



Newsletter

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December 2001



The club's old Executive board is the new Executive board.

Joe Burger is the VP. Voted in primarily for his salty wit. We cherish Joe's effort in providing trendy technology news as he can and to fill in leading the meeting as VPs normally do.

Jac Carrol remains the Treasurer. I understand he still uses the same wireless quill pen for keeping the books he did when he started several years back.

Don Columbo is our Secretary. Voted in last year by a closed door electron filled chat room Executive Board meeting held on the post election retirement of Evelyn Stewart. Don is the Executive Board rookie and surely will be nominated the Executive board rookie for the year 2000.

Officers and chairs have not expressed an interest retiring their posts. Therefore I and everyone welcomes them to another year of rewarding computer club work in our community.

Jim Russ, the Program Chair, did a spectacular job arranging for speakers this year. This is despite his convalescence for most of 1/2 of the year. Marlyn Reuter, Editor, kept the newsletter tradition of the club going and going and going.

Lin Smallwood, Press Chair, worked behind the scenes has been punching out press releases. This has resumed the popping up of a new guest here and there.

Paul Glattstein, Web Master, continues to refine our Web site to a lean but a mean content machine.

Bill Woodall, Web Administrator, keeps our web site up and running free saving us at least \$40 or \$50 bucks per month. Also his expertise honors everyone each meeting.

Doris Moore does our monthly battle with the bagel shop bureaucracy.

Evelyn reports that she, Eleanor Cole, Maureen Barron, Arno Muench, Betty Hartsell, Ken Jones, Geneva Scerbo, Diane Steiner, Ron Steiner, John Warsinski, Jean Scharenberg, Ted Scharenberg, Mildred Goodman, Fred Lathrop, Julia Waugh, Jean Crouce, Cara Apgar, Jeannette Zink, and Barbara Himer all have provided their teaching services on a volunteer basis this past year.

At the November meeting Jim Russ hammered out another presentation to conclude the regular meetings for the year. It was a good presentation that gave everyone a chance to focus on the basics of using Windows.

At the December 1st Digital Photography Club SIG meeting, rookie club presenter but not rookie teacher, Ken Jones focused our attention on the many elements for selecting a digital camera.

Bill Woodall, then used Micrografix's Picture Publisher to show tone and layer editing of digital images. Club members found themselves suddenly pasted into various background images. Bill also answered a number of questions from scanning to printing images.

Next month, December 15th, is our holiday meeting. Don Slepian will provide music. Bagels and coffee service is provided. You can bring additional festive items and food at your discretion. Also food pantry type of items are accepted. Be there!



Evelyn Stewart bounces out those email loop requests as well as keeps tabs on our volunteer educational activities.



Glynn suggested a questionnaire be published in the newsletter regarding Internet Service Providers. Some questions might be: How much does your ISP cost? How difficult is it for you to connect? How much advertising is there? Do you get a human being when you call the company? Look for the questionnaire in a future issue.



Isn't it inconvenient to change Internet Service Providers, i.e. change of e-mail address?

Jim Russ suggests doing a free trial while keeping the old provider and using the time of the free trial to start making an address change if one were actually to change to the free trial provider. Or one could use a hotmail or yahoo address and then it wouldn't matter who the service provider is.



Does there seem to be more SPAM recently that in the past? Lon suggested reading his article about SPAM in the November newsletter. He also said not to respond either negatively or positively to SPAM as any response makes the SPAMER realize this is a goal address. Glynn volunteered to us club input to assist in writing SPAMING laws for New Jersey. Lon recommends AGENT 99 for filtering e-mail.



AOL Instant Messenger was installed on a computer and then uninstalled. Now every time the machine comes it is still looking for the program.

Go into the registry to find it. Offload onto a disk before removing AOL.

Thanks to Ken Jones & Bill Woodall for providing a wonderful Digital SIG meeting.

JOE BURGER'S REPORT

At this year's show in Las Vegas, Comdex did a video spoof of Space Odyssey. They also revealed that wireless technology is the in thing. Wireless LAN is likely to continue to expand its popularity. Wireless notebook and PDA expansion cards have also become less and less expensive, thus driving further adoption and a welcome demand for better mobile services.

Biometrics popularity is surging. Ever since September 11, security products that use the human body to ascertain identity have become very popular. The search for a quick tech fix to America's new security concerns has led to renewed interest in devices such as fingerprint readers and face scanners. In the world of biometrics, a person's face, fingertip, or eye becomes a password. Video conferencing cameras at airports and stadiums as well as private companies and government agencies are becoming standard fare.

Thanks to Jim Russ for a great program on "Using the Windows Control Panel."

Tech RV, Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen's technology news cable channel, announced that despite its founder's deep pockets, "current market conditions" have prompted it to cut 130 people from its staff.

Windows XP sales are not great. Microsoft is upset because of the hype involved. Part of the problem may be the 12 mg download on start-up of installation.

The Xbox, a new video game, needs various add-ons that the buyer would assume comes with the product.

The Intel game cube is \$100 less than the Xbox.

Joe reminded the club to join other Lionites to view nature's light show of meteor showers on a moonless night that was occurring on November 17th.

YOU'RE A GONER

By Lon Hosford

Are you a goner? Tuesday, December 4 you could have been if you are in Europe. Asia was the safe place to be on that day. Goner is a tech worm that infects ICQ instant messaging, IRC (Internet Relay Chat) groups but primarily through: well guess, Microsoft email products Outlook and Outlook Express.

At 6 PM Tuesday, December 4 the worm was replicating at 21,000 per hour. The next morning it reached 36,000 per hour. The worm appears as an e-mail attachment. It promises a screen saver that suits your taste. When the attachment is opened it sends the worm to everyone in your e-mail address book.

Goner also deletes your anti-virus and firewall software. To add insult to injury it installs a back door program that could facilitate future hacking.

Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) was apparently hit. I am on the adjunct mailing list over there. They use Outlook inside. I have my RVCC email bounced to my ISP. I specifically requested this so that I did not have to check my email remotely using Outlook. My email client is Agent. The Goner attachment was reduced to a harmless text file which I still did not open.

At RVCC, many folks succumbed to the Goner virus as I received over 50 emails Tuesday morning from folks at RVCC. Apparently I am in many address books over there and do not know it. One or two emails were the RVCC MIS folks putting out warnings.

Anti-virus software firms hastily concocted an antidote within hours of Goner's rise. Apparently the Goner code is very uncomplicated making novice programmer a possible suspect. But then that is how 911 happened. Not very complicated.

Don Colombo suggests that if you receive an email with a subject of "Hi", this is the Goner virus. Don't open it. Norton hasn't created a patch for it yet. Here is a link:

<http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/w32.goner.a@mm.html>

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY SIG

December 1, 2001 Meeting

by Lon Hosford

Ken Jones and Bill Woodall were the presenters at the December 1, 2001 Digital Photography Special Interest Group (SIG). A visual count showed about 30 people attending including three first time guests!

Ken lead us to www.shortcourses.com and based his presentation on their course "A Short Course In Choosing a Digital Camera". Ken started with "What is a Digital Photograph?" He explained they are all elements called Pixels. Pixels is a sound contraction of Picture Elements. Pixels are what make up the resolution of your picture.

The question "Why Go Digital?" was addressed by Ken. Some answers included free photography, photographic freedom. Different from film photography, you do not need to carry film, you do not need to take and pick up film from a store, you can fix poor quality pictures, you can edit, cut and paste pictures, you can preview and re-shoot on the spot and many others.

There are three steps to Digital Photography Ken pointed out: Input, Image Processing, and Output. Sounded like the Computers 101 course. Input, Processing, Output.

The Image Processing part is where Bill Woodall's second presentation filled in. Bill is a fan of using a film camera and scanning the picture into digital form. This provides him with the best of both worlds. The high quality of film and the flexibility of digital.

Using club photographs Bill demonstrated how to crop the image to emphasize the key parts. He also showed how to balance the image tone.

Bill is a fan of Micrografx's Picture Publisher. He pointed out that it is the basis of Adobe Photoshop. Adobe licenses a significant portion of Micrografx's product which predates Adobe

Photoshop. Bill claims Picture Publisher is the original digital imaging processing software available.

Bill obtained Micrografx's Picture Publisher from www.msbcd.com. The MSB part of the site name's acronym is Most Significant Bits. They specialize in prior versions of software. All new in the package.

Bill credited Evelyn Stewart for pointing him to the msbcd site. Bill purchased Micrografx Picture Publisher 8 at the site. Today the price at the site is \$33.95.

The current Picture Publisher version is number 10 and lowest prices I could find are \$121.92 and www.buymicro.com. Note however, the upgrade price for version 10 at Micrografx is \$99.00. I did not check to see if there was a lower upgrade price at re-sellers. The Micrografx web site is www.micrografx.com. Be careful and DO NOT use www.micrographics.com. But this all changes now that Micrografx was acquired by Corel Corporation as of 10/30/2001.

Irony for sure because Adobe and Corel are fierce competitors in the graphic software market. And, based on what Bill says about Micrografx licensing to Adobe, we now may have Corel licensing to Adobe. Very interesting. In any case, sometime in the future, www.corel.com, will be the site to visit for Picture Publisher.

Picture Publisher is similar to Photoshop but has a simpler interface. As a Photoshop user, I could see the resemblances but I also could see how only the latest versions of Photoshop are starting to include some of the easier to use interfaces that I saw in Picture Publisher.

Bill also demonstrated layer editing of digital images. Photos of club members were humorously pasted into various background images. In one case a few members lost their members and we could see through them.

Ken also outlined the types of digital cameras: point and shoot cameras,

megapixel cameras, multi-megapixel cameras, professional cameras, and video cameras.

Image storage generated the most meeting interest on digital cameras. Ken distinguished between removable vs. fixed storage types. We learned that Flash memory storage does fade over time. Ken also talked about the process of downloading images from the camera to your computer and about image compression.

For downloading there are a number of options. There are docking stations for the camera like a portable phone; flash card readers; card adapters so one size fits all cameras for those of you going on to a second or third camera; and direct camera to computer such as the slow serial and parallel connections and the faster USB and IEEE 1394 (Firewire).

For image compression Ken identified two types for you to consider: lossless and lossy compression.

Lossless compression quality matches the original source quality. It doesn't provide much compression. The leading lossless compression scheme is LZW (Lempel-Ziv-Welch). This is used in GIF and TIFF files providing compression ratios of about 50 to 90%. Remember that GIF files are limited to 256 colors. Thus the GIF format is not as desirable for photographs.

Lossy compression is used by popular digital cameras. The picture degrades images based on the amount of compression desired. For web work this may not present a problem. But for print work it will showup. JPEG or JPG is a prominent lossy format.

If you can, have your pictures captured without compression. Then once they go into the image processing stage you can then, as a final step, save them in a compression format according to your needs.

The meeting covered much more than is fit to print and I had time to remember. However, visit www.shortcourses.com for more learning and attend our meetings!

COMPUTER KILLERS

Smart Computer (11/01)

Computer owners know that PCs are directly responsible for aggressive behavior. They crash all the time, Plug-and-Play components are anything but, and frustration mounts until bad things happen. Here's a rundown of some of the major things to avoid while using your computer, and some information on what will happen if you actually try anything on this list. Keeping these tips in mind can save a fortune in equipment costs.



Whack The Computer

Although many of a computer's parts are solid-state electronics, meaning they have no moving parts and generally can take a bit of a beating, some of the most important components, such as the hard drive, are mechanical. Slapping a computer's case can unseat cables and cards attached to the motherboard, cause a spinning CD-ROM to hop off the tray and shatter, and that's just the beginning. If the hard drive experiences shock while in use, the read heads inside can grind into the platters holding all your data, sometimes causing irreparable damage.

Hitting the monitor when it acts up can also lead to trouble. Standard monitors that use a CRT (cathode-ray tube), have electron guns inside that can get knocked out of whack, causing convergence and other display errors. Monitors with aperture grille technology, such as Trinitron have an array of vertical wires behind the glass that is easily disturbed. In a flat panel display such as found in a notebook, each pixel is controlled by its own transistor. Abuse can permanently disable the pixels.

Unnecessary Roughness

Improperly inserting PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) cards, ISA (Industry Standard Architecture) cards, memory chips, and any other component that connects to a computer port is a surefire recipe for disaster. Pushing too hard is a common mistake, especially when installing memory, but when you apply too much force, several terrible things can happen. The memory chips

can get scratched and stop working, or the motherboard itself can bend and possibly break. Most memory chips are first inserted at an angle, then swing up to lock into place, so bear that in mind before digging through the toolbox for a mallet.

The biggest mistake you can make when inserting video, audio, and other cards is rocking them back and forth to seat them instead of pressing straight down with strong, but measure, and steady pressure. Rocking the card can scratch the contacts on the bottom of the card. Never put sideways pressure on a card you insert in the motherboard or you risk snapping off the bottom of the card or even destroying the PCI or ISA slot, which in turn can take out the entire motherboard. Pulling cables from the middle to disconnect them from the back of the PC can cause damage to the motherboard or any peripheral card they are connected to. You should also take great care then you use a screwdriver anywhere near your motherboard. If the screwdriver slips and gouges the motherboard, the motherboard likely will have to be replaced.

Don't Mishandle Components

PCI cards, ISA cards, and memory chips have a row of contacts on the bottom. The contacts are made of copper, aluminum, gold or other materials with various corrosive properties, and touching the contacts with your bare fingers leaves oil on the metal that can cause corrosion. Corroded contacts lead to system errors and eventually can cause the affected component to fail. Don't fold cables because internal wires can snap. If there's a piece of paper stuck in a printer, don't pull it backwards: use the page feed button to eject it or open the printer to get it out. Any component designed to go in forward won't stand up well if forced into reverse.

Tools to Avoid

Using a screwdriver to pry open a stuck drawer on a CD-ROM drive can have ill effects ranging from defacing the case to destroying vital internal components. You may also scratch the very disc you are attempting to retrieve. Using cotton swabs to clean the insides of power sup-

plies, motherboard slots, and ports is also a good way to break things. When used dry, the swabs can leave behind tufts of cotton that degrade connections and gum up exhaust ports. Wetting them eliminates that problem but introduces others as liquid can promote rust, cause shorts, and generally wreak havoc. Compressed air is a better solution if you insist on keeping your computer's innards clean.

Keep Air Moving

Fans are essential for the safe operation of your computer because they whisk away a considerable amount of the heat generated by the processor, video card, transformer, and other power-hungry components inside the PC. If that heat is allowed to build, things start to melt, and once that happens, it's all over. Placing the PC so intake and exhaust vents are blocked is also a bad idea. If the fans can't move air, they're effectively not there, and you will eventually notice a metallic smell emanating from your PC as the components cook. This is especially important if you use a laptop computer.

Hard Drive Killer

If the hard drive activity light on the front of the computer is blinking, keep your finger away from the power switch. It's extremely rare, especially with modern drives, but cutting the power can cause the drive to shut down improperly. That's another situation where the drive heads can skip across the surface of the data platters and cause damage. Sometimes turning off the computer while the drive is in use is unavoidable. When a program stalls and Windows crashes, there's nothing left to do but press the reset button or power down completely;

typically no harm will come of it. There is one occasion, however, where you may want to think twice: Don't turn off your PC when the defragmentation utility is running. This utility (accessed by



clicking Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and clicking Disk Defragmentation can take a long time and make the computer appear as though it stalled, but give it plenty of time (up to several hours) before switching off the computer because data can be lost while it is being

TEN WORDS THAT AREN'T, BUT SHOULD BE

1. **AQUADEXTROUS** (ak wa deks' trus) adj. Possessing the ability to turn the bathtub faucet on and off with your toes.
2. **CARPERPETUATION** (kar' pur pet u a shun) n. The act, when vacuuming, of running over a string or a piece of lint at least a dozen times, reaching over and picking it up, examining it, then putting it back down to give the vacuum one more chance.
3. **DISCONFECT** (dis kon fekt') v. To sterilize the piece of candy you dropped on the floor by blowing on it, assuming this will somehow remove all the germs.
4. **ELBONICS** (el bon' icks) n. The actions of two people maneuvering for one armrest in a movie theater.
5. **FRUST** (frust) n. The small line of debris that refuses to be swept onto the dust pan and keeps backing a person across the room until he finally decides to give up and sweep it under the rug.
6. **LACTOMANGULATION** (lak' to man gyu lay' shun) n. Manhandling the "open here" spout on a milk container so badly that one has to resort to the 'illegal' side.
7. **PEPPIER** (pehp ee ay') n. The waiter at a fancy restaurant whose sole purpose seems to be walking around asking diners if they want ground pepper.
8. **PHONESIA** (fo nee' zhuh) n. The affliction of dialing a phone number and forgetting whom you were calling just as they answer.
9. **PUPKUS** (pup' kus) n. The moist residue left on a window after a dog presses its nose to it.
10. **TELECRASTINATION** (tel e kras tin ay' shun) n. The act of always letting the phone ring at least twice before you pick it up, even when you're only six inches away.

AFTER MUCH FINGER-WAGGING TOUCH SCREENS GET THE POINT

A fingertip may not be the most ideal instrument for navigating a hand-held computer, but to many users, it is the most convenient. Why bother with the stylus when information can be retrieved with a few well-placed pokes?

Now consider coupling fingertip flexibility with the precision of a writing instrument. A new company, Orbit Industries, has developed what it considers to be the perfect combination of the two: the Stinger, a finger accessory with a stylus tip. Stingers come in packs of three, each with multiple colors, and can be ordered at www.stingerstylus.com for \$4.95 a pack. They have a clasp that can be adjusted to fit most fingers, said Marc Schneider, the founder of Orbit Industries.

Other fingertip styluses are also available, the TrueTip stylus, available at www.truetip.com for \$9.99 for a pack of

three. It is available in an assortment of colors (including one called "glow in the dark").

Lisa Guernsey (New York Times)

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Computer Volunteers
ALL MEMBERS

Hunterdon Computer Club

Next Meeting Saturday, December 15, 2001
Hunterdon Medical Center
Rt 31 Flemington NJ

8:30 A.M. To Noon

HOLIDAY PARTY

**Bring a food item or paper good for the Food Pantry.
Bring a finger food to share with the group.**

Guests Welcome – all ages all levels

HCC NEWSLETTER

HUNTERDON COMPUTER CLUB

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