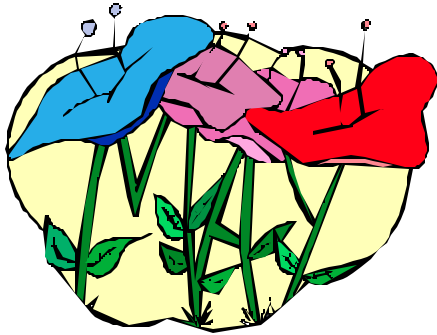


# Newsletter

Volume 16 Issue 4

May 2003



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(by Lon Hosford)

My phone was a ringing just before the last meeting. People seeing press releases and wanting to stop by our meeting. Continued thanks to John Gbur for making this press happen.

Even more so a record crowd last meeting with a few guests. The money raffle counters were still counting the take into the presentation.

Ilene Shope was the winner which was one of the largest raffles I can remember. Ilene donated the winnings back to the club. We intend to look at a possible outreach use for that gift. Thanks to Ilene for her generosity and club dedication.

Peter Czerwinski pioneering in self-taught digital video took the show last meeting with a well received presentation. His work showed great artistic quality.

I followed Peter's great act with a presentation on Fireworks MX but unfortunately the projection system did not like the computer video output and we lost the luster the topic deserved.

Some members mentioned they would like the Fireworks again and I will look into it perhaps later in the year or at a SIG.

Jim Russ has researched the state of shareware for us and will be providing us with that presentation at the next meeting.

Come on down and find out how to save a buck and make using your computer better and maybe more fun.

I need to report that I have been out of it since the last meeting for club members who have wondered. I got the big long flu starting the Sunday night after the last meeting. It progressed from a growing daily annoyance to putting me out of commission for two days in the middle and did not leave for nearly two weeks after it had its way with me. Each day left me with only partial capacity to complete the day's duties. The Doc said pain killers and liquids and rest. The last I rarely get but this bug forced me into it.

I am getting back up to speed this week but I am so far behind I see my behind. So stay with me if I missed something.

Based on last meeting's attendance, you may want to get there early and reserve a seat. :-)

## FREE WARE & SHAREWARE

(by Jim Russ)

The cost of computer hardware has fallen to an all time low. Pentium 4 machines in the range of 2.4 GHz are as low as \$500. Other hardware has also fallen with hard drives costing about \$2-3 per GB. About the only computer product that has not significantly dropped in price is software. So what are those of us stuck on a budget to do? The answer is look for good quality free ware and shareware. Like commercial software, free ware and shareware has a wide range of quality. I have found some excellent free ware and shareware programs which I will share with you.

Shareware programs are often well written programs that fill a narrow notch. Such as: printer programs. I have found three that I use quit often for Floppy labels, CD Labels and Zip Disk. I'll show

them to you and you can judge for you self if the are worth the small fee asked by their author. One great share ware program I use all the time is Easy Mail. Prints addresses, return address and bar codes on different size envelopes from a database as well as labels.

The list of great free ware programs continues to grow with the formation of the open source ware organization. Open office Org. is in my opinions every bit as good as Microsoft Office and reads and writers the same file formats. Add the availability in seven or eight languages and you have a great suite of programs. Then there is Adobe's free Acrobat Reader for reading PDF (Portable Document Format) files. These are preferred by authors to distribute the instruction manuals for their programs because it gives such excellent print outs and the files are not easily changed due to the high cost of Acrobat Writer. Another great program is Belarc Advisor, which gives you a complete description of the hardware and software on your machine. Then there is Win Zip, Atomic Cock Sync and the many great media players free for the download such as Windows Media Player, Real Player, Apple's Quicktime and free browsers like IE Explorer, Netscape and Opera.

Have a favorite I did not mention? Bring it to the meeting and show it to all of us.

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**"You said I should spend more time with our children, so I turned their faces into icons."**

Contributed by Don Colombo

**KICKING A SICK HORSE  
CALIFORNIA STYLE**

*(by Lon Hosford)*

The sick horse? The dot com world of online transactions.

The kickee? State of California.

The State of California with a \$35 billion deficit decided they could raise an extra \$13 million by forcing dot coms having any physical representation in the State to ante up sales tax.

Typically, the consumer is responsible for sales tax payment for out of state businesses. So how do they know \$13 million? Well they may have added up business from Dell Computer and Barnes and Noble who do not collect California sales tax.

Dell has no offices or plants in the State. Dell has made the unfortunate mistake of selling computers to the State of California and that is how the State is justifying a physical representa-

tion. After all, the computers need support. Huh?

Hey stick it to those Dell Texans who may need to say to California eat Compaq.

For Barnes and Noble the State is making the jump that the book stores are the physical representation even though these are a separate business entity from the online business.

Barnes and Nobel stores have been closing down at a steady pace nationwide. Perhaps they may start focusing on closing California stores and see how that opens the State's deficit wound further. Or at least change the name. How about Barn and Novel?

I do not see Amazon.com planning any distribution centers in California in the near future.

**MACHING MELODIES**

*(Technology Review, May 2003)*

The marriage of computers and music has spawned digital instruments that sound "real," an interface—the musical-instrument digital interface—that's now an industry mainstay, and composition software that helps generate ideas, assemble phrases, and analyze existing works. But now machines are actually learning to compose music of their own. Eduardo Miranda at England's University of Plymouth has developed software that generates music from scratch. Other composition software tools rely on high-level mathematical rules, but Miranda's approach is "bottom-up," he says. His software, which grew out of his research at the Sony Computer Science Lab in Paris, France, adapts ideas from the field of artificial intelligence to create a sort of virtual orchestra. Ten "players" get together and generate simple sequences of musical notes. Each play is programmed to listen, evaluate, imitate, and generate variations. After running for a few days, the artificial society produces haunting melodic streams. These melodies are still ploddingly crude. "This is a beginning to getting a computer to create something new," Miranda says. The next step, he adds, is to evolve rhythms and dynamics.

It's too soon to say whether creative machines will supplant their flesh-and-blood counterparts, but "the technology is here," says Rodney Waschka II, a North Carolina State University researcher. Initially such technology will help human composers by speeding the process and providing new ideas. In the long run, boy bands beware.

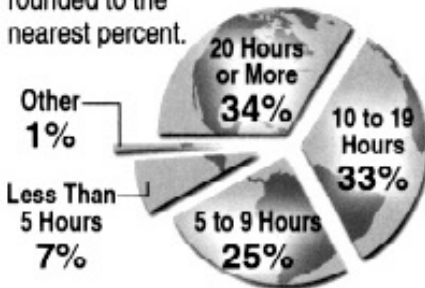
**SENIORS GLAD TO BE CAUGHT IN THE WEB**

*(Smart Computing (May 2003)*

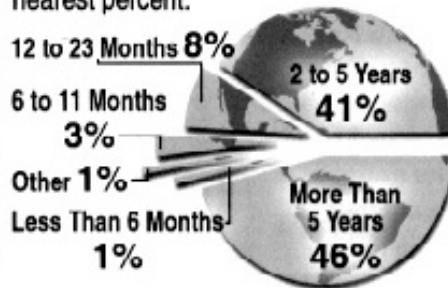
A recent Senior Net survey of adults 50 years of age and older found that baby boomers and senior citizens are avid, long-term Internet users. Top reasons for using the Internet include staying in touch with friends and relatives (94%), keeping up with the news (72%), and doing genealogy research (70%). Here's a look at how much time respondents spend on the Internet, and how they learned to surf the Web.

**Time Spent On The Net**

Here's how much time respondents spend on the Internet each week, rounded to the nearest percent.

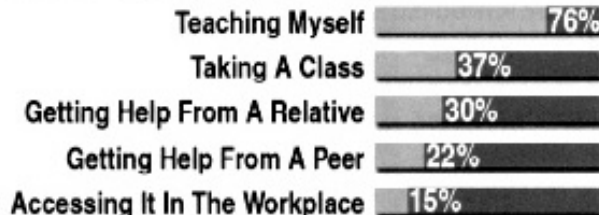


And this is how long respondents have had Internet access, rounded to the nearest percent.



**Method For Learning To Surf**

When asked how they learned to use the Internet, respondents were permitted to check all of the following answers that applied.



**CD-RWs**

*(Smart Computing, May 2003)*

Windows users generally expect backward compatibility. For example, a 1.44MB floppy drive can also use 720KB diskettes, and a 250MB Zip drive will read and write 100MB Zip disks. Unfortunately, some blank CD-RWs (CD-rewriteables) aren't as backward-compatible as we'd like. If you have an optical drive that can write CD-RWs at 12X speed, for instance, it may not be able to write 24X-rated discs at speeds above 4X or so. The best advice is to buy blank CD-RWs that are specifically rated for your drive's top CD-RW burning (rewrite) speed, such as "1X to 4X."

## **HOW RECYCLING YOUR PC JUST GOT EASIER**

(by David Coursey, AnchorDesk)  
(submitted by Don Colombo)

I don't like to admit this, but I've got a hazardous waste dump in my garage. Yes, there are the usual old paint cans and half-used bottles of transmission fluid for cars I no longer own. There's some gasoline that's so stale I'm afraid to use it for anything. And there are the PCs--eight of them. And three monitors.

Nobody told us when the PC era started that eventually we'd all end up with computers we have no use for and no idea how to get rid of. Sure, I pretend I'm holding some of this hardware "in reserve" for a future project that'll require a 450MHz Pentium II. And the Kaypro II is a relic I really want to hold on to. But the rest of this stuff really ought to go. But where?

It turns out that two of the computers are from HP, so I know what to do with them: Send them back. Last week, on Earth Day, a friend reminded me of something that I'd known but forgotten: HP has had a recycling program for two years.

The company recently upped the ante a bit, offering merchandise coupons in return for worn-out hardware.

One thing I didn't know about the HP program until I started writing this column: They also accept hardware made by other vendors for recycling--a great thing for them to be doing. So it turns out that all my old hardware can go to HP.

Of course, I still have to pay HP a recycling fee and also pay for shipping, but with the coupon maybe I'll come out even in the deal.

HP makes it pretty simple to recycle: All I have to do is pack up the equipment, then HP arranges for someone to come to my home or office to pick it up. If I had 11 or more machines, they'd do a "custom quote" for the recycling service--worth remembering next time I run into a company with a bunch of old PCs.

HP says it's the only U.S. computer company with its own recycling facilities. One is in Roseville, Calif., and another just opened in Nashville, Tenn. The com-

pany, which last week won an award from the Environmental Protection Agency for its recycling program, says it receives 3 million pounds of recyclables every month.

(Maybe I should just take my old hardware myself: Microsoft Streets & Trips 2003 says Roseville is only 95 miles from my house, so I could just pack this stuff into the Explorer and haul it out to HP. It'd be interesting to see what a big computer recyclery looks like. And there's a bird sanctuary near there that I've wanted to see...)

As we all know, Dell is HP's biggest PC competitor. And while most of the time I couldn't really care less, it turns out the companies are competing in recycling programs, too. Dell has a home pickup recycling service that recently lowered its fee to \$15 per 50-pound box.

But the Dell program has been somewhat controversial, because it uses prison inmates to do the recycling. Critics say the inmates are exposed to unhealthy levels of toxins. Dell counters that the program meets Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

My two cents is that OSHA standards have seemed pretty lax in the past, so even if it costs a bit more, I'll use the HP program and save some prisoners' lungs. But Dell certainly gets credit for trying and the \$15 fee ought to encourage many more people to recycle their old hardware. And, like HP, Dell will accept anyone's hardware for recycling.

People who work in technology like to feel ecologically superior to the generations that worked in the smokestack industries. Of course, Santa Clara County has 73 Superfund sites within its borders, an estimated 80 percent of which are the result of Silicon Valley companies. It seems that what they do in all those clean rooms is actually pretty dirty.

I can't fix that, but I can do something about my own hazardous materials. I think I'll take that road trip up to Roseville and drop them off at HP. Next trick will be finding someone to haul away all that old paint...

## **CALIFORNIA TOWN FAILS TO SELL ON EBAY**

Associated Press

(submitted by Lon Hosford)

AMBOY, Calif. - A 150-acre Mojave Desert town located on Route 66 failed to sell after a month long auction on eBay.

Bidding on the auction site eBay ended after a month on the Internet auction site with no offers reaching the minimum reserve price.

Amboy, with seven residents, has a listed value of \$1.9 million, but the top bid reached only \$995,900.

Amboy has a post office, motel, cafe, gas station, church, gift shop and two landing strips. A buyer also gets about 540 acres

of surrounding land divided in five parcels.

The town is owned by celebrity photographer Timothy White and his business partner, Walt Wilson.

"It was below the price that the sellers

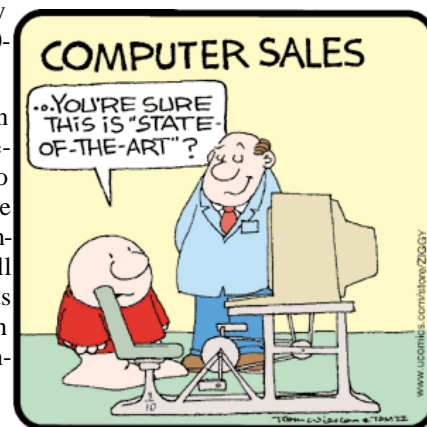
would be willing to accept," said Rob McManus, estate director for Dilbeck Realtors, which is selling the town for Christie's Great Estates.

The owners will have to resort to more traditional methods to sell the town through a real estate broker.

"We had expectations that it would be very successful, but the fact that we went to war in the middle of the marketing process had a tremendous effect on it, as one would expect," McManus said.

McManus said even though the eBay auction was unsuccessful, the town's appearance on the Web site prompted calls from interested buyers and he's optimistic the exposure will help in an eventual sale.

Amboy was founded in 1858 as a mining town. It is about a 3 1/2-hour drive from Los Angeles, about halfway between Barstow and Needles.



### WHAT YOUR ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE WON'T TELL YOU

(from *PC World*, May, 2003—Andrew Brandt)  
(submitted by Bill Dearborn)

Some security applications ignore surveillance programs.

There may be software on your PC that hides itself like a virus, silently keeps tabs on your PC like a virus, and e-mails the data to the person who planted it like a virus. So why does your antivirus program not tell you about it? Good question.

For years, some people have used PC surveillance products to keep tabs on other people, much of it for legitimate purposes--by businesses that want to enforce computer policies, for instance. But they're becoming popular with jealous spouses and data thieves for spying on people.

These programs can run hidden from the user, recording every keystroke, taking pictures of the desktop, and quietly sending the information to another party on the Internet.

For a long time, applications like Symantec's Norton AntiVirus and Trend Micro's PC-cillin have found and removed hacker tools that perform the same functions. But these antivirus applications won't warn you about commercial spy software. Only Kaspersky Anti-Virus claims to trap both spyware and viruses.

The core problem here is philosophical, not technological. Antivirus companies guard against viruses by obtaining a sample of the malicious application, examining the underlying code, and then telling their programs to look for the virus's unique signature. Obtaining a copy of any of these snoopware applications shouldn't be tough--after all, the software is on sale every day.

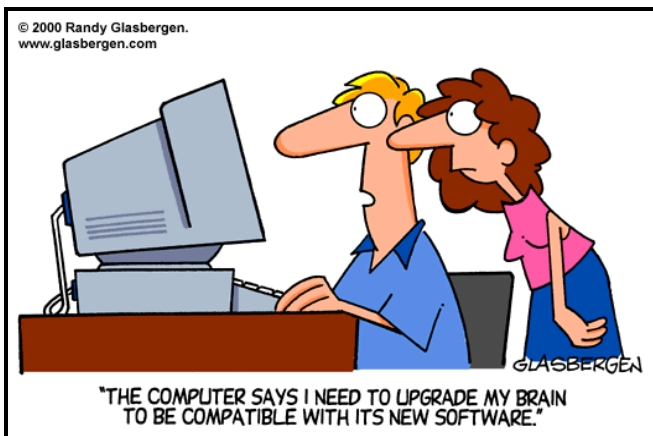
"Traditionally it was very black-and-white--if [a suspect file] wasn't replicating, it wasn't a virus," says Vincent Weafer, senior director of Symantec Security Response. But it's not so easy to draw a line that separates legitimate from shady use of retail snoopware. Weafer, at least, is changing his view. The next version of Norton Antivirus will detect and block spying utilities.

In his book, *The Art of Deception*,

hacker-turned-consultant Kevin Mitnick decries the double standard that antivirus companies seemingly apply to viruses and to spyware.

"Antivirus software [treats spyware] as not malicious, even though the intent is to spy on people," Mitnick writes. That creates "the risk that each of us might be under illegal surveillance at any time."

Until antivirus companies change their tune, you can ferret spyware out in other ways. Most firewalls can alert you when a program seeks to access the Internet, stopping spyware that e-mails data about you. And SpyCop (\$50) is one of the few tools that scans specifically for all commercial snoopware applications.



Contributed by Don Colombo

### PALM ZIRE-71

(by Ilene Shope)

Ref: -MERCURY NEWS - 04/24/2003  
"Palm gets out of its rut with Zire 71"-By Jon Fortt (Mercury News)

The new \$300 handheld device- Palm Zire 71- went on the market Wednesday, 04/16/2003- with new features-digital camera, MP3 and video playback capabilities. (The first Palm Zire \$100 was last year's model.)

(New- Palm Zire 71)-Jon Fortt says, "It has a fashionable design, built-in digital VGA-quality camera for e-mail quality pictures, 16 megabytes of memory, brilliant 320-by-320-pixel color screen, a clever new built-in joystick, an SD memory slot, and it plays MP3s and video." And "...it also has the new Palm OS 5, and runs on an ARM-based Texas Instruments OMAP processor."

### IS MICROSOFT SOFTWARE UNRELIABLE AND INSECURE?

(by Lon Hosford)

Do you think Microsoft software is unreliable and insecure? Sure I jest with such an open ended question.

You may be pleased to know Microsoft appears to have admitted that its current software is unreliable and even unsafe.

A story on CNN has Microsoftian VP S. Somasegar claiming that Windows Server 2003 is taking a long time (what is it May 2003 already) to complete because they wanted to "do the right thing on security and reliability".

So do we conclude that the current operating systems we use were rushed out the door without such attention?

May explain a lot or it may explain that if Microsoft actually has to write software correctly, it may take time, something stock holders and markets have little patience.

I know I do not want to be Microsoftian VP S. Somasegar if hackers compromise Windows Server 2003 out of the batting cage. I may not even want to be him/her now.

### ARE YOU A QUILTER?

(by Marlyn Reuter))

If you are interested in learning how to transfer printing on fabric with a computer or a color copier, or if you would like to do direct printing on fabric using a printer here are a couple of great sites:

<http://quilting.about.com/library/weekly/aa101199.htm>

<http://www.straw.com/quilting/articles/transfrprint.html>



## **KEEP PC VIRUSES FROM MAKING YOU SICK**

*Technology / Julie King*

*(submitted by Don Colombo)*

Right now I have three different computer viruses sitting in my attachments folder, ready to infect my system at the click of a mouse.

No, I'm not a careless user; my antivirus program is both reputable and up-to-date. In fact, on a daily basis it catches many viruses trying to trick their way onto my machine. But with the increasing frequency of viruses and new techniques being used by virus writers, even the best antivirus software out there doesn't offer complete security.

To get the best protection possible, you need to know how to keep your software current. You'll also need to spot potential viruses before you click. To get started here, consider how viruses infect.

### ***How viruses infect***

Virus writers use techniques that resemble those used in two movies, "Where the Money Is" and "Swordfish."

The first movie is about a team of thieves, led by Paul Newman, preparing to steal millions. They are well prepared; they think things through before they strike, and they con the people into trusting them.

The plot in "Swordfish," on the other hand, depends on one character's ability to understand and leverage a computer's weak spots. This "cracker" — someone who breaks into secure computer systems — is tasked with breaking into one of the most secure computer systems in the world to steal \$6 billion in government funds.

Similarly, viruses usually get into a user's system either by conning the user into clicking on an attachment, or by leveraging weak points or "vulnerabilities" in a program or system.

### ***The con in action: Do not open that attachment***

Curiosity, friendship, anger, lust ... many virus writers manipulate the emotions of the recipient to propagate their programs. (For more go to <http://www.bcentral.com/articles/enbysk/160.asp>.)

Typically, a virus arrives as an attachment to an e-mail, and the only way it can infect your computer is if you, the user, click on it. Here's how they trick the unsuspecting user:

- A virus in disguise. Viruses often appear to be legitimate. They may appear to be a Word doc, Excel file or Web link. In many cases the true extension (.bat, .exe, .pif, etc.) is hidden because the file. This happens when your basic operating system is set to show abridged file names.

- Leveraging friendship. To entice users to click, most virus programs will read the address book of an infected machine and send copies of the virus out to everyone listed. As a result, when people receive the virus file, they are inclined to click on it, since it's coming from a friend or colleague — i.e. a "trusted source."

- Touching our emotions. Viruses play on the emotions of the reader. This "socio-engineering" technique often uses curiosity, anger, or desire to get users to click on a virus attachment. For example, here's an excerpt from one instance of the Klez virus, which appears with the subject "Worm Klez.E immunity":

We developed this free immunity tool to defeat the malicious virus. You only need to run this tool once, and then Klez will never come into your PC. NOTE: Because this tool acts as a fake Klez to fool the real worm, some AV monitor maybe cry when you run it. If so, ignore the warning, and select 'continue.'

The bottom line: Don't open any attachments unless you are certain that the person who sent it to you did so intentionally — even if they are your friend or colleague.

### ***Avoid the hack: Keep patches in place***

Virus writers look for vulnerabilities in computer programs and create viruses that enter through these holes. Operating systems and programs that connect to the Internet are among the most vulnerable.

The creator of the recent Klez virus takes advantage of both human emotions and program vulnerabilities. For example, Klez attempts to run automatically when the recipient views the associated e-mail in the preview pane of Microsoft Outlook. This is just one of several tech-

niques the program uses to infect.

The virus can only run automatically if the user has failed to install the latest patch for Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE) 5.01 or IE 5.5, or has done a minimal installation of IE 6. (Older versions may also be affected, but are no longer supported.) The problem is that many small businesses don't know how or when to apply patches. So, until you have installed the latest Internet Explorer patch or have upgraded to at least a "Typical Install" of IE 6, I recommend you turn off the Outlook preview pane.

You can look for patches on the Web sites of most software manufacturers. For example, you can visit the Download Centre to find and download patches for Microsoft programs.

The bottom line: Regularly check with relevant software manufacturers for patches and program updates.

### ***Watch out for a new hybrid***

Lately, everyone has been talking about a new "proof of concept" virus, w32Perrun, that can activate virus code through "JPEG" picture files.

Despite the hype this new infection method cannot infect your computer unless you first click on an attachment. Users that activate the attachment have their system files modified. After this modification, every time a JPEG image is opened, an application is initiated that can run virus code embedded in the JPEG image.

People are most concerned about how this virus sets up a gateway or vulnerability that any hacker with picture-virus code knowledge can leverage, explains Antoine Lourtau, marketing director of Panda Software. As well, once the initial program is installed the user's system is vulnerable every time a JPEG file image is opened, whether it's found online or off.

The bottom line: Programs such as Perrun can only run if you activate the initial attachment, making it particularly important that you don't open strange attachments and that you keep your antivirus software current.

*(continued on page 6)*

(continued from page 5)

**Beware of hoaxes: Never delete system files**

Many virus warnings aren't real. That's right — an urgent virus warning forwarded from a friend of a friend of a friend may be a hoax.

Hoax messages can take two forms. Many are simply false messages; the virus writer's success is linked to having thousands of people relay the warning.

Other hoax warnings contain instructions that urge you to look for and delete specific files from your computer. The trick: The files aren't viruses at all. They are valid system files that Windows uses to run a particular function. Users who delete the file may not even realize there's a problem until a later date, when they perform an action that requires the presence of the deleted system file.

The bottom line: Confirm the validity of a virus warning before you forward it or take any action. This can be done easily on any number of Web sites, such as a U.S. government Web site, Hoaxbusters.

**6 safety tips**

1. Use antivirus software and keep it up-to-date.
2. No matter how curious you are, don't click on an attachment until you're sure it's safe.
3. Keep your main software programs, especially those that connect to the Internet, patched.
4. Upgrade to the latest version of Internet Explorer. You'll need to do either a Full Install or a Typical Install for protection against viruses such as Klez.
5. Be very careful if a virus warning encourages you to delete from your system; the originator of the message may be trying to trick you into deleting valid files.
6. If you're not sure about something, or have even the slightest concern, check with your IT consultant or administrator, or a Web site such as Symantec's security response, before taking action.

**NEW WIFI**

(by Ilene Shope)

Ref: MERCURY NEWS- 04/28/2003- "Cisco offers Net phone for workers on the go"-By Dean Takahashi (Mercury News).

Cisco Systems on 04/28/2003 is geared to market Cisco Wireless IP Phone 7920 (wireless Internet phone) to employees for use within buildings and campuses of businesses such as universities and hospitals.

"By connecting via the Internet, these phones can bypass long-distance providers..."

"... it uses the same phone number as the person's desk phone. The user can dial outside of the business campus as well to the wired phone network."

(Cisco Wireless IP Phone 7920)- "The phone is the latest to use WiFi, or 802.11b, wireless radio technology for broadband radio transmissions.)



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Marlyn Reuter, Editor

Paul Glatstein - Liz Dunbar  
Contributing Editors

Joe Burger, Banner Design

**President**  
**Lon Hosford**  
**908-996-7941**  
**lon@hosfordusa.com**

**Vice-President**  
**Peter Czerwinski**  
**peterhccc@itsagoodlife.org**

**Treasurer**  
**Jac Carroll**  
**908-782-4325**  
**jcarroll@eclipse.net**

**Secretary**  
**Membership**  
**Jim Aller**  
**jimaller@att.net**

**Program**  
**Jim Russ**  
**908-685-1079**  
**jfruss@juno.com**

**Ex Officio**  
**Richard Williams**  
**Immediate Past President**

**HCC Web Page**  
**www.hunterdoncomputerclub.org**  
**Paul Glatstein, WebMaster**  
**pglatt@ptd.net**

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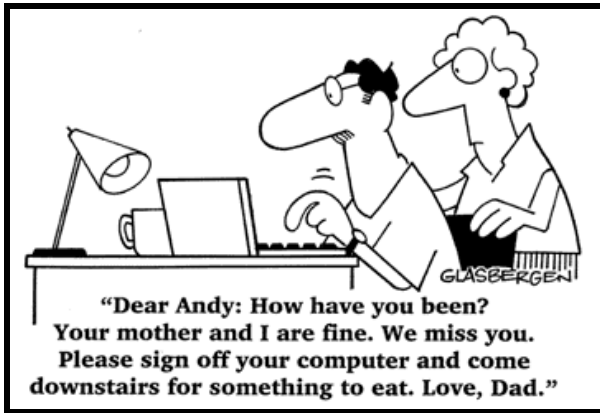
Fax ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Information that will help us help you:

1. **WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HELP THE CLUB ? (circle one or more)**  
Club officer   Technical advisor   Setting up for the meeting   Taking club minutes   Newsletter   Programs  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. **DO YOU HAVE AN AREA OF COMPUTER EXPERTISE? \_\_\_\_\_ IF SO, WHAT IS IT?**  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. **PLEASE LIST ANY COMMENT AND/OR LIST WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN OUR COMPUTER CLUB**  
\_\_\_\_\_



*Contributed by Don Colombo*

Submissions for articles, cartoons, pictures, or other information pertinent to the club are due to the editor by the 3rd of each month. If you plan to email your submission, please be sure to include HCC in your subject line. Send to:

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or use snailmail to return address on next page.

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Guests Welcome – all ages all levels

Program: Free ware and Shareware  
by Jim Russ

8:30 A.M. To No on

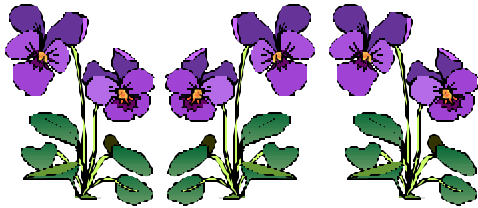
Next Meeting Saturday, May 17, 2003  
Hunterdon Medical Center  
Rt. 31 Flemington NJ

Hunterdon Computer Club

## HCC NEWSLETTER

### HUNTERDON COMPUTER CLUB

Marlyn Reuter  
267 Federal Twist Road  
Stockton, New Jersey 08559



FIRST CLASS MAIL  
Address Correction Requested

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