Next Meeting October 21   Be there or else!

NEXT

The October meeting will be on the third Saturday, October 21 with bagels by the Moores at 8:30 as usual, but this month we are scheduled to meet in the meeting room , then move to the auditorium.

At press time Jim was not sure whether we would have the scheduled presentation of Windows Tools, or an outside speaker on the inside details of developing   software. Or we might have Jim's programs on **Faces** which did not fit into the September panel.

September Meeting

The regular meeting of HCC was held on Saturday, September 16, 2000, at the Hunterdon Medical Center. President Lon Hosford called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. Guests welcomed included Albert and Marie Kleiner of Flemington, and Rowland Carver,a Bell Lab retiree, treasurer of Lehigh Valley CC, guest of Harvey Schramm. LVCC has 270 members, about 50 of whom are active. He was interested in our experience and views on incorporating. Jac Carrol, our

treasurer, said he had spent a lot of time on the paper work and concluded it was not worth while for HCC. Jim Russ added that NJCC has completed 407C incorporation but he was also lukewarm about its value to the club.

The Kleiners had come to ask what they should plan for a computer room. Suggestions flowed. Waist high wall outlet strip. Wheels on the computer desk so you can roll it out and work on the back. Good lighting. Set the monitor facing away from any window. A prayer rug for times of crisis. A pullout keyboard shelf. Mouse holder. Heavy duty surge protector. Comfortable adjustable height chair. Good ventilation.   Provision for the heat that the computer generates. Monitor placed away from thermostat. Fluorescent light. No carpet or only flat hard no pile carpet. Joe Burger said his computer desk is a flush door supported by a 2 drawer file cabinet at each end. 2 phone lines. If the computer room is below ground level leave the machine on all the time to combat humidity. Most agreed they leave machines on except for lightning. Lon said it's a good idea to turn the machine off now and then to let it clean itself up. Gateway recommends saily reboot. Use a static defuser before touching the machine. Rowland Carver said he had suffered $700. Damage from lightning in the phone line. He also reminded us to store disks on top of monitors.

Lon started with a brief description of his work making videos for training in Cobal programming, to be shipped to India. He explained that Cobal was invented by Lt. Hopper, USN, and that her

programming language is now running computers around the world. Lon said a billion people in India are working in government supported and controlled research.

In new business, the president called for nominations for all officers. Carl Heitzman moved that all present officers be nominated. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous voice vote. Lon announced that further nominations would be in order at the October meeting, according to the by-laws.

The Secretary's report covered continuing need for teachers at the Senior Center, and improvements in equipment and facility. See the article on Computer Volunteers. She urged people to look at the Adobe material on display, and noted that Adobe sends a lot of material to User Groups. She reported thatPrint Shop Deluxe v 11 will not install unless you let it first install MIE (Microsoft Internet Explorer) version 5. No fine print on the box tells this. It wants 1038 Mb for full installation, 6356 Typical and 450 Minimum. Minimum install requires having the CD in the drive, but Print Shop is infamous for disk switching anyway.

Treasurer Jac Carroll reported a balance of $981.87. He commented fur-

ther about incorporating, saying he had had meetings with an accountant and a lawyer and has a folder full of forms and notes. Achieving non-profit status needs a lawyer club member. Jim said its value it is allows the club to give tax letters for donations, and limits the liability of the officers. Non profit groups pay no sales tax. [We pay tax only on newsletter copies and supplies. Our only other purchases are stamps and bagels.]

Don Colombo is back on the phone calling about renewals.

Webmaster Paul Glattstein noted that no one had asked to be removed from the member list on the web site (hunterdoncomputerclub.org) He reported that sometimes his paper copy and the PDF file arrive together so that the letter is posted quite promptly.

Jim Russ, discussing programs, said that NJCC has suggested a joint meeting in order to insure attendance enough to get a presentation by Adobe, which requires a guarantee of 70 people. We would have some input on choice of topic.

Ed Matko and Jim Talbot came on down with winning tickets.

Vice President Joe Burger, in his tech report, said Amazon is accused of sharing names and addresses. He said net shoppers will need to shop early this year, because of increased volume. Many orders last year were never delivered. He discussed problems in the Tme-Warner\AOL merge. He gave www.sardata.com as an address to look at for news of how much harm your cell phone can do to your health. He described a new MP3 player ($500) that holds 1500 Mb with a 6 gig hard drive, runs 4 hours on 1 set of batteries, records enough to play 100 hours of music. In the goof department, Ikea posted 1000 names of people who requested catalogs.

Of MS Millenium OS, Joe said don't buy it. He cited a Mossberg column panning it. Joe said Millenium is a rehash of Win98, and that Win2000 is like NT.

The Program

Peter Czerwinski followed up his previous presentations on taking pictures (at high levels) with advice on how to share the results, over e-mail. He used **MS Photo Editor**. Other programs can do the same things.
First step: Crop. That is to say, trim the picture to remove extraneous areas, usually improving the picture.

The second step is to sharpen the picture, i.e. increase contrast.

Next is Auto-Balance. This deals with color, looking at the RGB balance. (red green blue)

Having modified the picture to suit, Peter recommended lowering image size to about 300x250 pixels. He chose a resolution size of 72 ppi. Then he Saved As Quality=low.jpg, ending with a 20 KB file that loads from a 28.8K modem in less than 10 seconds.

The object of this exercise is to send a picture without stalling your friend's email with an immense file, or boring him with a tedious, long, slow revelation on his screen, much of which consists of meaningless edges of sky or earth.

As usual, Peter's expert presentation led to lively questions and discussion. Peter mentioned flash cards that compress photofiles and create albums of up to 20 pictures.

See the club web pages for Peter's hand out.

Thanks to Peter for another fine program.

Our reliable program chairman had a backup program handy and we can look forward to seeing Jim's software called **Faces.** There are two(2) versions of "FACES"- one for Law Enforcement (The

Police) and the other version is for the Public (You and Me). It can attempt to picture a person's features from verbal descriptions. This is the computer artist at work in criminal investigation of suspects.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Intimidation by computer. There should be a law.

I am going to use the IRS, excuse me, the United States Treasury, for y example. But they are not the only ones.

I messed up on the IRS return in 1998. Forgot the NJ tax refund - a big whopping $132.00.
Some years you get one and some you don't - you know how it goes.

So after 30 some years doing my returns, I missed one state refund. Now I file about 9 forms 1040, A, B, C, D, SE for IRS to name a few. more letters than in my vitamin tablet.

Here we are in August 2000 and along comes a notice of delinquency with interest for 2 years on $132.00.

Perhaps the interest is irritating being a computer person and knowing that their computers should have picked this up eons ago. The IRS and NJ computers were not talking until now?

But what really got me was the 8 pages of computer generated paper. And forget the United States Treasury logo. This was from the IRS plain as day.

Of the entire 8 pages only 1 line explained the error. The rest explained how and why and when the IRS charges penalties and interest and beware terminology.

Ok I sent the check in and moved on -- until September.

Now the 1999 return had taken a child credit incorrectly - gee I thought in high school - still a child. So much for intuition.

Again 8 or more pages of blah blah and somewhere buried deep inside is the explanation.

Again interest from that date plus re-computing another part of my tax return to my benefit but then another to my loss - etc etc etc. The net overwhelmingly to their benefit plus interest.

But the real intimidation from the computer is the notice being sent on September 7 and demanding payment on September 25. I knew computers worked fast, but did not know they were impatient.

On this one I decided to call the help number on the form. The person on the other side told me to hold on and it sounded as if he had to go into the catacombs for my documents.

After about 5 minutes I broke the silence by saying that I was sorry for bothering him on a small matter. He popped back with "oh I was waiting for the computer to gather your records".

The summary of the inquiry was that there is no hope for a taxpayer making an honest error getting anything off on interest or penalties.
Besides the computer was involved.

Ok I sent the check in and moved on -- until the next day.

Then comes another notice of 8 pages. After sorting through it I figured out it was the receipt of the payment of $132.00 plus interest. Some receipt!.

I cannot wait for the next one. I will be up to 32 pages of paper received from IRS versus the 20 or so I sent them to start for two years.

Since it appears possible for the IRS computer to take two years to determine my making an error, I can only plan for more 8 page notices and will invest in additional deductible file folder storage accordingly.

The fact that the government can harness machines that overwhelm its citizens resources to retaliate is I think a good campaign issue.

But the IRS, excuse me "United States Treasury Except On Delinquency Notices", is not the only case of intimidation by computer we have.

More on this next time -- if I remember.

Lon,
May many happy bits flow your way!

Expert on the Scene
From Paul Glattstein

Once upon a time there was a shepherd looking after his sheep on the edge of a desert road. Suddenly a brand new Jeep Cherokee screeches to a halt next to him. The driver a young, a man dressed in a Brioni suit, Cerutti shoes, Ray-Ban sunglasses and a YSL tie, gets out and asks the shepherd, "If I guess how many sheep you have, would you give me one of them?"

The shepherd looks at the young man, then looks at the sheep, "Al l right."

The young man parks the car, connects his notebook to his cellphone, enters a NASA site, scans the ground using his GPS, opens a database and 60 Excel tables filled with algorithms, then prints out a 150-page report on his high-tech mini-printer.

"You have exactly 1586 sheep," he declares.

"That's correct," says the shepherd. "You may take the sheep." The young man takes the sheep and puts it in the back of his car.

The shepherd asks, "If I guess your profession, will you return my sheep?"

"Why not?" answers the young man.

"You're an Andersen Consultant," declares the shepherd confidently.

"That's amazing! How did you guess so quickly and easily?" asks the `man`.

"Very simple," replies the shepherd. "First you came here without being called. Secondly, you charge me to tell me something I already knew. And thirdly, you do not understand anything about what I do. And lastly you took my sheep-dog..."

 [Glossary:
An Anderson consultant is one who works for Anderson Consulting (a management consulting firm). They do, among other things, business practices assessments and recommend changes in company organization or working methods in order to improve efficiency.
YSL Yves St Laurent]

CUE CAT

Free at Radio Shack, or packed with Wireless, and other products, CueCat burst upon us free. At Radio Shack it was handed to you with a full Radio Shack catalog. Here's an e-mail description:

"………this is a device you attach to your computer which will scan any barcode either in an ad or off the product itself. If that product has a website, it will bring you to the URL! "

From the package description:

"The …CueCat Reader will change the way you use the internet forever….reads any product code and instantly transports you to the corresponding web page associated with that product."
The package consists of a CD for installation and a "convergence cord" with a mouse reader that has ears (molded). You disconnect your keyboard at the back of the computer, plug in CueCat, plug your keyboard into the CueCat cable, answer "a few questions" and you're off. If this isn't thrill enough, you can connect CueCat to your TV and every time it "hears" a "special Cue" it opens a related web page.
Of course, since nothing is free, it sends word back to someone who cares about your shopping interests.
A great many companies can be found on the web by typing www.companyname.com with no need for Cue Cat.

From: "Warren Rees"
<wsrees@voicenet.com>

PCUG News a service of the Personal Computer Users Group of Delaware County A service of the Personal Computer Users Group of Delaware County http://pcug.homepage.com

Another Freebie! http://NBCi.com Free ISP.....Free e-mail.....Free web page All links to these Freebies are on the club's "Links" web page: http://pcug.homepage.com/pclinks.htm

COMPUTER VOLUNTEERS

Senior Center classes are not all the club is doing for the community.
Peter Czerwinski is buiding and maintaining the Kingwood Township web site.
Lon Hosford does the web pages for the Alexandria Schools, and serves on their technology steering committee.
John Warsinski keeps the Youth Services office in Glen Gardner running, and recently networked their machines. He is also networking the Flemington Food Bank computers. John and Ted Scharenberg put in a lot of time setting up the most recent donation of Pentiums at the Senior Center. We have now lost the machine John had taught to say "LemmeOut!" and the Degas wallpaper, but he has at least enlivened the room with flashing SMPC logos which puzzle passers by. (Senior Multi Purpose Center)

Paying to Remove Ads

On egroups.com the "free" web space is supported by banner ads. A group of irritated users tracked down the right office person and one of them has collected enough cash from list members to pay to have the ads removed. Contributions were small but numerous. Figures not available.

The Greyhound Virus
From: Liz Dunbar
<edunbar@telephonet.com>

Sender: Greyhound discussion list <GREYHOUND-L@APPLE.EASE.LSOFT.COM>

You have just received the "Greyhound Virus"

As we greyhounds don't have any programming experience, this virus works on the honor system. Please delete all the files on your hard drive, and manually forward this virus to everyone on your mailing list.

Bobby and Betty Greyhound

FREECELL FOREVER!

If you would like to know whether that red ace is a heart or a diamond, put the mouse pointer on it and press the right mouse button. Works on any card.

Also it has been revealed that your true afficianado chooses Game # 1 and plays games in succession. One such has reached # 279. One reason your newsletter is often delayed is that if the editor had followed this system the number would be a lot higher than 279. There are 32000 games. What is the difference between an afficianado and an addict?

And where does the Roving Reporter gain these golden nuggets of info? Chatting with neighbors out for breakfast, where else?

SCANNER MAINTENANCE

Gaye Lowe asked the loop members for help in finding a replacement scanner bulb. Along the way there were new words to learn.

Gaye wrote: The bulb in my Microtek Scanner - ScanMaker E6 has died. The bulb is an 8W >>fluorescent DAYLIGHT tube "TL8W/84". Fromm carries the cool white version of this bulb and that is what I am using. It also mentions Firmware – I have version 1.9. For about $50 Microtek will send me replacement parts. Great! I can get a new scanner for $59. Is there any local supply for these parts? What is Firmware anyway. The manuals - paper and online are no help.

Bill Woodall answered:
From the Phillips Lighting Technical Forum:(http://www.lighting.philips.com/forum/forum_3/messages/11036.shtml)

For availability in US. AAMSCO at 800 221 9092. AAMSCO is in Jersey City...

"Firmware" is ROM-based programming that's part of the device itself. For instance, the BIOS of your computer is also firmware... unless there's a really compelling reason for upgrading (like a new feature you HAVE to get) then don't mess with it.
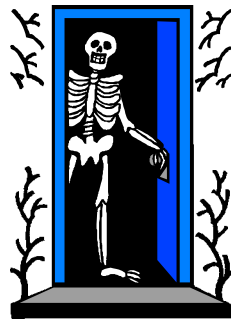
Good luck!!

[wpw] Return-Path: <wpw@woodall.com>

Rick Williams had more comments:

I'd replace the fluorescent tube from a local source or from the scanner manufacturer. Try local source first. Be careful not to upset the belts/gears which drive the moving parts of the scanner. Firmware, as I understand it, is somewhere between hardware and software.

It consists of digital instructions stored in a chip which control the actions of a specific device and which can be upgraded if the user so wishes, but often is not really necessary. Modems, for example, have firmware which can be upgraded over the internet and so increase the speed or accuracy etc. of the modem. The scanner in question evidently has upgradable firmware and performance may or may not be improved by an upgrade. Check the .com, or chat rooms for the brand to see if there are user comments or possibly a downloadable upgrade (for free.)

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Computer Volunteers
ALL MEMBERS

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