in Pinnacle Project Studio runs about \$500.

Frank and Mike opened their presentation with the usual adjustments and testing of equipment and then belted out a showtime musical theme they labeled "Voyetra Beach Party." It was great sound to a solid Calypso beat that elicited a spontaneous round of applause from the audience, probably a first for an opening to a DACS presentation.

Frank then went into his tutorial on the basics and buzzwords. In the audience, Margaret Arnold, a school teacher and keyboard artist but not a computer maven, found it helpful. Dave King, a local musician who creates music in his home studio using the Pinnacle soundboard, was way ahead of the curve on this part of the program but felt it was well presented and effective.

Next came the in-depth tour of just what Voyetra's Orchestrator Pro can do with component sound elements. Frank emphasized the similarity to a word processor as he sliced, diced, and blended audio components in much the way we process text and graphics. He cut out segments of an audio waveform and then recombined them with modifications and enhancements.

Working with MIDI tracks, Frank substituted other voices for the originals and showed the manipulations built in to the editor including SMPTE support for locking and synchronization and transposing keys. For overall effect, he combined audio recordings with MIDI signals. Frank used his mandolin for input to the Orchestrator Pro editor to demonstrate its digital audio capabilities.

Technically the demo was a clever and effective way of illustrating the versatility of the editor. From the audience's viewpoint, however, both Margaret and Dave would also liked to have seen a demonstration of input from a MIDI keyboard. The razzle-dazzle looked difficult to Margaret, but she could follow the time/event lines, and the waveform representations made sense. Dave said, "The capabilities

are there for just about any requirement of a professional production."

The final segment of the presentation was a demo of just how effective a multimedia production can be. Frank combined videoclips of his recent house-hunting venture with audio recordings of his wife's comments, his own comments, and his ubiquitous mandolin. The result conveyed the kind of multimedia impact that people in the audience could use in their own situations—meetings, sales promotions, Web pages, or wherever powerful impact is needed to leverage a message.

It sounded great to Margaret, but Dave felt that it could have been presented much more effectively had the audio equipment been better adjusted and the audio recordings been of a higher quality. To Dave, the 97 dB signal-to-noise ratio and the digital I/O capabilities on the Pinnacle soundboard provided a level of audio excellence that was not fully achieved during the presentation due to the source material utilized.

The presentation by the Voyetra people was very well planned and presented. It was at the level of professional excellence that characterizes the top tier of DACS General Meetings.

We learned a bit, watched a system that can do just about everything we would need, and saw the jolt that multimedia editing can give to our apps. And it was delightfully entertaining.

JACK CORCORAN is a retired computer programmer who has abandoned his Fortran and Assembly background for the fun stuff.

DACS New Members 3/23/98 thru 4/20/98

- 1) Gloria Bellofatto
- 2) Claire Dunn
- 3) John W. Koch
- 4) Diane Langlois
- 5) Brian F. Lund
- 6) Luis Ramos
- 7) Nancy Shimko
- 8) Douglas Weiss

If your membership date on your mailing label reads

EXP. 03/98

THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER.

You need to renew your DACS membership now!

Eastern Wisdom

What if your computer put out error messages in Haiku format?

From the Internet

Three things are certain:
Death, taxes, and lost data.
Guess which has occurred.
.....

Everything is gone;
Your life's work has been destroyed.
Squeeze trigger (yes/no)?
.....

Windows NT crashed.
I am the Blue Screen of Death.
No one hears your screams.
.....

Seeing my great fault
Through darkening blue windows
I begin again
.....

The code was willing,
It considered your request,
But the chips were weak
.....

Printer not ready.
Could be a fatal error.
Have a pen handy?
.....

A file that big?
It might be very useful.

But now it is gone.
Chaos reigns within.
Reflect, repent, and reboot.
Order shall return.
.....

Login incorrect.
Only perfect spellers
may enter this system.
.....

Wind catches lily
Scatt'ring petals to the wind:
Segmentation fault
.....

ABORTED effort:
Close all that you have.
You ask way too much.
.....

First snow, then silence.
This thousand dollar screen
dies so beautifully.
.....

With searching comes loss
and the presence of absence:
"My Novel" not found.
.....

The Tao that is seen

Is not the true Tao, until
You bring fresh toner.
Stay the patient course.
Of little worth is your ire.
The network is down
.....

Yesterday it worked
Today it is not working
Windows is like that
.....

To have no errors
Would be life without meaning
No struggle, no joy
.....

No keyboard present
Hit F1 to continue
Zen engineering?
.....

Hal, open the file
Hal, open the damn file,
Hal open the...please Hal
.....

Having been erased,
The document you're seeking
Must now be retyped.
.....

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Community Service

Be a Mentor at the CLC

By Bobby Curtis

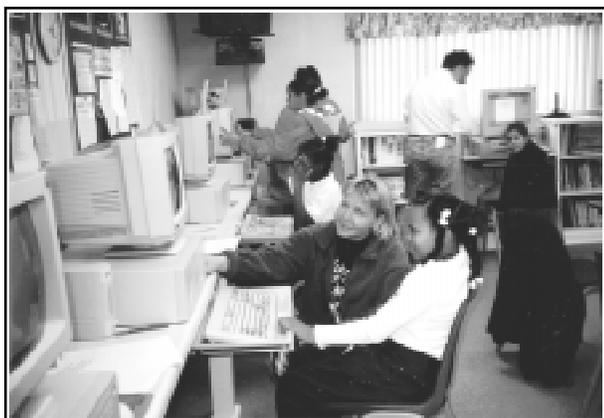
IN THE JANUARY ISSUE of *dacs.doc*, the Computerized Learning Center (CLC) at Frost Homestead Apartments, an HUD moderate income community owned by the private, nonprofit New Samaritan Family Housing of Waterbury, placed a notice requesting volunteers needed to make a difference in the lives of technologically disadvantaged adults and children.

I visited the CLC and found an earnest group of people bringing computer technology to the residents of Frost Homestead. Through the work of the Project Administrator, Ed Hayden, On-Line Service Coordinator Linda Bernegger, and a number of volunteers, the CLC is taking shape.

IBM donated a 66 Mhz Pentium computer system, and four other computers have been upgraded to 66Mhz Pentiums. All have CD-ROMs and sound capabilities. An Internet connection using a single modem and a modem-sharing device enables access to The World Wide Web. A project is underway for the students to create a Web page for the CLC.

The students range in age from eight to 60 years of age and up. Volunteers serve as teachers and mentors to groups of four to six students. Groups meet throughout the week in one- to two-hour sessions. Microsoft has been appraised of the work being done and has donated software.

I have been working with children in a small group. Our current goal is to establish



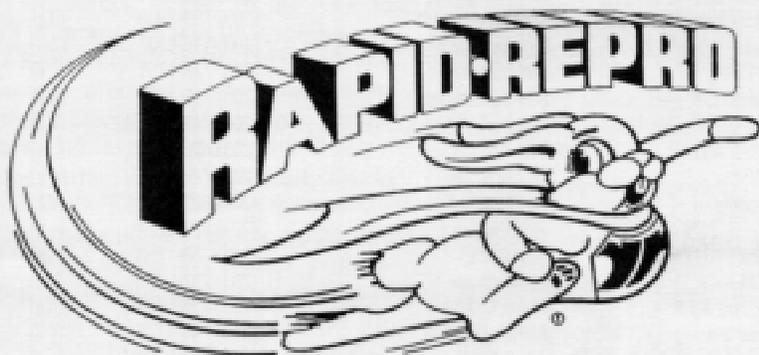
a mentoring program, whereby the mentor will have two students to work with. It's very challenging to provide guidance to a group of children with varied interests and skill levels. More volunteers are needed to support this mentoring program. If you are interested, please contact Ed Hayden or Linda Bernegger at 203 574-5456, or me, Bobby, at 203 263-3589 or bobbycurtis@snet.net.

Local Area Internet Providers

AT&T Worldnet	800-967-5363
Cloud 9	914-682-0384
Concentric Networks	800-745-2747
C. P. Connect	203-734-6600
Delphi Internet	800-695-4005
Earthlink	800-395-8425
MAGS-net	203-207-5695
Erol's	888-463-7657
GTE Internetworking	800-927-3000
IBM/Advantis	800-888-4103
Internet84	203-830-2122
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LocalNet of Fairfield County	203-425-3535
MCI	800-550-0927
Microsoft Network	800-386-5550
Netaxis	203-969-0618
NETCOM	800-353-6600
North American	800-952-INET
Netmeg Internet	888-863-8634
On The Net	203-270-6388
Paradigm	800-664-INET
Putnam Internet Services	914-225-3234
Smart World Technologies	203-790-4600
SNET Internet	800-408-8282
SpryNet	800-sprynet
TIAC -The Internet Access Co.	203-323-5957
Web Connect of Ridgefield	203-438-7650
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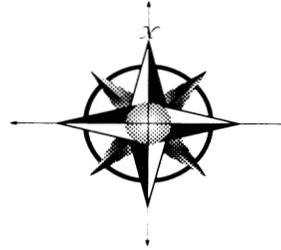
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WANTED SIG NOTES EDITOR

We need an editor to assume the mantle of our award-winning DACS SIG Notes and calendar pages. Responsibilities will be to coordinate with SIG leaders and to edit monthly notes. A pleasant phone voice and/or enforcer experience is most desirable.

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Special Interest Groups

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

Contact: Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920. Meets on 2nd Tuesday at 7p.m. at AMSYS Computer, Ridgefield.

Next meeting: May 12, 1998.

ADVANCED OPERATING SYSTEMS. Uses, explores, and develops OS/2, BSD UNIX and NT operating systems.

Contact: Don Pearson, 914 669-9622.

Meets Wednesday of the week following the general meeting, 7:30 p.m., at Don Pearson's office, North Salem, NY.

Next meeting: May 13, 1998.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING. Edits and produces *dacs.doc*. Anyone interested in newsletter publishing is welcome.

Contact: Allan Ostergren, 860 210-0047 or Marc Cohen 203 775-1102. Meets on Thursday following monthly general meeting, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next meeting: May 7, 1998.

EDUCATION. Coordinates DACS education classes.

Contact: Charlie Bovaird, 203 792-7881. Meets as needed.

FINANCIAL. Discusses various investment strategies, emphasizing careful selection to maximize profits and limit risk.

Contact: Will Toll, 203 270-1519, or Paul Gehrett, 203 426-8436. Meets 3rd Thursday, 7:30p.m., Edmond Town Hall, Newtown.

Next Meeting: May 21, 1998.

GRAPHICS. Learn to create and print high-quality graphics and images.

Contact: Ken Graff, 203 775-6667. Meets on last Wednesday, 7p.m., at Best Photo, Brookfield.

Next Meeting: May 27, 1998.

INTERNET. Acquaints DACS members with all aspects of the Internet.

Contact: Diane Greenwald, 203 797-4505. Meets on 3rd Wednesday, 7p.m., in the Danbury Public Library Community Room, 170 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: May 20, 1998.

MACINTOSH. A forum for a discussing Macintosh hardware and software.

Contact: Chris Salaz 203 798-6417. Meets on 3rd Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: May 19, 1998.

VISUAL BASIC. Focuses on developing Windows applications using Visual Basic.

Contact: Chuck Fizer, 203 798-9996 or Jim Scheef, 860 355-8001. Meets on 1st Wednesday, 7p.m., at DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: May 6, 1998.

VOICE FOR JOANIE. Provides and supports people with Lou Gehrig's disease with special PC computer equipment.

Contact: Shirley Fredlund, 860 355-2611 x4517.

Meets on last Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., at Datahr, Brookfield.

Next Meeting: May 26, 1998.

WALL STREET. Examines new Windows market software.

Contact: Phil Dilloway, 203 367-1202. Meets on last Monday, 7p.m., at A. G. Edwards office, 42 Old Ridgebury Road, Danbury.

Next Meeting: May 25, 1998.

WEB SITE DESIGN. Designs and maintains *dacs.org*, the DACS Web site.

Contact: Jeff Setaro, 203 748-6748. Meets on 2nd Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: May 13, 1998

WINDOWS. Explores all aspects of Windows 95 and 3.1.

Contact: Ben Carnevale, 203 748-1751. Meets on 2nd Friday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: October, 1998.

SIG News

GENERAL

The SIG Notes and Calendar are available on the Internet on Dan McLeod's home page. Changes from the SIG Notes and Calendar printed in *dacs.doc* will be shown in red and italics. The Internet address for the SIG Notes and Calendar is: <http://www.concentric.net/~dwmcleod/signotes.htm>. Please type it precisely as shown and use only lower case. Comments on the Internet SIG Notes would be appreciated by e-mail at dwmcleod@concentric.net.

VB

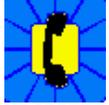
If you missed the April meeting you missed a good one. Glenn Storm brought in and demonstrated one of his applications—computer, programmable logic controller (PLC), interface and all! The PCL was a simulator but the application and our discussion of a problem he experienced in writing it kept us going for some time. After solving Glenn's problems we continued our discussion of COM and DCOM and how this technology can affect your applications. The VB SIG meets on the first Wednesday each month in the DACS Resource Center.

WINDOWS

Topics of individual concern were raised by the members at the last Windows SIG meeting and resolved with discussions and computer hands-on demonstrations. One new member was welcomed to the Windows SIG meeting. The Windows SIG meetings will take a long break for the summer months and will resume on Friday, October 9, at 7pm. In the meantime, any DACS member having questions with Windows 3.1 or Windows 95 is always welcome to check the Helpline, or contact Ben at 203.748.1751 or email FFJM69A@Prodigy.Com.

May 1998

Danbury Area Computer Society

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Calendar and SIG Notes are available on the Internet at <http://www.concentric.net/~dwmcleod/signotes.htm>

Building a Small Office/Home Office

By John Heckman

WITH their exponential growth, small businesses have even developed their own acronym—SOHO in this context stands not for the artsy area in New York City but for Small Office/Home Office. What you will need to build yours varies widely depending on what type of business you have and what your definition of “small” is. For the purposes of this article, a “small” office will have fewer than 20 employees. What follows are some of the issues you’ll need to address before you set up your own SOHO.

What is it going to cost me?

The answer to this question is more complex than it might appear. You no doubt carry all kinds of insurance (health, life, automobile, property, etc.). When people approach me about “saving money” on computer equipment, I always ask them how they feel about insurance. Compaq has been running ads lately with a headline: GIVEN THESE PRICES, WHY GET THE MORE EXPENSIVE CHEAP MACHINE? The point here is that all computer equipment used in an office setting will sooner or later fail. This is especially true of the pieces of the computer that involve moving parts, *i.e.*, the hard drive.

“Cheap” PCs, which are entirely acceptable as home machines, can develop strange quirks when attached to a Network. I learned this the hard way when I bought a Micron and attached it to my network. After about eight hours on the line with technical support, they finally confessed that Micron home PCs were “flaky” when used with 3Com network cards (one of the most reliable on the market). If I had to pay someone for that eight hours, it would have more than wiped out any savings on the “cheap” PC.

So when considering whether to “save money” on a lower-end item, you should also take into account what will happen if that piece of equipment is suddenly unavailable for several days. This is not just a question of repair/replacement costs, but also the effect on your business. For key pieces of equipment, the extra expense is just another form of business insurance. Of course, all the “extra” amounts can add

up rapidly, so with each of the elements of a network that are described below, you simply need to make a conscious choice about where you can intelligently cut expenses and where it really isn’t worth it.

To server or not to server

One of the first questions you need to decide is whether you need a server-based network. Basically, if you have three or more people using different PCs at the same time, you should get a network server, not just use Windows 95 or some other peer-to-peer networking. A dedicated server brings a number of advantages in terms of data security, centralized ease of administration, use, and backup. It also brings savings of scale in terms of Internet, faxing, and modem connections. Finally, it avoids the performance hit and potential data loss that can happen to a PC on a peer-to-peer network. Yes, it means buying an extra machine, but you will be much better off in the long run. This article assumes you will need a server.

Network operating systems

If you have a network, what software do you want to use? Both Microsoft and Novell make “small-business” versions of their network operating systems geared to companies that have only a single server and fewer than 25 employees. While Microsoft certainly has the mind-share, the issue is not always clear-cut. If you plan to use Microsoft products for your main business applications (Word, Excel, Access), Microsoft Back Office is a good choice. Be aware, however, that Microsoft products are much more hardware-intensive than Novell’s. You can run a small business quite adequately on a Novell server with 64Mb memory, but you will probably want to start at 128Mb for an NT server.

A similar relationship exists for other products. The Gartner Group recently did a study showing that the Microsoft e-mail product Exchange (and variants) costs about three times as much per user per year to operate as the Novell e-mail product, GroupWise. And GroupWise is a better product!

But the most important issue with Microsoft Back Office is whether your business uses legacy applications. (Someone has defined a legacy application as one that works). Microsoft NT is notoriously flaky when running DOS or 16-bit legacy applications. So if you depend on one of these products (and many specialty vertical applications for specific businesses fall into this category), double-check, then check again to make sure it will work with NT before going that route. If possible, try to find someone in your line of business who is using the same application, or check with relevant professional associations (many of which have technology committees). You definitely do NOT want to install a nice new NT server and then find out that your key application doesn’t work.

How much PC do you need?

Assuming you do have a network, how powerful does the PC have to be? If your business requires that you travel to client sites and make presentations, you might consider getting a decent laptop and having it do double duty as a workstation. You can expect to pay \$1,000 to \$1,500 more for a laptop than a desktop PC, but you will appear qualitatively more professional to your prospective clients, and this could make a significant difference between getting an account and not getting one.

All of the major manufacturers (Compaq, Dell, Gateway, Micron) have two lines of PCs: home PCs (the ones you mainly see advertised) and business-oriented PCs. Business PCs tend to come with built-in network connections and less in the way of sound and video systems, yet they cost around \$300-\$400 more than a home PC. This is one area where “saving money” can actually cost you more, as I found out with my Micron. The reason for this is that business PCs are designed to have more consistent parts, while home PCs sometimes come with virtually all their IRQs used, so trying to add another piece such as a network card, can be an adventure. If you get away with it, fine. If not, *caveat emptor*.

Server-related equipment

Network Hub. You will need a network hub to connect the network. You will have the fewest problems if you buy all your network cards and related equipment from the same manufacturer. For example, 3Com makes excellent network hubs and network cards, and you can be sure that they will all work with each other. Especially if your business involves significant amounts of graphics or large databases, you should buy 10/100 PCI cards and hubs. This will allow your network to have optimal performance further into the future.

UPS. You should get Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) at least for the server. If possible you should get a UPS such as the ones that American Power Conversion makes, which connect to your server via a serial port. In event of a power outage that lasts longer than 10 to 15 minutes (the life of the battery), the UPS will shut down your server properly, thus preventing any loss of data. Consider the extra cost as a form of insurance.

Backup. Backup is a critical issue. When (not "if") your server goes down, you could experience anything between 48 hours of downtime when no business records are available (Just ask yourself how many times you have called a bank or other institution and been told, "I'm sorry, the computers are down right now.") to total loss of all your data.

Some form of tape backup is probably your best bet. Not only can you automate backups so they occur in the middle of the night, but they allow for easy off-site storage (What if there is a fire in your office?). Travan tape systems are inexpensive, but the tapes can stretch and become unreliable, so they need to be reformatted periodically. DLT backup tape systems are more expensive, but faster and more reliable. If you are willing to invest the time to take proper care of your tape systems, this is one area where you can save some money. Both Seagate (Backup Exec) and Computer Associates (Arcserve) make excellent backup programs, and tape drives are available from a number of manufacturers.

Virus Checking. You should definitely have some form of antivirus program, especially if you are using MS Word. How you configure it depends on how many documents or files you receive from outside your organization and how much Internet e-mail you receive. You should check with your ISP to see whether they do antivirus checking on your e-mail. The better ones do. You can run your

antivirus checker on each PC every time it boots up, or you can get a server version that will check all the files on the server. Symantec (Norton), MacAfee, and Dr. Solomon's are three of the best. For network-based systems, Inoculan from Computer Associates is a good product.

Printing/scanning/faxing

What to do about printers, scanning, and faxing depends on the exact mix of what you do. Some questions to ask yourself are:

- When I need to fax things, how often do I need to fax a regular sheet of paper (as opposed to a document from the computer)?
- Do I regularly need to scan anything that is not just a flat piece of paper?
- Do I need to scan high-resolution images?
- What volume (how many pieces of paper) do I print every month?
- Do I need to print in color, or just in black and white.

Here are some criteria, depending on the answers to the above questions:

- If you mainly do business correspondence, definitely get a laser printer. Inkjets really don't cut it for regular business use.
- If you only do a small volume of faxing that is not from a computer, you may want to just get a scanner and dispense with a separate fax machine (You can set up a PC to receive faxes in ways that are more convenient than a fax machine anyway).
- If the only thing you ever scan is black-and-white paper (*i.e.*, documents, bills, etc.), you might be happy with a low-end sheet-fed scanner such as the Paper Port Visioneer or the small HP 5s3 scanner. These feed up to about ten sheets at a time. If you need to scan graphics, you will want a flatbed scanner (which takes up more room).
- If your needs in the fax/scan/print area are minimal, you might consider the new Hewlett Packard 3100 multifunction machine, which can be used as a printer, fax machine, scanner, and copier. At a street price of about \$700, this is a real bargain and is the first multifunction machine that contains a laser printer (as opposed to an inkjet).
- If all you need to do is fax from the desktop, consider WinFax Pro. This is the industry leader and can also be set up to function as an answering machine, assuming your PC has voice capabilities.
- Depending on your needs, it may be worthwhile to get a laser printer and then

a second color deskjet printer for occasional use. I have had very good luck with the Epson 400/600/800 series (the higher numbers indicate faster speeds).

Phone lines and Internet access

Obviously, your phone requirements depend on the size and type of your business. The Internet is another important variable. If you can make do with a 56k modem (which will actually deliver a speed somewhere around 40k, *i.e.*, if your needs are minimal), then a simple modem solution might be adequate. If your needs are greater, and depending on where you live, you might want to investigate an ISDN line and some of the newer services that are just starting to come on line, such as modem cables and ASDL. Then you will need to find a provider that has ISDN access only a local call away *and* that is still a local call from where the phone company has its ISDN ports. ISDN costs more, but if you need the access, it is worth it. You can also use the second ISDN line for incoming fax calls or a second phone line.

If you have multiple PCs, think about using a program such as iModem or iShare from Artisoft (which also makes Lantastic, a peer-to-peer networking system), which lets multiple users make use of the same modem (iModem) or use the same Internet connection simultaneously (iShare).

Finally, there are a number of small-business telephony units available for around \$1,000 or \$1,500 that can serve as automated answering machines/voice-mail units without the expense of a PBX.

E-mail

Whichever network system you install is likely to come with an e-mail package (Exchange/Outlook for Microsoft, GroupWise for Novell). Even if you are a small business, there are benefits in company-wide e-mail. It comes with calendar/scheduling modules built in, so that you may not need a separate application. E-mail can be worth it simply by getting rid of the yellow stickies on your monitor and phone messages piling up on your desk. More important, while you may already have an individual e-mail address, you appear much more professional by finding an ISP that will register your company name. Jheckman@kalmon.com is much more professional than Louie2126@aol.com. You can then hook your e-mail system to the Internet just for e-mail. This enables you to leverage the

Internet, for example, by providing automatic company or other information to anyone who sends a message to *e.g.*, info@mycompany.com.

CD-ROM Access

It doesn't take very long to get tired of swapping out CD-ROMs or spending ten minutes to find out who was last using the one you happen to need. Put a CD-ROM multichanger on your list. This allows you to load five to seven CDs (or more) attached to the server and enable all users to access them all the time. This is a great time-saver, especially if you use specialized databases on CDs. The Business Phone Disc is one of the most popular ones, and there are many vertical-market CDs for specific industries.

Where and how to buy

As to the "how," even if you feel confident you can assemble all the pieces once you get them, you may want to hire a consultant, even if only for the planning stage, to ensure that all the right questions get asked. In general, you want first to establish what you need to accomplish. Then find the software to do it and finally figure out what hardware you will need. And keep in mind the "90% rule" of computers: It should be fairly easy to get 90% of what you want; it will be difficult (and probably *very* expensive) to get the last 10%. Figure out what it is you can do without if need be. Many DACS members either run consulting businesses (as I do) or know somebody reliable who can assist them with their particular business needs. Ask around.

Once you have a detailed idea of what you need, you have several options for purchasing equipment and software. The cheapest solution is likely to be a major mail-order supplier, whether for computers (Dell, Gateway, etc.) or software. You can frequently buy from a consultant or VAR (Value Added Reseller), but these typically cannot meet mail-order prices because they do not have the volume. Buying from a VAR may be a good option if you are willing to pay a slight premium and the value-added part is really there.

JOHN HECKMAN is President of Heckman Consulting, which specializes in business automation issues for law firms and other small businesses. John can be reached at (203) 831-0442 or jheckman@kalmon.com.

Tips & Tricks

Sergeant April's Secret Files

Boot camp boss discloses favorite tips

By April Miller Cripliver

It takes you eons and serendipity to locate those shortcut chestnuts a digi pro can spout in a second, right? But April Miller, creator of our popular Boot Camp series for the growing PC primer set, has vowed to lop your learning curve angst by disclosing her cache of treasure bytes. Enjoy a collection of these quickies each month in the .doc until we come to the end of her file (when we will grovel and slime for more!). —Ed.

Delete files without a mouse. Hold down the SHIFT key when you press the DELETE key to delete a file instead of sending it to the recycle bin.

ESC quickly ... bail out ... bail out. If you are halfway through a drag-and-drop operation and change your mind, just bang on the ESC key to bail out. The whole trick to this one is to NOT LET GO OF THE MOUSE BEFORE pressing the ESC KEY !!!!

SCANDISK and DEFRAG—your disk toolbox. Most of us use the Start Menu to find Scandisk and Disk Defrag or Backup. But there's a better way. In MY COMPUTER, right-click on a drive and select PROPERTIES. Click on the TOOLS tab. Here you'll get information on the last time you performed each operation, with launch buttons for each.

MEM command—good memories. If you ever want to know what's happening with your system's use of memory, Go to START/RUN and type in MEM /c/p

More (conventional) memory. If you're not happy with the results you received from the step above, try adding the line BUFFERS=13 to your config.sys file. Reboot your PC, perform that last tip again, and you'll find you've freed a significant amount of conventional memory, which is always at a premium.

Print Scrn—and reap the benefits. When you hit the PRINT SCRN key, everything you see on your monitor is placed on the clipboard. To use it, go into any applica-

tion and choose EDIT/PASTE. You will now have a picture to work with.

ALT Prn Scrn is even better. IF you press ALT and PRINT SCRN, only the active Window is saved to the clipboard. This is wonderful for writing documentation. To get the result below, this is what I did:

Start / Settings / Control Panel / Sounds

Press ALT Prn Scrn. Open an application. I opened WordPerfect.

Click on Edit/ Paste. And there you have it.

F2—Changing folder names. Press F2 to change the name of a selected file or folder.

To change an icon. If you want to change the picture associated with an icon, right-mouseclick on the icon, choose PROPERTIES. Next, choose the SHORTCUT tab, then click on the CHANGE ICON button. Scroll through the choices and select the icon you want. Click OK twice. Wait five seconds.

Secret icons. Whenever you change an icon, you'll be offered the default source of icons. It's in a file called SHELL32.DLL that lives in the WINDOWS/SYSTEM folder. But there's another file hidden in the system folder called PIFMGR.DLL that contains WIN95's secret stash of cool icons.

Right-mouseclick on the object you want to change and choose PROPERTIES.

Choose the SHORTCUT tab.

Click on CHANGE ICON.

Delete out the SHELL32.DLL and type in PIFMGR.DLL (leave everything else alone). The end result should say: C:\windows\system\pifmgr.dll.

Hit the TAB KEY. You should now see a new selection of icons to choose from.

Click on the ICON you want, and then click on OK twice.

APRIL MILLER CRIPLIVER, creator of our BootCamp series, is Director of PC Applications at Computer Education Institute in Chesterton, Indiana. She is a regular contributor to dacs.doc. Contact April at uzerfriendly@niaa.net

It's a Small World After All

How I became a fan club byte throb

By Wally David

I WAS JUST telling a co-worker that I have my own fan club on the World Wide Web. Relating how this came to be lead me to recount a series of incidents that, viewed collectively, really illustrate how the Internet has brought us all a lot closer together.

Over the past few years I've come into contact with a number of people over the Internet I'd otherwise have never met. I guess it started when I mounted my own

Web page (www.mags.net/wallydavid). There I told people about my father, Gunter, who was a big-time newspaper reporter for the Newark News, Philadelphia Bulletin, and Philadelphia Daily News. With tongue planted firmly in cheek, I talked about how hard it is to be the brother of the well-known science fiction and comic book writer Peter David. And I also mentioned my Philly roots and my fondness for the sports teams of that town. Little did I expect that these three subjects would lead all sorts of people to my page.

After my page hit the Net, I started getting e-mail from fans of my brother. When people did searches on his name, Star Trek, and comic books, my page came up in the search engine results. Some people just dropped me notes to say "hello" and ask how they could get in contact with my brother. A few have become regular e-mail pen pals. One woman has three things in common with me: She is a fan of my brother; a fan of Philly sports teams, and her mother used to work with my dad in the newspaper business. Another woman, a displaced Philadelphian living in Florida, loved my sports recollections and continues to e-mail me every now and then to say hello, especially around the holidays. One guy from Texas is a huge fan of Space Cases, my

brother's now defunct kids' science fiction show on Nickelodeon. He asked me to create a link to his home page, which is devoted to the show.

Now I ask you this: Would I ever have come into contact with any of these people had it not been for the Internet? The answer, of course, is a resounding "no." But then you don't have to have a Web page to get connected with people.

Newsgroups are another place where I've met a lot of people, and it is not just because my brother is an author. I subscribe to *rec.auto.simulations*, a newsgroup devoted to computerized racing simulations. One day I was reading the latest batch of posts and came across the last name of someone with whom I used to work. Since the name was unique, I sent him an e-mail message asking if he knew the person I used to work with. It turns out they are distant cousins.

I'm not the only person to meet someone on the Internet and become friends. My mother posted a message to my brother's newsgroup, *alt.fan.peter-david*, and got a response from someone asking if, based on her first name, she was from Israel. Since my mother had been born there, she responded. The woman who had sent the message (a fan of my brother) had been born in the United States but now lives in the one of those tiny Israeli settlements that has been the center of controversy for years. She carries a 357 Magnum and loves science fiction! She and my mother became such good e-mail pals that last year, on a visit back to the States, she visited my mother. Would this have happened before the Internet? No.

Now I know you are all dying to find out about my fan club and how that started. So here goes. The guy who has a Web site devoted to Space Cases runs a weekly chat on Tuesday evenings. So every Tuesday a bunch of people who are fans of the show—or just fans of my brother—meet to shoot the breeze. Since my brother is not as computer savvy as I am and doesn't have much spare time, he hasn't visited the chat room yet. But I have had the pleasure of visiting it on two occasions. And people there treat me like a pseudoc celebrity because I'm Peter David's brother! It's mind-boggling to me to find legions of people out there that spend time discussing my brother's work.

On my second visit to the chat room, people asked me if I was a big sci-fi fan (which I'm not) and what do I do for a living. Since being a systems support specialist is not as interesting as being a writer—at least not to them—we started to get a little silly, with me feigning a severe lack of self-worth because I'm not famous. One thing led to another, and the idea of a Wally David fan club was born. Within minutes (actually about half an hour) the woman from Philly whose mom used to work with my dad had created and posted a Web page guest book devoted to the Wally David Fan Club. The address, in case you are interested is <http://members.aol.com/scfanfic/wallyfan.htm>. Drop by and post a note on the message board for all my "fans" to see!

There are lots of other ways to use the Internet to contact people—those you've never met before or those you haven't heard from in years. The Internet is out there waiting for you to use it (and maybe become a celebrity), so take advantage of this rich resource and have fun.

There are lots of other ways to use the Internet to contact people—those you've never met before or those you haven't heard from in years. The Internet is out there waiting for you to use it (and maybe become a celebrity), so take advantage of this rich resource and have fun.

WALLY DAVID is chairman of the board of DACS and also a member of the newsletter editorial committee. He is a Systems Support Specialist for Labatt USA at their U.S. headquarters in Norwalk. Contact Wally via e-mail at wallydavid@myself.com



The Internet is out there waiting for you to use it (and maybe become a celebrity)...

Random Access

Instant replay: April 1998

Bruce Preston, Moderator

Q. I installed a program and then uninstalled it. It left a DLL file in the system, and when I went to delete the DLL file I got a message that said, "Cannot delete the file because it is in use by Windows." How do I get rid of it? There is an icon in the StartUp folder for the application.

A. Before you delete it, you would probably be best to rename it first. If it has been loaded, you won't be able to rename it either. Here is the process to follow: First, go to Start/Settings/Taskbar/Start Menu Programs/Remove/Programs/StartUp and remove the icon for the program. This should stop it from starting.

Restart the machine, but press the F8 key when you see the message "Starting Windows 95" (This happens before you get the blue cloud screen). Select Command Prompt Only. Change to your Windows directory, then to the SYSTEM subdirectory within. (CD \WINDOWS\SYSTEM). Then rename the file, say it is XYZ.DLL, and change it to XYZ_XXX.DLL or something similar. Restart your machine and let Windows run normally. If all is well, you may delete the file (which is now named XYZ_XXX.DLL). If there is a problem, rename the file to its original name.

If you have many applications that you want to remove, you may also want to look into some of the cleanup programs such as Uninstaller or CleanSweep. These programs will inventory your system, the programs within, which programs call which DLL files, and vice versa. They will identify which components may be safely removed.

Q. I have a 486 machine with a SCSI controller with an external ZIP drive attached and working. I tried attaching a SCSI CD drive, and now neither work. The Adaptec EZ-SCSI software recognizes that both devices are present. I am running under Windows 3.1. What should I do?

A. First, see if the CD works without the ZIP drive attached. If so, then it may be that both devices have the same

SCSI ID setting (a number in the range of 0 to 7 inclusive.) They must be different. Also, the last device in the chain must be "terminated" either by a physical plug attached to the device, or by a switch setting in the device. For example, you might have the PC connected to the ZIP drive with a cable, then another cable running from the ZIP to the CD drive. In that case, the CD drive must have a terminator switch set, or a terminator plug in the empty socket. Try to get the CD-ROM working on its own, then get the ZIP drive to work on its own, then get them to work together.

Q. I have a Pentium II with 64MB of RAM and Windows 95. After installing Internet Explorer 4, I and am now getting a lot of Kernel 32 crashes. Suggestions?

A. Record the address of the crash, then go to the Microsoft Knowledge Base and do a search on the address. This will often identify a fix. Make sure you have the latest Service Pack and releases. Turn off the "Active Channel Bar" — it has problems.

Q. I have Windows 95 OSR Rev C. It won't shut down. If I do a shutdown, it cycles as if I had hit the Reset. It goes through the memory test, and then boots. The machine has an AMD K6, and Windows 95 Rev C was on the system.

A. OSR Rev C is not a user-installable version of Windows 95; it is intended to be installed by an OEM, and usually requires some configuration by the OEM to match the machine. Some reported similar problems when there was bad cache, but this is not probable in your case. It was suggested that you check to make sure all applications are stopped before you shut down (check in the task manager).

Also, does the machine have a "soft off" function, whereby the Windows 95 Shutdown will also power down the machine? The software may "think" that you have this feature, and if it isn't present in the hardware, that could do it.

Q. I have WinFax 8.0 on a Pentium-based machine. It sends and receives faxes with many machines, but with one correspondent I can receive but not send.

A. Some older "real" fax machines have problems with fax modems, in which case you won't be able to fax to them. But before you abandon it, check the release in your software (usually in HELP/ABOUT), and then compare it with the update release in the Symantec support Web site. You may also want to check the modem settings: The setup strings in the modem database are often "close" but not exactly right for faxing. Check with your modem manufacturer's site.

Q. I am running Windows 95 on a Pentium 150. If after I have been using the machine for a while I start Netscape Communicator 4, I get the hourglass for just a second, then it goes away, but Netscape Communicator isn't running. If I restart the machine and then start Netscape Communicator 4, it runs fine.

A. Some application is not freeing resources, and thus not leaving enough of them for NC. You can take a look at your resource availability by going to HELP/ABOUT in any of the Microsoft products. Note that even if you have "50%" free, this does not mean you have 50% usable, since it could be fragmented. For example, you could have 2% used, 2% free, 2% used, ... in which case you would have 50% free, but only 2% usable. Some programs are notorious for being resource leakers—you mentioned you sometimes use PowerPoint. Try to identify which application doesn't clean up its act.

Q. Under Windows NT, how can I determine if a device is supported?

A. Go to www.microsoft.com and follow the references to Windows 95 support. Find the HCL (Hardware Compatibility List). You also might check the manufacturer's Web site, as it will usually announce the company's compatibility before Microsoft gets around to updating the list.

BRUCE PRESTON is president of West Mountain Systems, a consultancy in Ridgefield, CT., specializing in database applications. A DACS director and moderator of the Random Access sessions at the General Meetings, Bruce also leads the Access SIG.

Danbury Library to launch technology center

At 12 noon on Saturday, May 9, balloons, speeches and a ribbon cutting ceremony will inaugurate the grand opening of Danbury Public Library's Technology Center. Mayor Gene Eriquez and Library Director Elizabeth McDonough will welcome the public into the new section of the library devoted to computers and non-print information services.

Visitors may take ongoing tours from 12:30-5:00 p.m. to view the center. They will see a lab with 20 computer workstations, software packages for multilingual Internet access, Britannica Online, a student writing center, and more. A video information wall with six screens will display financial news, weather and cable news channels. A digital publishing room will open in the future, equipped with text, audio and video needed in designing Web displays. Laptop users will have a place to work. A comfortable meeting room may be reserved by the public for small group meetings.

Highlighting the afternoon event for children will be a visit from the book character, ARTHUR, who will be in the courtyard preceding the ceremony, from noon to 12:30 p.m. Later, in the Junior Library children may get their picture taken with a digital Arthur and have it made into a button to take home. Local celebrities will read aloud at an Arthur Storytime Marathon, 12:30-4:30 in the Jr. Library Story Corner. Mayor Eriquez and Superintendent of Schools, Tim Connors will be reading stories.

Library customers will find live, international programming via satellite demonstration in the Program Room, 1:30-4 p.m. This is a new program capability for groups to use. Database demos will be ongoing at computers on the main floor.

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