



Patron Saint of the Internet

THE DANBURY AREA COMPUTER Society's favorite presenter, John Patrick, will be the featured speaker again this year at the Wednesday, December 15th, DACS general meeting. IBM's Vice President of Internet Technology and world-renowned Web guru and visionary, Mr. Patrick will speak about current Web trends and share his insights about the fast-evolving pace of the Internet. Mr. Patrick shares his observations and wisdom with people around the world, inspiring new product ideas, new applications and innovative ways to use the Internet to help people meet their goals.

General meetings take place on the first Tuesday of the month at the Danbury Hospital auditorium, 24 Hos-

pital Avenue. They are open to the public. Meetings start at 6:30 p.m. with casual networking. At 7 p.m. DACS

members are invited to ask their most pressing computer questions during Random Access. The featured presentation starts at 8 p.m. Members of DACS include computer users at all levels. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) covering specific computer topics meet monthly. Consult the calendar on the DACS Web page (<http://www.dacs.org>) or elsewhere in *dacs.doc*. Also, check out our SIG Notes and SIG News page for meeting times, ven-

ues, contacts, and topics to be discussed. SIG meetings will answer many of your computer questions. You can reach DACS by phone at our Resource Center in Danbury by calling 203 748-4330.



Patrick divines the meaning of the Net at last year's meeting.

Meeting Review

Stocking Stuffers

Microsoft offers fun software for everyone

By John Corcoran

IT HAS BECOME A DACS tradition. In November Microsoft comes to town with goodies for the holidays. Again this year we got to see snippets of their latest and greatest consumer apps. And what a difference a year makes! This year's bounty makes that subtle transition from products that only computer geeks can love to professional-level productions.

Our presenter this year was John Stroiney, Channel Marketing Representative out of Microsoft's Farmington, Conn., office. John was typical of the Microsoft people we have seen—sharp and focused.

He was completely comfortable with the products he demonstrated and well practiced in the presentation. But he was noticeably more relaxed in the one-on-one discussions that took place after the meeting than he was addressing the entire audience. I am quite sure that will improve with time.

John opened the presentation by introducing Microsoft's Work Suite 2000, which bundles half-a-dozen of the apps most people would use at one time or another and throws in a ton of clip art. It includes Word 2000, Money 2000, Home Publishing 2000, Encarta

President's File



What if we had an election and no one came?

I've been with DACS for about nine years, and after nine board elections, I can't remember a time when the number of candidates was equal to the number of seats.

Wally David, our one-person nominating committee, has been searching unsuccessfully for volunteers to run at this year's annual business meeting, which will be part of our general meeting on December 15th. Although ballots printed in this newsletter reflect the lack of any opposition, members will have an opportunity during the proceedings to nominate other candidates or volunteer themselves.

Of course, it's not unusual for volunteer boards to run for reelection unopposed; in fact, many simply nominate their rank for reelection, or nominate their successors for affirmation by the membership at the annual meeting. In some cases, a lack of opposition candidates reflects waning membership commitment to the organization or a pessimism over whether anything will be accomplished; in others it might indicate a consensus on the way things are run and an unwillingness to "rock the boat." We'd like to think that the latter case applies to DACS, but it would be gratifying to see some new faces on the board to head off the inevitable burnout that many of us are beginning to experience.

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A maxim I have always held to be true is that no one should be indispensable. In fact, some business managers make it a point to replace or reassign any employee who has learned so much and become so good at their job that no one could replace them. But you can't hire and fire volunteers at will, so as jobs open up and the same people keep taking them on, a few become so involved that they become "irreplaceable." Then, when it finally comes time to move on, no one is left with the skills or motivation to take over.

While it may be asking much for people to run against someone who is doing a good job or to likely lose in the process, it is still a good way to get involved. I ran for the board two months after joining DACS, and lost two successive elections. But I stayed involved by coming to meetings, volunteering for responsibilities, and participating in debates. Most board members would love to retire and let others take over; but they want to see a track record and a commitment to keeping DACS a success.

So when the call for nominations is sounded, stand up to volunteer. Or, come to a board meeting and find out what needs to be done. In April, we'll be choosing officers and appointing committees, so there will be plenty of time to get involved.

Just a Click away

Are you looking for great deals? Many companies offer special services or discounts to user groups and their membership. But it can be hard to keep track of these deals, which can change from month to month and may be too numerous to list in our newsletter or web page.

Bob Click of the Greater Orlando (Florida) Computer User Group has taken the time to research these deals and has been reporting them in a monthly Deals column widely reprinted in the UG press through a service of the Association of PC User Groups. Now, thanks to APCUG, Bob's Deals column is regularly posted on the Web at <http://member.apcug.org/benefits/deals/>. Once you've bookmarked the URL, you should eat it, since these great deals are only for user group members.

The December deals include Windows tips book at 20% off, long distance service for 3.9 cents a minute, sheet music that plays itself, and a PC add-in card that lets you make long distance calls at local rates over the Internet.

—ALLAN OSTERGREN
DACSPREZ@AOL.COM

Membership Information

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Editorial Committee

Managing Editor: Frances J. Owles
Production Editor: Marc Cohen
Technical Editor: Bruce Preston
Public Relations: Marlene Gaberel

Contributors

Charles Bovaird	Larry Buoy
Jacqueline Cohen	Richard Corzo
April Miller Crippliver	Marlene Gaberel
John Heckman	Mike Kaltschnee

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The editors welcome submissions from DACS members. Contact Frances Owles 860-868-0077 (jones@ct1.nai.net) or Allan Ostergren at 860-210-0047 (dacseditor@aol.com). Advertisers, contact Brad Altland at 203-790-8620; (BBA3@exchange.co.westchester.ny.usa).

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Jeff Setaro
APCUG Liaison
748-6748

Officers

PRESIDENT: Allan Ostergren (860) 210-0047

VPS: Gene Minasi (860) 354-9380 • Frances Owles (860) 868-0077
Marlène Gaberel (203) 426-4846 • Jeff Setaro (203) 748-6748

SECRETARY: Larry Buoy (860) 355-0394 • **TREASURER:** Charles Bovaird (203) 792-7881

Directors

CHAIR: Wally David (203) 790-7286

Charles Bovaird (203) 792-7881 • Larry Buoy (860) 355-0394
Marc Cohen (203) 775-1102 • Dick Gingras (203) 426-0484
Ed Heere (203) 431-1500 • Bruce Preston (203) 438-4263
Marlène Gaberel (203) 426-4846 • Allan Ostergren (860) 210-0047
Frances Owles (860) 868-0077 • Jeff Setaro (203) 748-6748

Committees

EDUCATION: Gene Minasi (860) 354-9380 • **MEMBERSHIP:** Don Ruffell (203) 797-8138

NEWSLETTER: Frances Owles (860) 868-0077 • **PROGRAM:** Jeff Setaro (203) 748-6748

WEB MASTER: Jeff Setaro (203) 748-6748

RESOURCE CENTER: (203) 748-4330

WEB SITE: <http://www.dacs.org>

HelpLine

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

d = day e = evening

Program	Name	Phone #	
Alpha Four	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
AOL	Marc Cohen	(203) 775-1102	(d e)
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(e)
AutoCAD	Peter Hylenski	(203) 797-1042	(e)
C/UNIX/ObjC	Kenneth Lerman	(203) 426-4430	(d e)
Clipper	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
COBOL	Charles Godfrey	(203) 775-3543	(e)
Dbase/DOS	Alan Boba	(203) 264-1753	(e)
DOS	John Gallichotte	(203) 426-0394	(d e)
Newdeal	Marc Cohen	(203) 775-1102	(d e)
Electronics	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	(d e)
Focus	Jim Scheef	(860) 355-0034	(e)
Hardware	John Gallichotte	(203) 426-0394	(d e)
Interface -Instrumentation	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	(d e)
Internet	Nick Percival	(203) 438-9307	(d)
Macintosh OS	Chris Salaz	(203) 798-6417	(d e)
Microsoft Access	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
OS/2	Rich Chernock	(203) 270-0224	(e)
Paradox	Alan Boba	(203) 264-1753	(e)
Q&A ver 3/4	Anthony Telesha	(203) 748-4478	(d e)
Statistics/Data Analysis	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(d e)
SQL Server	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9998	(d)
Viruses	Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748	(d)
Visual Basic	Nick Percival	(203) 438-9307	(d)
Windows 3.1	Nick Strother	(203) 743-5667	(e)

Directors' Notes

A meeting of the DACS Board was held at the Resource Center on November 8, 1999. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Buoy, Cohen, David, Gingras, Heere, Ostergren, Preston, and Setaro. Chairman Wally David presided, Secretary Larry Buoy kept the records of the meeting. The minutes of the October 11, 1999 meeting were approved with minor corrections.

Finance and membership

Treasurer Bovaird reported that combined CDs, checking, and postal accounts amounted to \$16,873.63, plus postage on hand of \$40.32. Current membership stands at 559.

Recycle Day rehash

A discussion of the successes and failures of DACS' participation in the America Recycles day (Oct. 20, 1999) resulted in suggestions for participation in the future.

Y2K video

Ed Heere reported on the presentations of the video made at the Y2K Conference held last May at local senior centers and within the Danbury School System.

Elections

Chairman Wally David, as chairman of the nominating committee, reported that most current members of the Board whose terms will expire as of the December General Meeting had agreed to stand for re-election, but those solicited to stand for election had not at present responded, nor had any volunteers appeared.

Resource center lease

Treasurer Charlie Bovaird reported on preliminary discussions with the Danbury Housing Authority, owner of Ives Manor, regarding the upcoming lease renewal for the Resource Center. It was suggested that DACS offer volunteer services relative to computer maintenance for about twenty computers located at four DHA locations. The board agreed in principle. It was also advised that such offer or any alternative be cleared through DACS corporate counsel.

Membership incentives

A general discussion of incentives and methods to attract new members produced a suggestion that a trial program be instigated offering a premium to members re-

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Directors' Notes *Continued from page 3*

ferring new members, and that a gross of coffee mugs be ordered (white with DACS logo and URL in blue) at an anticipated cost of less than \$200.

C of C Showcase

Concerning DACS' participation in the Danbury Chamber of Commerce's Business to Business Showcase scheduled for November 18, the consensus was to decline, since DACS' ability to provide a volunteer capable of offering advice at the technical level anticipated during the normal business hours involved was unlikely.

General meeting rethink

Chairman Wally David suggested that the general membership's response to the pre-presentation activities at general meetings was, with the exception of the Random Access sessions, becoming jaded. The board discussed a replacement format and agreed that starting with January 2000, a What's New session be added.

Patrick recognition

On the suggestion by Jeff Setaro and a short discussion, it was agreed to present John Patrick at his presentation at the December General Meeting with a Certificate of Lifetime Membership and a plaque recognizing his long-standing contributions to DACS and its members.

Web Site SIG

Jeff Setaro announced his intention to step down as the leader of the Web Design SIG and a discussion ensued regarding possible replacement leader(s). Further discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

— LARRY BUOY

Microsoft *Continued from page 1*

Encyclopedia 2000, Expedia Streets and Trips 2000, and a few others. At \$95 upgrade it should be the first thing on the list for you to check out.

The next demo was the perennial show-stopper, Flight Simulator. Over its 17-year existence, Flight Simulator has become the No.1 computer game of all time. John showed us the Professional 2000 version, \$55 after rebate. The audience was predictably impressed with the five-minute demo of airplanes soaring over airports and terrains. John remarked

that professional pilots have come to use this product, which is about as good a recommendation as you can get.

Next up was Home Publishing Suite 2000, which was developed in partnership with Hallmark. The result of this collaboration: For the cost of about two dozen cards purchased at your favorite card shop, you can create professional-level, personalized cards for every imaginable occasion, and even a few unimaginable ones. If you include sound, animation, and Web delivery, Home Publisher will attain that ultimate goal of all apps, the ability to change your life style.

John also demonstrated Picture It!, also included in the Home Publishing Suite. This is an app that has photo-enhancement and touch-up graphics capabilities that are better than some of the full-size graphics packages we have seen at recent DACS meetings

We then saw Pandora's Box, which turned out to be a Tetris-type game. John showed a two-minute videoclip and emphasized that the ten puzzle types and hundreds of variations could convert even the most hardcore Solitaire addict. The price tag, \$17 after rebate, makes it a perfect stocking stuffer.

John saved Encarta DVD-ROM Reference Suite, \$55 after rebate, for his big finish. And appropriately so. The scope of this version of Encarta goes beyond anything possible as little as a year ago. In addition to more content, it uses higher-resolution graphics and video.

With DVD, the storage capacity of a single disk is ten times that of a CD-ROM. This brings a whole new dimension to the Encarta experience, and John was prepared to make the most of it. Unfortunately for him, Murphy was lurking in the audience with a big grin on his face, and the demo didn't work. Later, John found he had a defective DVD player in his computer, but the moment was lost and The Murph was off to another presentation.

In addition to the software, John briefly showed us two new mice and three new keyboards, all in the \$30 to \$70 range. More temptation.

Microsoft has always been generous in donating material for the raffle. Everybody knew it and nobody left early. The lucky ones went home with copies of Office 2000 Pro, Encarta Reference Suite, MS Baseball game, NBA Basketball game, Home Publishing Suite 2000, Flight Simulator 2000 Pro, Age of Empires, and a few more I missed.

The impact of the meeting was the quality of the apps. These are not the professional packages that people who do graphic design for a living would use but are applications that are close enough to professional level to become a part of our way of life. The prices are incredibly low. The dollar figures in this review were taken from listings on the Net by companies like Outpost and NecX. Try your favorite and look for the rebates.

Reflecting on the ego trips of Washington omnipotents, however, it might be well to take advantage of these offerings before the government forces Microsoft to raise the prices and degrade the quality.

CORCORAN@snet.net is an old, retired computer programmer who doesn't appreciate the nobility of purpose of the lawyers playing guardians of the computer industry.

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Trade Fairs

Musings from Vegas Comdex 20

By Mike Kaltschnee

YOU KNOW you've been in the computer biz a while when you realize you are flying to Las Vegas for your twelfth fall Comdex. It was with unusual excitement that I found myself on a plane going to spend an entire week walking the aisles, schmoozing vendors, attending parties, and observing my first keynote (I usually avoid them to save time, and then read the summaries later).

In case you've never heard of Comdex, it's a computer convention held twice a year. Comdex is usually held in Las Vegas in the fall and in various other locations in the spring. During my career in the computer business I've been forced to deal with the long lines for bus transportation, a severe lack of hotel rooms, the general sleaziness of Vegas, and paying cabs to get around. Things have changed.

Las Vegas has grown up over the past 12 years. When I first visited, it was really scummy. You couldn't walk down the "strip" without having pornographic literature jammed in your face, or even a come-on by a hooker. The city has really cleaned up the strip, and only in a few areas are you bothered. It's also a much cleaner city now.

Las Vegas has changed the most of any city I've ever seen. The town has literally been rebuilt, transformed from a sleazy gambling town to a tourist mecca that saw more than 35 million visitors last year. They've built dozens of new, expensive and exotic hotels that are a wonder to observe. I stayed at the Luxor, a 30-story black glass pyramid built in the middle of the desert.

The show really starts before the Monday morning opening. I attended a small exhibition at the Gold Nugget around noon and attended two parties Sunday night after the keynote. I have avoided

keynotes in the past because it's usually a canned presentation, meant for people new to computers and full of marketing propaganda. This time I couldn't resist the Bill Gates speech—he had just been handed

the news that the Judge in the anti-trust suit thinks he's a monopolist. Bill opened the speech with a great one, "Heard any good lawyer jokes lately?"

The line to get into the keynote was huge. I write for dacs.dot, so I had press credentials. (This is a great perk you might want to consider

writing yourself.) This got me a spot in the VIP line, so I wound up in the fourth row. We journalists had two minutes to take photos when he came out, so I actually got a close-up shot of Bill. I put together a slideshow on the DACS Web site of photos from Comdex, including Bill's.

Bill showed many new technologies, including a clustering Web server that allows big companies to add or remove Web servers as they need to. He also showed a new interface you can use to connect your computer to your car. The demo car was a new Ford Focus, from which you can download your music to your CD player, or even upload GPS and trip information. Very slick! I am just a little bit nervous about experiencing a "blue screen of death" on the highway, though.

I spent the better part of the week wandering the aisles, meeting with our customers and suppliers and even attending several great parties (see the slide show). I saw a number of interesting things at the show, but my "Best of Show Award" would have to go to the Linux pavilion. In the past I would have voted for a product or service, but the most interesting thing at Comdex was Linux. In a hall that was deserted last year I found an entirely new group of companies dedi-



cated to this OS. Dozens of booths, from Caldera, Red Hat, Andover, and even Corel, showed off products and services for the Unix operating system. The coolest one had the staff of www.slashdot.org hanging out and working on the Website live at the show.

Elsewhere at Comdex I found some really neat technology. Biometric security devices were everywhere. These devices add another level of protection beyond your password. They scan your retina, fingerprint, or even your voice. The one I liked the most was the BioLink mouse, which has a thumbprint scanner built into the side of it. To log into your computer, you simply have to use the mouse. Very easy to use, and a lot harder to forget than your password.

Since I work in the graphics industry, I was really impressed with the 3D scanner technology from www.real3d.com. You sit in front of a camera, which takes a 3D picture of you (it can also work on inanimate objects). You have to take several "pictures" to get a 360-degree view, but it really works. The company will be shipping a new version of their product in January that will cost only \$8,000. This type of technology used to cost more than \$50,000 last year.

I was really impressed with the designs for new computers and accessories at the show. We've suffered for years with boring, corporate computers, and now things are really starting to look interesting. I guess we have to give Apple credit for starting this trend, and now everyone is trying to create amazing-looking devices. I was really impressed with the Qbe tablet computer—it even includes a CD and digital camera. You can walk around your house or office, working on a computer less than an inch thick.

Finally, portable MP3 players were everywhere. They are all priced around the \$200 range and can only hold about two hours of music, but they are getting really small. Sony even showed one that is the size of a large pen! I would love to find one of these under my Christmas tree this year.

Be sure to visit the DACS Website at www.dacs.org to see the photo tour of Comdex. If you get a chance, visit the more than one million square feet of exhibits yourself. You're sure to find something interesting from one of the 2,000 vendors.

MIKE KALTSCHNEE is our roving reporter when he can find a spare moment from his Web graphics site, WebSpice.com. You can contact Mike online: mikek@demorgan.com.

Windows 2000

Exploring Release Candidate 2

by Richard Corzo

WINDOWS 2000 IS COMING, and I've had a chance to try out Release Candidate 2 after attending the Windows 2000 Customer Preview Tour. (Disclosure: I'll try not to let the free T-shirt unduly influence my review.)

This successor to Windows NT 4.0 is a massive update to Microsoft's preferred operating system for business. There are three versions of Windows 2000: Professional, which succeeds NT Workstation 4.0; Server, which succeeds NT Server 4.0; and Advanced Server, which succeeds NT Server 4.0

Enterprise Edition. I tried out Windows 2000 Professional Release Candidate 2. This, of course, is not yet the final release due in stores on February 17, 2000, so bear in mind that some things could change.

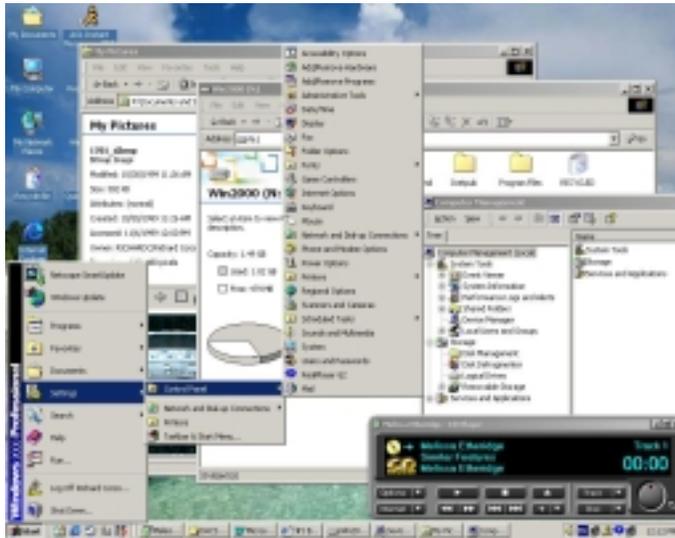
I normally avoid installing beta software, but this time, since I had heard from others that the Windows 2000 Professional beta was pretty stable by this point, my curiosity overcame my caution. I installed it in its own partition and used System Commander (<http://www.v-com.com/products/scd.html>) to manage the few common files on the C: drive that NT 4.0 and Windows 2000 Professional share, even when their \WINNT directories are installed in separate partitions.

Installing the system

The installation, which I started from NT 4.0, took about an hour, including a good ten minutes just for the hardware discovery phase. If you want to do a clean install instead of upgrading your current Windows NT, 95, or 98 installation, you need to request this option up front in the Advanced Options of the initial setup dialog.

Windows 2000, like its Windows 95 and 98 siblings, now provides Plug and Play support. It did a fine job of detect-

ing all my hardware. As an experiment, I had left my attached printer powered on. Windows 2000 correctly identified it as HP LaserJet 4000 with a duplex option installed and automatically installed the



printer for me! There were only a few slight misses: it didn't automatically detect the amount of memory installed in the printer, my modem was only identified as a standard modem, and my network card was identified as a Winbond W89C940 PCI Ethernet Adapter instead of a Linksys LNEPCI II card. The driver it identified seems to work just fine with my network card, however.

Interface changes

The user interface changes are comprehensive, especially if you are upgrading from Windows 95 or NT 4.0. If you have ever installed Internet Explorer 4.0's Windows Desktop Update, or have used Windows 98, you've seen some of the changes. But Windows 2000 has gone even further in merging the Windows and Web browser interfaces, and for the first time it has now surpassed Windows 98 in the user interface arena. So now if you've said that you only want to single-click to start programs and open folders on your desktop, this will also be true in the File Open dialog.

There are so many changes to the user interface that I was having trouble finding things I expected to see on a Windows NT system, like the Administrative Tools program group. I suffered enough

frustration at first that I broke down and took the Discover Windows tour available from the Getting Started welcome dialog. There I actually found some useful information, unlike the lame startup tips themselves (example: Click "X" to close a window or program.) By the way, the Administrative Tools can now be found in the Control Panel, or you can customize the start menu settings to make the group also appear again under Programs. You can also customize whether Favorites is displayed on the Start menu, or whether Control Panel is automatically expanded from the menu. There is a new Re-sort button for the Start menu, but I wish new programs would just be automatically added in sort order like the old days of Windows 95 before Internet Explorer 4.0.

I thought I would hate a new feature called "personalized menus," because it hides menu items that you seldom use. For instance, I always turn off the default options that hide file extensions or systems files in the Explorer folder views. Surprisingly, I found I liked the personalized menu just fine as a means to reduce menu clutter, and it's easy to make the hidden items appear, such as by lingering too long when you can't find the menu item you're looking for.

On the desktop there is still a My Computer icon, but the Network Neighborhood has been supplanted by My Network Places. The latter now includes not only computers on your local area network, but also dialup connections and FTP folders that allow you to explore FTP sites using a Windows Explorer interface. One addition I like is the option of showing send/receive lights for your LAN connection in the status bar. Like Windows 98 there is a My Documents folder with a My Pictures folder that includes a thumbnail view of your graphics files and allows you to preview them in the space at the left side of the folder.

Before I get too much further I should mention that if you use NT's native NTFS file system, it has been modified for Windows 2000. If you use NT 4.0 on the same machine, it requires Service Pack 4 or greater to read and write the new NTFS partitions. But be forewarned that you will no longer be able to run the CHKDSK against your NTFS partitions from NT 4.0. With the new NTFS, you can now mount a partition under an empty folder in an existing partition, thereby avoiding the need to add another drive letter. Finally, FAT32 file system support has been added for compatibility with Windows 98.

Utilities updated

Microsoft has updated all the operating system utilities. The former Disk Administrator and User Manager functions and the Event Viewer are all now subsumed under the Computer Management console available in Administrative Tools or by right-clicking My Computer and selecting Manage. A new backup function is under Computer Management | Storage | Removable Storage. It's a bit complicated for individual personal use but will probably be appreciated by IS administrators. I was eventually able to perform a successful backup and verify, after discovering that I needed to first add one or more empty tapes to a free media pool.

A convenience for administrators and power users is the new capability to run programs as Administrator while logged on as an ordinary user. You just press the Shift key and right-click on a program to get Run As... as a menu choice and then enter the Administrator password. However, this is not quite the same as giving the user temporary administrator authority to install a program. If an install program creates a program group on the current user's Start menu, it will do so under the Administrator user's Start menu if you run as Administrator, which may not be what you want.

Efforts have been made to add support for the latest hardware, such as USB ports and DVD-ROM drives. Power management is now included, which should make laptop users happy. It may now be possible to play Windows 95/98 games on a Windows 2000 system. The latest DirectX 7.0 support has been added, so I was able to install a Windows 95 game called Heavy Gear. I also have a Thrustmaster joystick and tried an experiment of installing the manufacturer's driver under Windows 2000, even though the driver states it is for Windows 95/98 only. I was able to get the joystick's buttons and throttle to be recognized properly, but not the Point-Of-View hat control. With a little cooperation from the game controller manufacturers, it looks like a promising future for games on Windows 2000.

Missing features

One thing missing compared to Windows 98 is Desktop Themes. In Windows NT 4.0 Microsoft made you buy the separate NT Workstation Resource Kit to get Desktop Themes. I don't know what the plans are for Windows 2000. Another feature missing is WebTV for Windows,

which allows for watching TV if you have a TV tuner card, or at least downloading a TV program guide even if you don't. Even with these missing Windows 2000 is much more suitable for home use than NT 4.0. You can even set it up so that no logon is required. The updated CD player is the nice one from the Plus! 98 pack that automatically downloads the track list from the Internet.

Bugs

Bugs I've encountered in Windows 2000 RC2 have mostly been minor. The most notable was when I tried to create a new NTFS partition. Even though I selected NTFS rather than FAT or FAT32 for the file system, the new partition was formatted as FAT. (I verified this bug by trying a second time and noting that the wizard summary indicated a FAT partition would be created, even though I had chosen NTFS.) I was able to work around this by formatting the partition as NTFS in a separate operation.

The only notable drawback I saw was the more than doubled boot time compared to an NT 4.0 or Windows 98 system. Shutdown time is quicker than NT 4.0, however. Perhaps the boot time will be reduced in the final release. As possible compensation for the long boot time, Microsoft has added a new hibernate feature that saves everything in memory to disk, allowing for a quicker startup time by reading from the disk file.

Conclusion

Windows 2000 is an ambitious update to Microsoft's Windows NT product. The cost of retraining to corporate America will probably be comparable to going from Windows 3.1 to Windows 95. In return, the new Windows does have a lot of welcome features that power users will appreciate. Microsoft has made efforts to accommodate more novice users, but they may not have been fully successful in this area. They have really taken on a daunting task to try to make a Windows base that scales from individual workstation use to servers for the largest corporate networks. In any case, I certainly foresee that Windows 2000 Professional will take its place on my computer.

Richard Corzo is a computer programmer currently working for ACT Networks in Naugatuck, CT. He installs PC operating systems as a hobby.

New Members

10/20/1999 thru 11/21/1999

- 1) Edward Atkinson
- 2) Ramanadh Boddapati
- 3) Wayne Cabral
- 4) Harry Cohen
- 5) Matt Felice
- 6) Jim Hannigan
- 7) Myrnie Hoanzl
- 8) Joseph Maniscalco
- 9) Bill O'Neil
- 10) Christine Peckaitis
- 11) Robert Pettersen
- 12) Jack E. Scully
- 13) Andy Thompson
- 14) Vern Wallenta
- 15) Suzanne Dale Wilcox

THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

EXP 9/1999

You need to renew your DACS membership - NOW

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
INTERRAMP/PSI	800-827-7482
JAVANET	800-952-4638
LOCALNET / FAIRFIELD CITY	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	914-225-3234
SMART WORLD TECH.	203-790-4600
SNET INTERNET	800-408-8282
SPRYNET	800-SPRYNET
TIAC	203-323-5957
WEB CONNECT OF RIDGEFIELD	203-438-7650
WEBQUILL INT. SVCS	203-750-1000

List for informational purposes only, not an endorsement of any service. 4

Further information?
Call Jim Finch @ 203 790-3654

Digital quirks and quantum singularities

Counting down to Year 2000

by Allan Ostergren

Americans love countdowns. Whether it's the 10-9-8 . . . before a shuttle launch, the number of shopping days before Christmas, or the fleeting seconds before a star ship plunges into a black hole, there's always an excitement and nervous anticipation that stirs our blood as we prepare for expected events and unexpected outcomes. And in a culture accustomed to the Hollywood ending countdowns can be

slowed or reversed, and even the most dire consequences can somehow be avoided. Once inside the black hole, for example, that star ship (captained by Maximilian Schell in the movie *Black Hole*), simply passed through to the other side and into another galaxy.

Viewed in this perspective, it is perhaps more understandable that American veins are un-stirred by the countdown to Year 2000.

Of course, there's no shortage of staged Y2K events designed to rattle our complacency. DACS Y2K spokesman Ed Heere recently participated in several official info opportunities, flanked by distinguished panels of experts that included representatives from the state of Connecticut, the city of Danbury, Yankee Gas, SNET and Northeast Utilities. In each case, the panel outnumbered the audience. Similarly, two carefully prepared DACS Y2K conferences in the last year, have been under attended and underwhelming in their impact.

Perhaps we've all simply become Y2K weary. After all, it's been at least two years since the countdown for 2,000 began and doomsday warning flags were raised. That's longer than most attention spans and on a par with such other flung out forgettable phenomena such as the

Microsoft antitrust case, the end of the world, or Hillary Clinton's exploratory Senate campaign. And just when

we've started taking it all seriously, stocked up on canned goods, firewood and cash, and headed for the hills, the experts are coming out again and saying not to panic, 'cause it won't really be that bad.

That's not to say there is no concern in the land over

what will happen on January 1st. Perhaps we just feel helpless and resigned to accept whatever comes, on the understanding that things may go topsy turvy for a while but then right themselves in the end. That's a reasonable tactic for anyone who uses a PC to send email, play games or surf the Net. For the rest of us who crunch numbers, make payroll or trade in goods and services, it might be time to think about Y2K, or it might be too late.

If you want some quick and easy Y2K evaluation, along with some good advice on what to do about it, download the YMARK2000 testing utility available from National Software Testing Labs (NSTL). Look for the rotating links icon at the bottom of the DACS Web site at www.dacs.org.

Probing the millennium

I am customarily bored by the media flashbacks that seem to occur at the end of each year, and head for the isles when the psychics start to predict what will happen in the next. But given the magnitude of the leap we are taking into a new century and millennium, I thought it would be good to explore where technology may be

taking us. Here are my TOP TEN predictions for the next millennium that will occur soon after space ship Earth emerges from the other side of the Y2K black hole:

1) PCs will be so fast that they will typically crash before even completing their boot cycle. A common error message will warn users: "Don't even think about touching that key."

2) A stockholder revolt will occur at IBM and Deep Blue will become new CEO.

3) The first message from space aliens will arrive by e-mail and will be automatically deleted by AOL's spam filter.

4) An upgrade to Microsoft Office will give Paperclip artificial intelligence and the desktop wizard will go berserk, locking out company executives and cutting off life support at the Redmond headquarters.

5) Persistent problems with Y2K will force Microsoft to adopt the Macintosh for all its corporate accounting.

6) A jaded public will tire of triple-X Web sites, and will flock to sites promoting meaningful personal relationships.

7) To save processing resources, E-mail spell checkers will highlight only correct spelling and language conversion software will intelligently guess what the writer was trying to say.

8) Students will be allowed to take their computers to exams and a question will be considered successfully answered if the student can accurately state where the information can be found on the Internet.

9) Standard memory for PCs will approach 1 Terabyte (1000 billion bytes) of RAM. The minimum memory required to run Windows will be 1.2 Terabytes.

10) Palm technology will create the virtual workplace by effectively merging voice, video and digital communications. Two-thirds of the U.S. population will be living in Florida.

11) The personal digital assistant will be officially declared a sentient life form, and users will be able to list them as dependents on their tax returns.

12) More than 100,000 couples will pay \$1,000,000 apiece for Bill Gates' DNA, and none of the resulting offspring will be successful entrepreneurs.



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ALLAN OSTERGREN is president of DACS, and so powerful as to be able to commendeer a whole page of *dacs.doc* for himself.

Practice Safe Computing

By Mike Kaltschnee

I KNOW, you've heard it all before. Sorry, but I'm going to sound a bit like your mother and tell you all of those things you should be doing to make your computing experience a bit safer (and less stressful).

I constantly talk to people, from novices to advanced users, who don't follow these steps and are trying to recreate data that took hours or weeks to create (even though most know better!). Yes, I'm sometimes guilty of not following my own advice, and I've paid the price. Here's my list of things to save you from having prematurely gray hair:

(1) **Backup your computer.** Let's have a quick show of hands: How many of you have backed up your computer in the past week? Month? Year? The most important thing you can do to save hours of time when your computer crashes is to have a backup. I try and backup at least once a week, even more if I'm working on critical data. I don't care how you do your backups—just do them. You can copy your data onto a floppy, zip disk, CD, or backup tape and you'll be safe. I copy the files from my notebook onto my desktop computer, which is cheating, but it works. You don't need to go out and spend thousands on backup hardware or software when you can get a zip drive or a backup tape drive for less than \$100.

(2) **Use a virus-checking program.** There are more than 40,000 viruses out there, and it only takes one to trash your computer or hard drive. There are many ways to get a virus-checking program, whether you download it, buy it at the store, or get it free with another program. If you don't use a virus checker, the odds are that you will get a virus if you are connected to the Internet or share files with other people. Always scan floppy disks before you use them! Be sure to update your virus-checking program at least every 2 weeks. I sleep a lot better at night because I use a program to protect me from computer viruses. Now if these guys could only cure the common cold...

(3) **Be careful reading e-mail.** No, you can't get a virus by reading your e-mail. However, you can get one by open-

ing a file that came attached to your e-mail. If you get e-mail from someone with a file attached, make sure you scan it with your virus-checker before running it.

(4) **Be organized.**

Have your operating system, software, serial number, and backups somewhere you can find them quickly and easily. For those occasions when you suddenly have to re-install your video card or call

support because your program is acting sick, you'll be ready. I've spent a lot of time searching for a serial number so I can install an upgrade. It really does pay to be organized, especially when you're on a deadline.

(5) **Pay for software.** If you use something, pay for it. This is especially important for business users. Yes, everybody loves a deal, but it's not a real savings if you're working late at tax time and find that you need to install a feature from the original CD. Worse yet, if you call support with a pirated copy, they might do more than just hang up on you. If you use shareware, keep in mind that only a few people actually pay for shareware. If you like a program, send the author a check so they'll continue to update and write shareware.

(6) **Leave 100 megabytes free on your hard drive.** There's an unwritten law about computers that says that no matter how large your hard drive is—you'll fill it. Don't fill it all the way - Windows or the

Mac operating systems need space to do things, and if you get too close you'll start having those strange problems. Give your operating system some breathing room, and it'll behave a bit better.

(7) **Never turn off your computer.** Use the "Shut Down" command to let your operating system close open files and quit nicely. If you can, leave it on all the time. Most new computers have a sleep mode and use less electricity than a light bulb when in power savings mode.

(8) **Use a surge suppressor.** Never plug your computer into the wall without some sort of surge protection. If you can afford it, get an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) with power filtering. If you have bad or "dirty" power, this can help extend the life of your computer.

(9) **Use common sense.** If you're not sure about something, ask someone smarter than you (there usually is someone). I've called friends and asked them before doing something I think might be stupid, and they've saved me from trashing my computer.

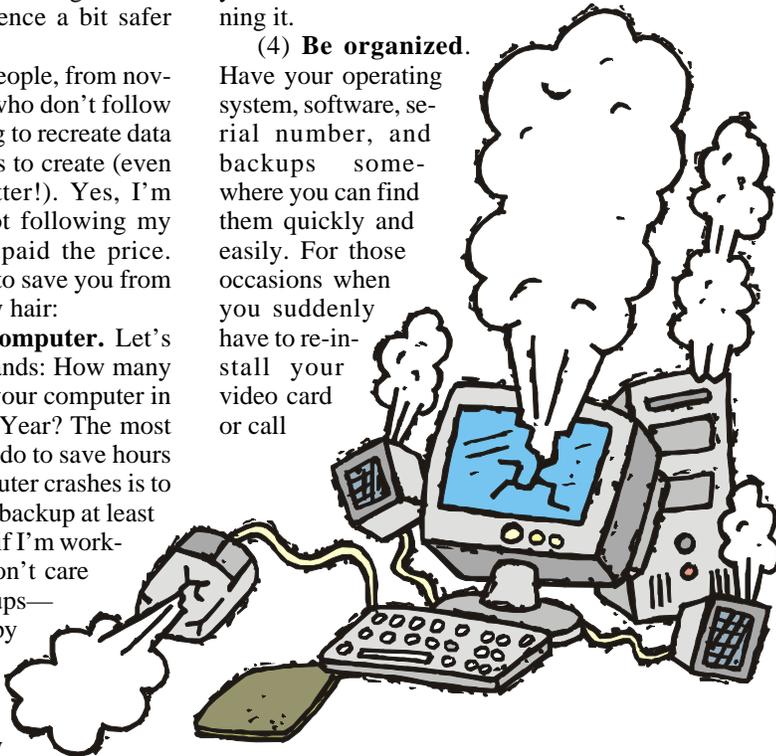
(10) **Scandisk & Defrag.** These two things can save your hard disk and speed it up. Scandisk checks your hard drive for errors, and keeps them from getting out of control. Defragmenting your hard disk reorganizes the programs and data on your drive, and can speed things up. I Scandisk weekly and Defrag monthly, but you should do it more or less frequently depending on how much you use your computer.

(11) **Join DACS.** If you're not already a member, joining the Danbury Area Computer Society gets you many benefits, such as the monthly newsletter, access to the monthly meetings, special interest groups, and much more. Even though I am a "computer professional" (whatever that means) I still learn things from DACS. It's a steal at \$25.

When all else fails, don't panic. Sometimes taking a break and coming back to the problem later will give you a new and better perspective on the problem. When all else fails, just use your backup.

You have one, right?

MIKE KALTSCHNEE is a founder of DeMorgan Industries Corp., the leading developer of Web graphics and themes at www.WebSpice.com. You can reach Mike at: mikek@demorgan.com.



Special Interest Groups

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

Contact: Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920 (bpreston@mags.net). Meets on 2nd Tuesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.
Next meeting: December 14.

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

Contact: Don Pearson, 914 669-9622 (pearson@attglobal.net). Meets on Wednesday of the week following the general meeting, 7:30 p.m., at Don Pearson's office, North Salem, NY.
Next meeting: December 8.

EDUCATION. Coordinates DACS education classes.

Contact: Charlie Bovaird, 203 792-7881 (aam@mags.net). Meets as needed.

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

Contact: Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 (graffic@ntplx.net). Meets on last Wednesday, 7p.m., at Best Photo Imaging, Brookfield.
Next Meeting: December 29.

INVESTMENT STRATEGIES. Discusses various investment strategies, emphasizing careful selection to maximize profits and limit risk. **Contact:** Paul Gehrett, 203 426-8436, (pgehr4402@aol.com). Meets 3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Edmond Town Hall, Newtown. **Next Meeting:** December 16.

INTERNET. Acquaints DACS members with the Internet.

Contact: Larry Stevens (LStevens@usa.net) or Richard Koser (rkoser@worldnet.att.net). Usually meets on 3rd Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury, a few buildings north from the Danbury Public Library. Members' suggestions for Internet SIG topics are always welcome.

Next Meeting: January 19 (no December meeting).

MACINTOSH. Discusses Macintosh hardware and software.

Contact: Chris Salaz, 203 798-6417, (crsalaz@kami.com). Meets on 3rd Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.
Next Meeting: December 21.

VISUAL BASIC. Develops Windows apps with Visual Basic.

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

Next Meeting: December 1.

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

Contact: Shirley Fredlund, 860 355-2611 x4517 (voiceforjoanie@juno.com). Meets on last Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., at Datahr, Brookfield.

Next Meeting: December 28.

WALL STREET. Examines new Windows stock market analysis software.

Contact: Phil Dilloway, 203 367-1202 (phildilloway@juno.com). Meets on last Monday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.
Next Meeting: December 27.

WEBSITE DESIGN. Designs and maintains dacs.org, the DACS Website.

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

Next Meeting: No meeting. New SIG leader needed.

SIG News & Special Events

ACCESS

The November SIG meeting worked with the Command Bar Wizard. We are going to look at other wizards in December and January. We will also take a look at reading or modifying a table's definition at runtime using VBA statements. As usual, about half of each meeting is devoted to "How do you ...?" questions from the participants. Bring a diskette if you want to take the meeting's work home with you.

INTERNET

Those folks at Danbury Public Library again sent us an expert, John O'Donnell, who offered a fascinating presentation for our November meeting entitled "Genealogy on the Internet." For those who couldn't attend, here's a good place to start exploring the topic: Browse to the Danbury Public Library's site at <http://www.danbury.org/library/>, click on RESOURCES, then DPL STAFF RECOMMENDED SITES, then GENEALOGY. There will be no Internet SIG meeting in December when the DACS General Meeting will convene at Danbury Hospital on the third Wednesday. The presenter for our January meeting will be Bill Keane, Internet SIG regular, whose topic is "Linux and the Internet." Linux is much in the news lately, and Bill has been involved with the OS for some time.

MACINTOSH

Last month the SIG hosted a lively and informative review and demonstration of TechTools Pro utilities and discussion about the popular Norton Utilities. There will be no special program in December, just our usual GetInfo section. In January we will demo Mac OS9, tentative to its release.

At the December meeting, the topic will be: "Mac: Hardware: RAM," and we will discuss the meanings of the terms PRAM, ROM, SLOTS: PDS, ADB, NUBus, PCI, PORTS: ADB, Serial, SCSI, USB, and IEEE 1394 (Fire Wire/iLink).

VISUAL BASIC

The November meeting started with a demo of the "Depends" program. No, it's not what you think; instead, it analyses an EXE or DLL and tells you what other EXE or DLLs the program needs to run. This can be invaluable when problems develop after installing an application on a new computer. Our discussion moved on to how different versions of ODBC can affect applications due to the different DLLs installed.

VOICE FOR JOANIE

During the nine years it has been helping those suffering from ALS, Voice for Joanie has assisted 225 people in 104 Connecticut towns and eight people in seven New York State towns. At the present time we are helping 52 people. We are always in need of technical assistance and it would be especially helpful to have volunteers who would learn the programs we offer. These people could help with teaching, or be available to answer questions. Contact SIG leader Shirley Fredlund.

WEBSITE DESIGN The Website Design SIG is going on hiatus while we search for new leader.

December 1999

Danbury Area Computer Society

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<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>  <p>7:00 PM WALL STREET Phil Dilloway 203 367-1202</p>	<p>28</p>  <p>7:30 PM VOICE FOR JOANIE Shirley Fredlund 860 355-2611</p>	<p>29</p>  <p>7:00 PM GRAPHICS Ken Graff 203 775-6667</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> 																																																																																												

Reroute Barbarians at the Gateway

Shared Net resources on Win 95 or 98

By Bruce Preston

IF YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, the cost of setting up a local area network has fallen considerably: 10Base-T network cards (ISA or PCI) can be found for under \$30, and an 8-port minihub (essentially an amplifier) can cost you less than \$50. For notebook computers, a "PC Card" or PCMCIA network adapter will be about \$70. Add a few "patch cords" of appropriate lengths (\$3 to \$20) and you can interconnect several machines.

By using the "peer-to-peer" networking built into Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT, and yes, even Windows for Workgroups 3.11, you can share resources between the interconnected computers. For three machines you could probably set up a 10Base-T network for about \$150.

10Base-T moves data at 10 megabits per second through wires that are similar to telephone wires, but instead of four conducting wires in the cable there are four pairs of wires, each pair spiraling (or twisting) around its mate. The twists perform a shielding function that protects the signal from electrical interference.

Lastly the connecting plugs at the ends of the wire are not the same as on a regular telephone (RJ-11 plugs/jacks). The RJ-45 plug/jack has eight prongs and is somewhat wider. 10Base-T wiring must meet a specification known as "Category 5," or "Cat-5" for short. This configuration will deliver data transfers between machines on the network at approximately 250 times faster than the 40 kbps you might expect to get with a "56K" modem connection. For those of you with slightly deeper pockets, a newer technology, 100Base-T, can move data at 100mbps instead of 10mbps. Adapters cost about twice as much, hubs about three times as much, and they still use Cat-5 wiring. A home network based on 10Base-T should serve you quite well unless everyone in the house is moving huge quantities of data, such as video and/or sound clips.

Usually a shared resource is taken to mean media such as hard disks, CD-ROM drives, and printers. It usually does not include modems or other forms of connection to the Internet. Since my work

often requires using the Internet for accessing support sites, or working on remote client host machines via TelNet or FTP, I sometime have a problem when my use of the resource conflicts with that my son, who wants to check his e-mail or look something up on the Web for his homework. The conflict happens just often enough to be a nuisance but not enough to warrant yet another telephone line into the house/office.

Now, however, with the use of gateway/router software, shared resources can also mean simultaneous usage of a single Internet connection between the machines on the network. The connection to the network might be via a dial-up connection—the Dial-Up Networking Adapter, as typically used for connecting to an Internet Service Provider (ISP), an ISDN line, an ADSL line, or a cable modem.

THERE ARE SEVERAL ways of enabling the sharing, such as in stalling and configuring software on a machine running Windows NT. However, there are now software packages that have simplified the installation and do not require a Windows NT platform. These will run quite nicely on a Windows 95 or Windows 98 platform. SyGate Server 3.1 happens to be the package that I tried. You can download an evaluation copy from Sygate's Web site (www.sygate.com). The software provides several functions: a) it acts as a DHCP server; b) it acts as a NAT (Network Address Translation) router, c) it acts as a firewall, and d) it provides black-list and white-list services.

Let's take a look at each of these functions.

DHCP. When you connect to the Internet, each machine must have a unique address, of the form nnn.nnn.nnn.nnn, where each of the 'nnn's represents a number from 0 to 255. Originally, when you signed up with an ISP, you were given a specific number, say 209.123.162.12. Typically, the left-most digits (209.123) or (209.123.162) denote the "network number" associated with the ISP, and the right most digits

(162.12) or (12) denote the machine within the ISP's network, i.e. your machine.

Unfortunately, this numbering scheme ran the risk of running out of numbers available, so the mechanism of dynamic address assignment was invented. With dynamic address assignment, an address is "leased" to your machine for the duration of the call, once the call is terminated, the address is returned to the available pool and made available to the next caller. The DHCP protocol is used by a client machine (your PC) to request a DHCP server (the ISP) or in the case of SyGate Server and similar to provide an IP address for the duration of the call. In addition to DHCP, the Internet standards committee reserved a block of addresses (192.168.0.0 through 192.168.255.255 is one of them) for use by "intranets." In this context, an intranet is a local area network under the control of the enterprise; in our case it is your network of a few (up to 255) machines. The standards are such that messages with addresses in the range of 192.168 will not be allowed to leave the local network, thus reducing the traffic through the Internet.

NAT. Network Address Translation is a service provided by a router that substitutes a valid and routable IP address for a non-routable address. Thus, if your machine has the address of 192.168.0.3 assigned to it by the local DHCP server, and you ask for a web page at 209.1.2.3, the NAT function obtains an IP address from the ISP's DHCP server, and substitutes that "return address" for you local non-routable address. When a message is delivered with from the Internet with the routable IP address in the packet, the NAT substitutes the local address and delivers it to your machine. It performs the necessary adjustments to the packet for such things as check sum, and even makes adjustment to special-purpose packets as used by some Internet functions. With NAT, if each machine on your local network has a unique IP address, as it will because of DHCP, NAT can keep track that machine A requested a page from www.nick.com, machine B requested a page from www.e-Bay.com, and machine C is checking the mail system.

Firewall. The simplified explanation, because the "real" address of your machine is never visible to the outside world, is that it is not possible for an intruder to obtain access to the contents of your machine.

Black-list/White-List. Putting an IP address in the black list on the gateway prevents a client machine from communicating with any computer or application at that site. Assigning a white list to a client machine restricts the client machine to being able to access IP addresses only on the “approved” list.

SyGate Server specifics

A client of mine had recently installed a cable modem and wanted to let the other machines in his home office have access to the Internet. I did some searching on the Internet and came up with about 40 possible software or hardware candidates. Most of them were targeted at the corporate market, but a few also had pricing that made it reasonable for the small office/home office market. After comparing product features, I decided to download the trial version of SyGate Server 3.1 with a 3 concurrent user license, SG31.EXE - 2.3MB.

With a three-concurrent-user license you may have more than three machines connected to the Internet via the server, but at any given instant, only three may be actively sending or receiving data. The server software needs to be installed on only one machine—the one that has the physical connection to the Internet, be it via dial-up networking, ISDN, ADSL, or cable modem. It is not necessary to install any software on the client machines. Since everything you need is provided by the operating system, you need only to configure the machines to make use of DHCP to get an IP address; the default configuration in Windows 95/98/NT is that the machine will find the DHCP server on its own. Download the file SYGATE.PDF - 176KB for very complete and easy-to-follow instructions.

I followed the instructions and configured my machine to let SyGate Server 3.1 manage my dial-up networking connections and to provide DHCP server capabilities. As part of the install, you manually connect to the Internet by double-clicking on your dial-up networking connection. SyGate Server 3.1 then finds the connection and completes its configuration. I then went to another machine on my network and configured it to look for the SyGate Server. After that I checked as instructed: I first used ‘ping’ to make sure that I could see the server. I then ‘ping’ed a site out on the Net (SyGate suggested trying www.intel.com). I was quite pleased to hear the server running on the machine in the other room grab the mo-

dem, get the dial tone, and dial my ISP. In a few seconds ping responded with messages from www.intel.com.

I immediately started my browser on the second client machine and was able to “surf”. I started a download and then went to the server machine and checked my e-mail. It worked. The download completed on the client machine, and I put my son to work surfing. I then did some simultaneous surfing from my primary machine. We did not interfere with each other, and both of us had acceptable response time. Deciding to “go for broke,” I connected my notebook computer, and it, too, was able to surf—three machines connected to the Internet via one 56K dial-up modem connection on one telephone line!

After an hour or so of test playing with it, I was sold on SyGate Server 3.1. I logged onto the company’s Web site and followed the instructions for purchasing/registering, and using a secure site. Within an hour I received a “key” via e-mail with simple instructions for entering, and my server was registered. The trial download permits use for 30 days and has a 100MB download cap. Quite enough for evaluation.

A few days later I downloaded and registered a copy for my client. His connection is somewhat different. A cable modem requires two network cards in the “server” machine. The first one is connected to the cable modem and is often included in the cable modem lease. The second one is connected to the hub, which connects the elements of the local area network.

SyGate Server 3.1 then “owns” the network card associated with the cable modem and interposes itself as a router/gateway/firewall between the two network cards. Other than having to identify during installation which card is connected to the cable modem versus which network card is connected to the local area network’s hub, installation is the same. ISDN and ADSL connections are handled in the same manner as a cable modem.

There are a few well-chosen options available for configuring SyGate Server 3.1. For a dial-up connection, you may specify whether a client machine can cause the server to initiate a dial-up connection, and you may specify how much inactivity on the dial-up connection to allow before causing a disconnect. You may specify whether it is to start when the machine boots. You may control whether DHCP services are to be pro-

vided. (On a corporate LAN, you may have already assigned IP addresses, so you wouldn’t want DHCP.) You may control whether a log of activity is to be maintained. Here is a sample from the log. The log file is continuous: When it reaches a certain size, older entries are removed from the top.

```
Sun Aug 29 20:23:23 1999 DNS
192.168.0.3:1037->192.168.0.1:53
www.microsoft.com Sun Aug 29
20:23:53 1999 DNS 192.168.0.3:1038-
>192.168.0.1:53 www.dacs.org Sun Aug
29 20:23:57 1999 TCP
192.168.0.3:1039->199.79.138.6:80
Sun Aug 29 20:23:59 1999 TCP
192.168.0.3:1040->199.79.138.6:80
Sun Aug 29 20:26:21 1999 DNS
192.168.0.3:1042->192.168.0.1:53
www.nick.com
```

The server normally runs as a mini-icon in the system tray, next to the clock. You may open it up to run various diagnostic functions, see which machines are currently attached, control file and printer sharing, etc. Figure 1 shows the server screen expanded. In the left frame I have highlighted “Status” and the status of the server is displayed in the right frame. I then clicked on Tools/Configuration to get the property page shown—most of these settings are the defaults. The server will run on Windows 95/98/NT. When run on an NT machine, it runs as a service. Clients that make use of the server may run 95/98/NT and even Windows 3.11.

All in all, I am very satisfied by the program. Oh yes, the price: the three-user license is \$39.95. Visit their site, read the reviews there, download and read the manual, then download the software and give it a try.

Lastly, some legal comments: Check your agreement with your service provider about restrictions limiting or prohibiting you from connecting their service to a local area network. Because configuration of a proxy server or gateway has previously been difficult to support, many of them do not support networked connections. They will only assist with problems on a non-networked machine. SyGate Server makes support a non-issue.

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 general meetings, Bruce also leads the Access SIG.

Networking

Internet Connection Sharing

By April Miller Cripliver

The Internet Connection Sharing feature in Windows 98 Second Edition (Win98 SE) is a set of advanced home networking technologies that will enable you to configure multiple computers to use the same modem, the same phone line, and the same Internet Service Provider (ISP) to simultaneously access the Internet. If you already have NICs (Network Interface Cards) installed on your home PCs, you're only minutes away from surfing the 'Net on every PC in your home at the same time.

Here's how it works: When your modem dials your ISP, the ISP assigns your computer an IP address. This is a unique number that acts like a ticket that identifies your computer and allows it to access and communicate with other computers on the Internet. Without this IP address, your computer can't connect to the Internet.

With the Internet Connection Sharing feature of Win98 SE, one computer establishes a connection to the Internet through the ISP and receives a unique IP address. This computer, known as the Connection Sharing computer, then lets the other computers in your home borrow its IP address. When the other computers, called clients, borrow the IP address from the Connection Sharing computer, they can access the Internet over your home network without having a direct connection to the Internet and without having their own IP addresses.

To set up Internet Connection Sharing, each computer must have a network card installed and be connected to the home network. The computer acting as the Connection Sharing computer must already be configured to

connect to the Internet through an ISP. The client computers must be running Windows 98 (any version) or Windows 95 (any version) and be using version

3.0 or later of either Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator. Each client computer must also have the TCP/IP network protocol installed.

Now you're ready to set up Internet Connection Sharing. Select which computer will act as the Connection

Sharing computer on your home network. On this computer, open Control Panel and double-click the Add/Remove Programs icon. Select the Windows Setup tab, then scroll through the Components list to select the Internet Tools component and click the Details button. When you see the Internet Tools dialog box, select the Internet Connection Sharing check box. You may be prompted to insert your Win98 SE CD-ROM for Setup to install the Internet Connection Sharing feature.

Once Setup finishes the installation procedure on your Connection Sharing computer, it launches the Internet Connection Sharing Wizard, which guides you through the process of creating the Client Configuration Disk. You'll use this disk to reconfigure the browsers on the client computers on your home network to communicate with the Connection Sharing computer.

The first screen in the Internet Connection Sharing Wizard is the introductory screen; read over the instructions before you proceed. When you click the Next button, the Internet Connection Sharing Wizard informs you that it's now ready to create the Client Configuration Disk.

When you click Next, you're prompted to label a floppy disk and insert it into your computer's floppy disk drive. When you click OK, the Internet Connection Sharing Wizard creates the Client Configuration Disk. Once the Wizard creates this disk, it prompts you to remove it and click OK. Just click Finish to complete the Wizard. At this point, you'll be prompted to restart your computer.

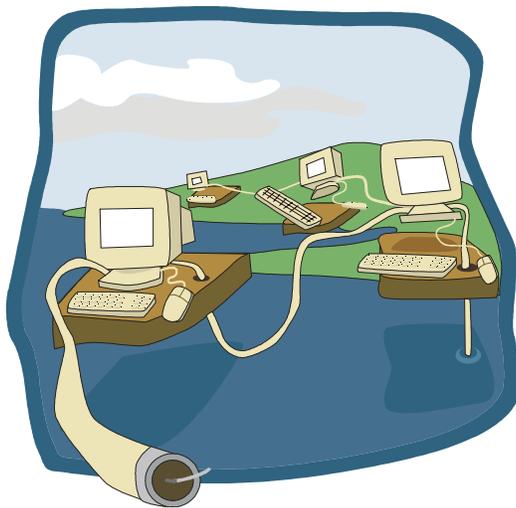
While your Connection Sharing computer is restarting, you can begin configuring the client computers. Make sure that the TCP/IP settings for the network card are configured correctly. To do this, open Control Panel and double-click on the Network icon. When you see the Network dialog box, scroll through the list of components and select the TCP/IP component that's connected, or bound, directly to your network card.

When you see the TCP/IP Properties dialog box, you need to make sure that the TCP/IP settings are correctly configured. On the IP address tab. Make sure that the Obtain An IP Address Automatically check box is selected. Then, click the WINS Configuration tab and make sure that the Use DHCP For WINS Resolution check box is selected. Next, click the Gateway tab and make sure that the Installed Gateway list box is empty. Now select the DNS Configuration tab, and make sure that the Disable DNS option is selected. Say OK to close the TCP/IP Properties dialog box. You may be required to restart your client computer.

Once you've made sure that your TCP/IP settings are correctly configured on your client computers, run the Browser Connection Setup Wizard on each client computer on your home network. Do this by inserting the Client Configuration Disk into the floppy drive, click START/Run, and type a:\icsclset.exe in the Open text box. Click OK.

You'll see the Browser Connection Setup Wizard's introductory screen, which contains a few instructions that you should read over before you proceed. As the instructions state, make sure that the Connection Sharing computer is already connected to the Internet.

When you click Next, the Wizard will inform you that it will now check and change your browser's connection settings. To continue, simply click Next again. You'll see the final screen in the



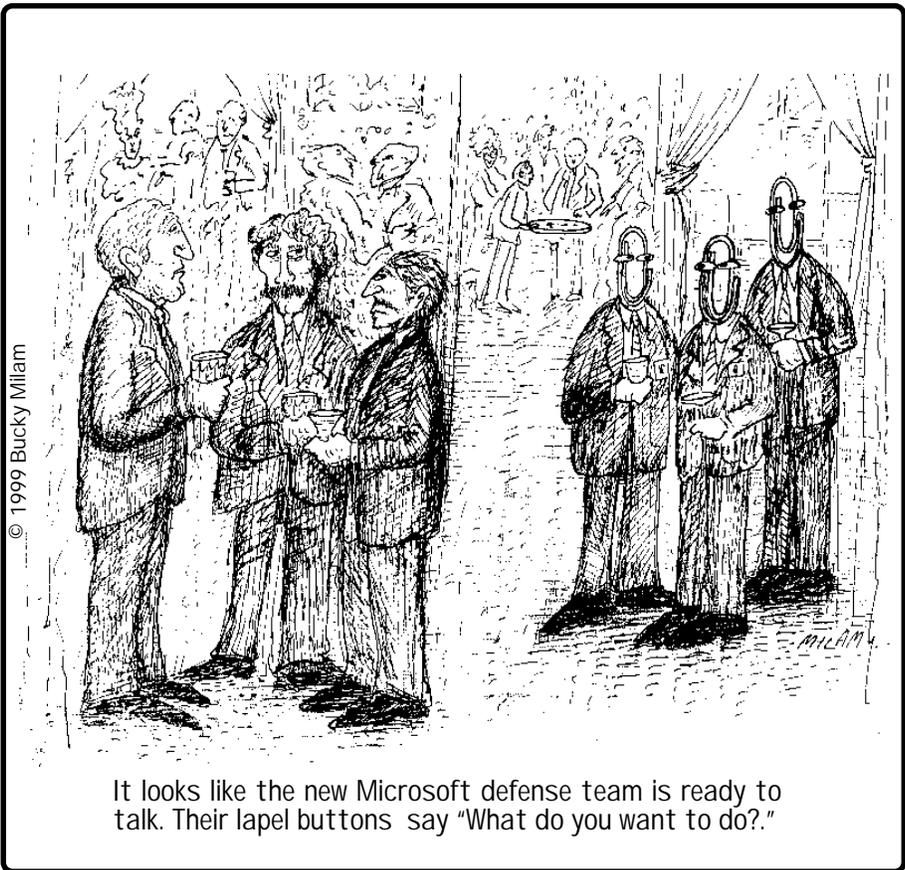
Browser Connection Setup Wizard. Select the check box to immediately connect to the Internet through the Connection Sharing computer.

Now, click Finish. As soon as you do, the browser on your client computer will launch, connect to the Internet through the Connection Sharing computer, and open your home page. Once you run the Browser Connection Setup Wizard on all the client computers, you can surf the Internet from any computer on your home network.

In the future, just be sure your Connection Sharing computer is powered on. When you attempt to surf the Internet on any client computer, the Connection Sharing computer will automatically begin dialing your ISP—no need to connect it yourself first.

Finally!! A way to solve the modern family feud of two or more family members needing access to the Internet at the same time. Peace in the home once again.

APRIL MILLER CRIPLIVER holds several certifications and degrees in business and computer science. She is a trainer and computer consultant in Indiana. April welcomes e-mail from readers at april@cripliver.com.



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It looks like the new Microsoft defense team is ready to talk. Their lapel buttons say "What do you want to do?"

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EOE

Random Access

Instant Replay—November 1999

Bruce Preston, Moderator

FOLLOW-UP: Last month we had a problem installing Quark on a PC: It hung during SETUP. Since then, the member has reported that Quark's help desk identified the problem as an incompatibility with the HP Printer Driver/Monitor that was running on the machine. The workaround was to temporarily set the printer to not be the default printer, to perform the installation and then reset the printer as the default. This is an example of why software vendors request that you stop all running programs before installing new software. In this case the "program" was one of those utilities that show up as an icon in the system tray (next to the clock on the task bar.)

Q. How do I install 128-bit encryption in either Netscape or Internet Explorer?

A. Download the 128-bit encryption version from Netscape. It is not a plug-in. In Internet Explorer it is a plug-in module. There had been restrictions on export of the 128-bit version, and some have reported that certain providers (such as Woodbury Telephone Company) were not recognized as being domestic U.S. ISPs, which is why Netscape would not download the 128-bit version. If you have this problem, contact your Internet Service Provider for a workaround. Also, the site www.fortify.net has a download that will upgrade Netscape 3, 4, and Communicator to 128-bit encryption.

Q. I am looking for an Uninterruptible Power Supply for my machine. How big a unit do I need?

A. It depends upon two things: how much of your system you need to keep running, and for how long. For the first, you typically need to keep the system unit itself and the monitor running (so you can see what you are doing while you shut the system down). You definitely do not want to keep a laser printer running—it consumes more power than your

system unit and monitor combined. (Note we said "laser," not "inkjet"-type printer.) A typical PC has a 200- to 250-watt power supply. Figure another 200 watts for the display. Thus a 400- to 500-watt battery backup unit should be ample. The second issue is how long you need to run on battery backup. The popular and recommended (by members at the meeting) APC (American Power Conversion) units such as the BackUPS 400 or BackUPS 500 should be good for 15 minutes, more than enough to keep the unit running long enough to save your files and close down the system. Other items to look for on an uninterruptible power supply are whether the rechargeable batteries within the unit are user-replaceable, or whether the unit must be shipped to the manufacturer or service organization for replacement. The batteries should be good for four to five years.

For slightly more money, there are "smart" devices, which are able to signal the PC (typically through a serial port connection) that they have gone to battery mode. Software in the PC detects the signal and initiates the shutdown procedure, signaling each program to save files and terminate. The software is usually provided free by the vendor, but often it must be downloaded.

Q. I downloaded Netscape Communicator 4.5 last spring. A month or two after I started using it, all of the names in my address book disappeared, even though it still knows the addresses since it offers them up if I start to type them. Where is it?

A. The address book is typically in the file `C:\Program Files\Netscape\Navigator\Address.htm` (substitute Communicator if you are using Communicator.) If you copy the file to a .TXT type file, you can then open it with Notepad or WordPad and view the contents. There is a possibility that something in the file,

such as a missing font, has messed it up, "white on white" text color, etc. The reason you want to change it to .TXT file type is that many word processors will "interpret" an .HTM file and show it to you as a Web page, which in this case is not what you want to do. If you know HTML you might be able to determine what is wrong, otherwise you may have to print the page out and then re-enter the names into a new address book.

Q. I have a Pentium Processor running on a Windows 98 machine. I just got the Windows 2000 CD at the Microsoft presentation last month, and when I run it, it suggests that I install it on a separate partition. What does that mean?

A. First the "why" they suggest that you use a separate partition: The Windows 2000 Release Candidate 2 is essentially a "beta" version, meaning that Microsoft is still testing it, looking for problems, and is recruiting you to help test it. They are recommending that you put it in a completely separate area of your hard disk so that if something goes wrong, you don't wipe out your "real" system. Now for what a separate partition is. Think of the physical hard disk in your machine as a filing cabinet. Usually, the hard disk is set up with one partition, equivalent to a single drawer in the filing cabinet that fills the cabinet. When your system was first set up, the builder/installer may have elected to divide the hard disk into two or more "logical" parts, or partitions, equivalent to two or more drawers in the filing cabinet. Your machine was most probably built with only one partition, probably known as Drive C:. Now for the bad news. Until recently, once a physical drive had been partitioned and data loaded upon it, the drive could not be repartitioned (i.e. converted from a one-drawer filing cabinet to a two-drawer filing cabinet) without performing a process (FDISK and FORMAT) that erased the entire contents of the hard disk. The good news is that there is now a third-party software product, Partition Magic from PowerQuest, which can repartition the drive without loss of data, should you want to do so.

Q. Has anyone loaded Windows 2000, and what have been your experiences?

A. Several members had installed it without problems. Some did it "over" Windows 95: It added a "boot manager" capability where it prompts at boot time, "Which Operating System do you want to use?" It did not create or offer to create a partition. On a "clean" hard drive, you cannot install from MS-DOS; you have to make a four-diskette set that you use to boot the machine, and then you install Windows 2000. In this case, you do not get a boot manager option. The issue of putting it on a separate partition came up at the presentation by Microsoft, where they recommended that you use a separate partition. The installation does not offer or provide a mechanism for repartitioning a drive while preserving data.

Q. Word is going around AT&T WorldNet that "certificates" are going to expire at the end of 1999. What does this mean?

A. These "certificates" are used by various e-commerce utilities and are associated with your machine. They are like cookies, used only when you use certain "shop-over-the-Internet" resources. If you update your browser the certificates will be renewed. Alternatively, if after they expire you get blocked from shopping, visit the certificate issuing authority (such as Verisign) to get new certificates.

Q. Speaking of expiring, the Windows 2000 Release Candidate 2 is supposed to expire after a certain amount of use. Does anyone know when?

A. One of the ReadMe files says 444 days after installation. By that time the production release and several service packs (bug fixes) should be out.

Q. I have a desktop machine and a notebook machine, both using Outlook Express. Can I keep the address books synchronized? By the way, I have LapLink available and use it to synchronize other files.

A. You can export the address book from one machine and import it

to the other. Alternatively, LapLink can synchronize one file to the other, but we would first suggest the Microsoft-approved method of using Export and Import. The files are of type .WAB

Q. What is the designation of the latest Intel motherboard chip set that supports the 133 bus speed?

A. 1820 Chipset, but hold back, there have been problems. It isn't mature enough to use. Check Intel's Web site for specs.

Q. I upgraded a machine from Windows 95 to Windows 98, and while at it I decided to go from the standard DOS-compatible FAT-16 file system to FAT-32. Before I told Windows 98 to make the change, I defragged the system. Afterward, I did another defrag, or attempted to do so, but the system kept locking up. What can I do? Right now the file system is sluggish?

A. As part of the process of going from FAT-16 to FAT-32, the files had to be relocated in pieces and then reassembled, thus the disk got fragmented again. We are told that the defrag process in FAT-32 can get upset (read: system lockup) if the screensaver kicks in, so try disabling it first. Also, if any application is running and modifies data, then defrag detects that the drive has changed again. You want the machine really idle: Use the Task Manager (Ctrl-Alt-Del) to get a list of running applications. The only things that you need are Explorer and SysTray. Note that Explorer, not Windows Explorer or Internet Explorer, is the "shell" that gives you the Desktop and Start button. Another way to keep other apps from starting is to hold down the Shift key while Windows is starting. Then with the machine free of running applications, do the defrag.

Q. I have a ThinkPad that boots fine when I use it as a standalone but hangs during boot with the floppy drive running when I start it in the docking station.

A. It sounds like a configuration problem. Try starting the machine in "Safe Mode," and let it boot to a steady machine state. Then check for device errors in My Computer/

Control Panel/System/Device Manager. Sometimes bringing up the machine in Safe Mode and then shutting down will resolve problems. If these simple things don't do it, contact IBM's support line.

Q. My machine has its original hard drive, plus a second drive. I now want to replace the first (small) hard drive. Should I "move" the second hard drive to make it the first hard drive, and then add the second hard drive, or put the new drive in as the primary (boot) drive?

A. The new drive, being a considerably faster drive, should probably be the boot drive. You will have to build it as if building a new machine. To do this, you will need to create a bootable floppy drive and (for Windows 95) probably install your CD-ROM device drivers. Once you can boot the machine from the floppy drive and see the CD-ROM drive, you are ready. Put the new drive in as the "master" on your primary controller. Power up the machine, and make sure that your BIOS recognizes the new drive. If it does, proceed with the boot from the floppy. Install Windows. (Now might be a good time to upgrade to Windows 98 SE.) If you are using an upgrade CD of Windows 95 or 98, you will have to put a "qualifying" product in either the floppy or CD drive when requested. One "downer" will be that you will also have to reinstall all of your application software. Since you will be starting with a new system registry file, none of your applications will be registered, even if they are loaded on your second physical hard drive. But the performance boost that you get should make the effort well worth it.

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 segment at the monthly general meetings, Bruce also leads the Access SIG. Members may send tech queries to Bruce at askdacs@aol.com. Responses will be published in the next issue of dacs.doc.

Candidates



Larry Buoy — Gaylordsville. After eight years of computer use Larry still considers himself a computer beginner. He serves as DACS secretary, keeping the minutes of the board meetings and writes the monthly "Directors Notes" for the newsletter. He would like to see more programs and events geared to the new computer user.



Marc Cohen — Brookfield. After more than 30 years providing advertising and public relations photography to local and national companies, Marc has recently retired. In 1982 he was the founder of the Danbury Osborne Group (now incorporated into DACS). A board member from the beginning, Marc has filled many DACS positions over the years— disk librarian, secretary, newsletter editor, and production editor. He considers himself a perpetual computer novice. To Marc, the computer is a tool for simplifying business problems, not creating new ones.



Allan Ostergren — Sherman. A social policy researcher with experience in journal and newsletter design. Since joining DACS in 1991, he has served as a volunteer for Voice for Joanie and the Danbury Senior Employment Center, editor of *dacs.doc*, DACS vice president, and for the last two years as president. He has been a member of the board since 1995. He is also active in area arts activities, and in his dwindling spare time, manages the Lumina String Quartet, a Connecticut classical chamber ensemble.



Frances Owles — New Preston. After more than three years as a volunteer for Voice for Joanie and an editor of *dacs.doc*, Frances Owles is managing editor of the newsletter. A copy editor for a major business magazine, a practicing generalist, who generates revenues from diverse sources, including landscaping, financial recordkeeping, software setup and training, database design, graphic design, writing, and editing. She serves her state and foothills community as co-president and membership coordinator of the Connecticut Dressage Assn. and as treasurer, membership coordinator, and database manager of Mad Gardeners.



Bruce Preston — Ridgefield. Is a consultant specializing in PC-based software solutions with emphasis on database applications. He has more than 22 years' corporate experience in the areas of communications, database management, technical support, and user education. For the past several years, he has moderated the Random Access session that starts the monthly DACS general meeting, writes up that session in the newsletter, and heads the MS Access SIG. The Preston household networks four machines among Bruce, his wife, Wendy, eight-year-old Scott, and two cats of uncertain origin.



Jeff Setaro — Danbury. A lifelong Danbury resident, Jeff has been involved in the computer industry for more than 14 years. He has been a DACS member for seven years and has served as a DACS vice president for six of them. After stepping down from Program Chair to assume direction of the DACS Web page, he was persuaded to continue in both capacities. He also serves as information coordinator on computer viruses and until recently as director of the Web page design SIG. He is a member of the 1995 VAR business advisory board and is frequently called upon to comment on industry issues.

Ballot

1. Select five (6) of the candidates for director of the Corporation, as indicated by my check mark:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Larry Buoy | <input type="checkbox"/> Frances Owles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marc Cohen | <input type="checkbox"/> Bruce Preston |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allan Ostergren | <input type="checkbox"/> Jeff Setaro |

2. Such other business as may properly come before the meeting

Yes

No

I appoint Wally David, Chairman, as my agent to vote in my place and stead at the annual meeting of members on December 15, 1999 as follows:

Signed _____

Dated _____

Notice of Annual Meeting

Notice is given that the Annual meeting of members of DACS will be held on Tuesday, December 15, 1999 at 7:30 p.m. in the Danbury Hospital Auditorium, 24 Hospital Avenue, Danbury, Connecticut.

An election of six (6) directors will be held. The meeting is further called for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the membership.

In the event that a member will not be able to attend, a written proxy may be delivered to the Secretary or to any other officer or director of DACS so that it arrives on or before the Annual Meeting.

Larry Buoy, Secretary



DACS member and computer consultant, Bruce Preston, checks out some of the hundred of PCs donated at a recent computer fair hosted by the Housatonic Resource Recovery Administration (HRRRA). Those PCs which were deemed still functional were donated to area schools and needy students. Other equipment was recycled.

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Future Events

December 15 • IBM's John Patrick, The State of the Net
January 4 • New Deal 2000 Suite
February 2 • Advanced Micro Devices - AMD Microprocessors

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