September

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
(by Lon Hosford)

The last meeting was really productive for me as Bill Woodall demonstrated the Watcom Graphire2 tablet. It was enough to make it clear to understand how it could be helpful and I bought one. I went for the steel blue.

I flopped my way through the installation steps for two computers. The instructions seemingly repeated themselves but without any penalty other than temporary confusion.

The tablet pen and mouse work fine and you can still use the exiting mouse as Bill reported.

I am now learning how to become efficient with the pen. This requires unlearning some rather automatic ways my hands work without conscious interventions.

The big advantage so far is the reduced stress on parts of my hand when working with the computer for extended hours. Recently I have been at the computer for 12 or more hours per day 7 days per week.

The disadvantage is that it is slower for certain procedures.

I did some research and have found some USB sharing devices that promise I can plug the tablet in and more than one of

my computer's can share it. My current switching equipment dates back before USB was a popular item.

Overall, this is the cadillac mouse and if you want to spend money on yourself and increase the fun you have with your computer, shell out the $85 and enjoy.

The next meeting topic is still open at this point. Bill indicated his intention to talk about on viruses, worms and trojans, but without internet connection in the presentation room this presents a problem.

The days of bringing computers with software to demonstrate are thinning. Most topics are better served with Internet access.

For the future of good meaningful presentations we need to solve this problem. We are first pursuing how to do this with the Hospital. However, it may come to pass if we cannot do this, we may need to look for alternative meeting facilities by the end of next year.

As I recall September is the first meeting for nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Nominations also can be made through the October meeting and the first order of business for the November meeting is the election.

If you have not had the opportunity yet, you can still contribute to the Jim Russ memorial fund. You can donate to the fund in two fashions. You can write a check to the Hunterdon Computer Club or to the Hunterdon Medical Center Foundation and mark on the check it is for the Jim Russ Memorial Fund. You can also give cash at club meetings.

We plan to present this to HMC in early Fall so make your contributions as soon as possible.

OPTIMIZE YOUR HARD DRIVE
(Smart Computing, 9/03)

Hard drives try their best to be orderly devices, saving data in the order in which it is received. But as you create, change, move, and delete files on your computer, the hard drive can't keep things quite as orderly. Additionally, deleted data isn't entirely deleted until new data overwrites it. Defragmenting the drive serves to reorganize scattered data. You can buy a defragmenter program, but your first line of defense is the Disk Defragmenter utility that's built into Windows.

Windows 95/98/ME users should run the Scan Disk utility before defragmenting. Click Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and Scan Disk. Select the appropriate hard drive (usually c:), check the Automatically Fix Errors checkbox, click Start, and wait for Scan Disk to complete. To defragment, click Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and Disk Defragmenter. Select the appropriate drive and click OK. The defragmentation process can take minutes or hours, depending on the computer (generally, an older PC with no recent upgrades will take the longest). To monitor the process click the Show Details button.

Windows NT doesn't include Disk Defragmenter, but Windows 2000/XP have a disk analyzer and defragmenter in a single utility. To use it, click Start, Programs (WinXP users click All Programs), Accessories, System Tools, and Disk Defragmenter. Select the appropriate drive and click Analyze. When analysis completes, a dialog box indicates whether you should defragment the drive. If so, click the Defragment button; otherwise, click Close.

Q & A

Questions & Answers

→ Don Columbo opened the topic on the MS Blaster worm. Bill Woodall pointed out that the worm does not effect Win95, Win98, WinME computers but does effect Win NT, Win XP and Win2000. The worm enters through routers on port 135. Bill pointed out the firewalls protect against worms like this and anit-virus software are for viruses. Viruses generally destroy file and are downloaded with email or FTP. Worms actively use infected machines to infect others.

→ Evelyn Stewart reported that after setting up a new machine the MS Blaster worm hit in 13 minutes.

→ Lon asked if ISPs provide worm protection with their firewalls. The answer was they may not and if they do, it is only for a short period of time.

→ Paul Glattstein mentioned ZoneAlarm (free) and ZoneAlarm Pro ($39.95) fire walls.

→ Bill Woodall mentioned TinyPersonal Firewall and Outpost both free and work fine.

→ Dr. Gerald Barad asked about law enforcement and penalties for worms and viruses. Currently if they can catch you for this, you may be spending 5 - 7 years in a Federal pen.

→ Someone mentioned products like Kazaa and IRC Chats do not work with firewalls. These file sharing programs are a source of viruses.

→ Someone asked for the names of virus software. The big three are Norton, McAfee and Trend Micro Penicillin.

→ George Knoedl Jr. asked about being stuck with 125% font size after installing a new program.

→ Dr. Gerald Barad asked about dangerous email attachments. The list offered up included exe, com, pif and screen savers.

→ John Gbur was looking for the Fish Tank for WinXP Pro. He has a computer with Win XP Pro pre installed. The answer he needs to look for Plus! and the installation files are on the CD or on the HD.

→ George Knoedl Jr. asked about obtaining fonts. The answer is certain programs install fonts, you can copy fonts from inside the Windows folder and Don Franklin mentioned a cheap CD he found in Staples with 5 million fonts.

→ Carl asked about AOL8 when it disconnects will not reconnect. The modem was verified not to be a problem.
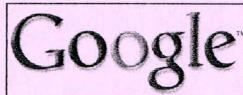
Google

WHEN I CANNOT SPELL I GOOGLE
(By Lon Hosford)

There are many dictionaries on the internet. They can help you spell and even pronounce words as well as provide definitions and cross references. They are also burdened with advertising, popups and slow performance.

I have found that when I need to spell a word and I am not in a program that has spelling help I type it into Google. If I spell it wrong, Google will diligently attempt to find the misspelled word but also let me know the correct spelling.

For example I could not think of how to spell cadillac. I typed in my best shot, cadallac, and the usual results came up, but also at the top of the results screen "Did you mean: cadillac" appears.

An interesting misspelling was spaghetti. I always forget the h. It is very interesting how many recipes on the internet for spagetti versus spaghetti. If you are not sure what spagetti looks like, switch over to images and you will find both spaghetti and spagetti are identical.

Then if you need the meaning of the word, you can click on the suggested correct spelling and there is a very good chance that Google will show links to dictionaries and provide enough text in the link that defines the word.

So if you are a terrible typist like me, you can Google the correct spelling up or if you want you can also learn about driving a cadallac and eating spagetti.

1960

DO YOU HAVE PRINCE ALBERT IN A CAN?   Hee Hee

TODAY

LET'S KNOCK OUT THE POWER GRID IN THE ENTIRE WESTERN HEMISPHERE   Hee Hee

Contributed by Don Colombo

KEEPING YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION SAFE WHILE USING COMPUTERS
(submitted by Don Colombo)

Depending on how you use your computer, an identity thief may be invisible as he steals your personal information. Consider the following to protect yourself when using your computer:

1. Update your virus protection regularly, especially when a new virus alert is announced. Don't download files sent to you by strangers or click on hyperlinks from people you don't know.

2. Use a firewall program, especially if you use a high-speed Internet connection like cable, DSL or T-1, which leaves your computer connected to the Internet 24 hours a day. (A firewall will stop uninvited guests and hackers from stealing personal information.)

3. Use a secure browser — software that encrypts or scrambles information you send over the Internet — to guard the security of your online transactions.

4. Try not to store financial information on your personal computer unless absolutely necessary. If you do, use strong passwords to protect the information (don't use automatic login features).

5. Before disposing of your computer, delete personal information. Use a "wipe" utility program to overwrite the entire hard drive.

6. Review Web site privacy policies. They will tell you how personal information collected will be used.

Where can someone go for help?

If you are a victim of identity theft, you can call the Federal Trade Commission's Identity Theft Hotline toll free at 1-877-IDTHEFT (1-877-438-4338) or report it online at www.consumer.gov/idtheft. The FTC puts your information into a secure consumer fraud database and may, in appropriate instances, share it with other law enforcement agencies and private entities. While the FTC has no enforcement power, it is collecting information and can supply you with other contacts. To report that someone is using your social security number, call the Social Security Administration Fraud Hotline at 1-800-269-0271. To report fraud to any of the three major credit bureaus, contact the following:

1. Equifax — www.equifax.com
  Phone: 1-800-525-6285
2. Experian - www.experian.com
  Phone: 1-888-397-3742
3. Trans Union - www.transunion.com
  Phone: 1-800-680-7289

To remove your name from national direct marketing mail lists, write:
 Direct Marketing Association
 Mail Preference Service
 P.O. Box 643
 Carmel, New York 10512
 www.the-dma.org/consumers/
 offmailinglist.html

To avoid unwanted phone calls from many national marketers, send your name, address and telephone number to:
 Direct Marketing Association
 Telephone Preference Service
 P.O. Box 1559
 Carmel, New York 10512
 www.the-dma.org/consumers/
 offtelephonelist.html

To remove your e-mail address from many national direct e-mail lists, visit: www.dmaconsumers.org/offemaillist.html.

CAN A KEYBOARD LIGHT THE WAY?
(by Katie Dean of WIRED)

Virtual keyboards -- projected images of the real thing that let typists compose their sentences on any flat surface -- are inching closer to store shelves. Canesta, a San Jose, California, manufacturer of electronics, said its chipset could allow other companies to incorporate virtual keyboards into PDAs, smart phones and other portable devices as early as the end of this year.

Writing sentences on PDAs still requires a lot of patience and practice. Some older models require people to enter data with a proprietary scrawl, while newer models use tiny keyboards that require dexterous, strong thumbs. And full-size keyboards just don't go well with the latest svelte devices.

"Even though these (handheld) devices are capable of sophisticated applications there's really no way to reasonably use those applications, especially those that require entering data, like e-mail," said Jim Spare, vice president of product marketing for Canesta.

Canesta's chipset projects an image of a full-size keyboard on any flat surface. It also emits an infrared beam that detects the position and motion of a typist's hands. Tapping on the image of a key produces the corresponding character on the device. The keyboard doesn't demand a lot of force, easing strain on wrists and digits. To get users comfortable with the technology, Canesta's chipset also produces an old-timey click sound. "People get used to it in about 10 minutes of use," Spare said. But some observers are skeptical that the high-tech gadget will catch on.

"Until we see a wider adoption of the data services for PDAs and phones, there's just not that much of an opportunity for these virtual keyboards," said Van Baker, a vice president at GartnerG2. "There has to be demand in the business or consumer markets to want to do e-mail on the fly."

"I think it's going to be a novelty that's not going to go anywhere," added Steve Bush, founder of Brighthand, a community website for handheld fans. "I just think the tactile thing is something you really need to have."

Still, the virtual keyboard would have distinct advantages over the QWERTY thumb keyboards on Palm's Tungsten line and the Handspring Treo models, which incorporated the mini keyboards into the devices after BlackBerry models became a hit, Baker said.

Ergonomically, virtual keyboards solve the problem of sore thumbs that can be caused by typing on the tiny keyboards of various gadgets like PDAs and cell phones. "These devices are way too small to type on for any length of time," said Alan Hedge, a professor of design and environmental analysis at Cornell University who runs the school's ergonomics website. "For typing small notes, using the thumb is OK, but you wouldn't want to sit down and type long documents."

Canesta is working with at least one company, Nec, which is evaluating the system for applications in its Tablet PCs, Spare said. Virtual keyboards likely will be available in time for Christmas, he said.

POEM FOR COMPUTER USERS OVER 50
(submitted by Bob Hepburn)

A Computer was something on TV
From a science fiction show of note
A Window was something you hated to
    clean
And a Ram was the father of a goat.

Meg was the name of a girlfriend
And Gig was a job for the nights
Now they all mean different things
And that really Mega Bytes.

An Application was for employment
A Program was a TV show
A Cursor used profanity
A Keyboard was a piano.

A Memory was something that you lost
    with age
A CD was a bank account
And if you had a 3-inch floppy
You hoped nobody found out.

Compress was something you did to the
    garbage
Not something you did to a file
And if you Unzipped anything in public
You'd be in jail for a while.

Log On was adding wood to the fire
Hard Drive was a long trip on the road
A Mouse pad was where a mouse lived
And a Backup happened to your com -
    mode.

Cut you did with a pocket knife
Paste you did with glue
A Web was a spider's home
And a Virus was the flu.

I guess I'll stick to my pad and paper
And the Memory in my head.
 I hear nobody's been killed in a Com-
    puter crash
But when it happens they wish they were
dead.

NAVIGATING ONLINE COUPON SITES
Finding true values on discount sites
takes patience, study
by Teri Goldberg of MSNBC
(submitted by Don Colombo)

I rarely seek out or use online coupons. For the first time, this past winter, I did redeem a coupon that I spotted at one-stop coupon shop couponmountain.com. The offer went as follows: spend $50 at any retailer linked to amazon.com's new apparel shop and receive a $30 coupon at amazon.com.

WHY DO USENET ARTICLES DISAPPEAR?
(Omni's Computer Humor Page)

I have noticed that some postings are disappearing faster than others. Why is that and who decides?

Its the size of the article. You see, the articles are stored on disk. An article is encoded in things known as 'bits' which are written on the disk. A disk is a rotating platter. As anyone knows centrifugal force will force anything off of a rotating surface.

As time goes on, the article moves closer and closer to the edge of the disk, and finally, it flies right off. Of course, the larger articles (more bits $=$ more weight) tend to fly off faster.

Unix systems have something known as a "sticky bit" which can help articles remain longer if it is set. Remember, USENET was originally set up by Unix people, and they knew what they were doing.

On the other hand, some systems have their own rules, and you might get a better (or at least more correct) answer by asking the people who administer your machine.

ONLINE GET-TOGETHERS FOR LINUX NEWCOMERS
(by J.D. Biersdorfer, NY TIMES)

Q. About a year ago I bought a computer with Linux Red Hat 7.1 installed. I have looked at several books for Linux users but have found them unhelpful. Is there a way to exchange ideas with other users?

A. Modern versions of Linux have a graphical user interface that makes the operating system seem more like the familiar Macintosh and Windows systems. Nevertheless, Linux, created in 1991 by the Finnish programmer Linus Torvalds and later improved by a worldwide community of programmers, can still be a bit of a challenge. There are many editions, called distributions, each of which can operate in a slightly different way.

The Red Hat distribution is one of the more mainstream versions of Linux, and there are many resources around the Internet to help you learn more about it. Red Hat's Web site has links to a number of mailing lists at www.redhat.com/mailman/listinfo. Mailing lists typically involve computer users from many different backgrounds chiming in with questions and answers. There is also a page with links to other Linux mailing lists at www.linuxlookup.com/html/main/mailinglists.html.

The Linux Online Web site (www.linux.org) contains information about using Linux and has links to Linux-related documentation, news and other information. The site has a page devoted to Linux user groups, computer clubs where people meet in person to discuss how to use Linux. To see if there is a user group in your area, check the list at www.linux.org/groups/usa/ or on the Linux User Groups Worldwide site at lugww.counter.li.org.

KEEP A CLEAN KEYBOARD
(PC World 10/03)

1. **Tap out the dirt**. Turn off your PC and unplug the keyboard. Put a large piece of old newspaper on a table, turn the keyboard over, and holding it a few inches above the paper, shake out any loose debris.
2. **Blow out the dirt**. This step is best done outside. Use a can of compressed air to losen and remove dirt by directing the air stream between the keys. Then invert and shake out the keyboard again.
3. **Clean the key surfaces**. To remove finger oils and other dirt from the surface of the keys, make a diluted solution of standard liquid dishwashing detergent. Use a damp (not wet) lint free cloth to gently clean off the key surfaces.
4. **Vacuum the leftover dirt**. To remove loose dirt that the other steps missed, use the dusting brush on any standard vacuum.

PUT YOUR PC TO BED AT NIGHT
SmallTech / Monte Enbysk
(submitted by Don Colombo)

For many years now, I've been shutting off my computer at night. But I'm now convinced you can leave your computer on at night and still conserve as much energy.

If you're a Windows user (Windows 98 Second Edition or beyond), just set up your PC to "hibernate" overnight. Hibernate" powers down your monitor to about 5 watts of energy and your PC to 2.3 watts — virtually the same as turning your PC off (your monitor uses zero watts when turned off; more on this below). Either way, you save as much as $90 a year in power costs compared to a PC left on with a 3D screen saver running.

The question keeps coming up, year after year: Should you shut your computer down at night or leave it running? The truth is, it really doesn't matter.

If you use the "hibernate" feature of Windows XP (and previous versions from Windows 98 Second Edition on), or even the "sleep" feature of most new Dell PC models, it really doesn't matter much. You save almost as much energy as you do turning off your computer for the night (minus unplugging it). And you won't have to endure a lengthy "re-booting" process the next morning; your computer should "wake up" in 30 seconds or less.

Again, I may not change my habits. I like the security of having it off (though locking your system or logging off is just as secure), and I like the ability to shake the cobwebs from my system on a daily basis. But, with every minute I spend booting up in the morning, I can see why someone would rather leave their machine on.

Energy Star (a power company) supports the practice of putting computers in "hibernate" or "sleep" mode — most new Dell desktop PCs contain "sleep state" power-management programs that work similarly as "hibernate." Energy Star applauds companies such as Cisco Systems and Pitney Bowes that have made enabling computers to "hibernate/sleep" at night a company policy. (The organization recently issued press releases touting the dollar volumes in energy savings at each company.)

It has been estimated that as many as 50% of U.S. users are enabling their PCs to "hibernate/sleep" at night, a percentage Energy Star hopes will continue to climb — even if the users are doing it for the wrong reasons. Many users simply don't like the 3-8 minutes it takes to re-boot a shut-off computer; they're more concerned about the re-boot time than saving energy. For that reason, and because the power-management features in Windows continue to be improved, the trend is for fewer people to be shutting off their computers at night.

Here are some consumer "myths" that are worth addressing:

- Turning your PC off uses more energy than leaving it on. Not true. The small surge of power you use when turning it on — which varies per PC make and model — is still much smaller than the amount you use in keeping it on for lengthy periods.

- Turning your PC on and off wears it out. Five or more years ago, there was something to this, but not today. It used to be that PC hard disks did not automatically park their heads when shut off, and that frequent on/off cycling could damage the hard disks. Today's PCs are designed to handle 40,000 on/off cycles before a failure, and that's a number you likely won't reach during the computer's five-to-seven-year life span.

SO, WHADDA YA WANT TO DO TODAY?.. HANG OUT AT THE MALL, GO TO THE MOVIES OR SCREW UP HALF THE WORLD'S COMPUTERS?!...

PIZZA

Contributed by Don Colombo

- Screen savers save energy. Not true. Screen savers, at a minimum, can use 42 watts; those with 3D graphics can use as much as 114.5 watts, according to Don McCall, a Dell product marketing manager who does power measurement studies for the PC manufacturer. "It's abso-lutely wrong thinking that a screen saver will save energy," he says.

- Your computer uses zero energy when "off." That's true only if it is unplugged. Otherwise, the PC utilizes "flea power," or about 2.3 watts, to maintain local-area network connectivity, among other things, McCall says. In "hibernate" mode, your PC uses the same 2.3 watts; in "sleep" mode, your PC uses about 3.1 watts. Monitors do use zero energy when turned off.

Lab tests done by Dell show that a PC running Microsoft Office uses 42.7 watts, McCall says. If it runs continuously at that rate for 365 days, at 7 cents per kilowatt-hour, the power consumption costs would be $26.18 for the PC and $45.99 for a regular monitor, for a total of $72.17 for the workstation.

Flat-panel monitors use less energy (22 watts when left on, 3.3 watts in "sleep" mode) than regular monitors (75 watts when left on, 5 watts in "sleep" mode), McCall says. So the same workstation with Microsoft Office running for a year would use $39.67 in power with a flat panel.

Meanwhile, if a PC was kept in "sleep" mode for 20 hours, for every four hours "on," as Dell recommends, the annual energy costs per PC would total $16.17 with a regular monitor and $9.88 with a flat panel. Using "hibernate," the costs would be slightly cheaper.
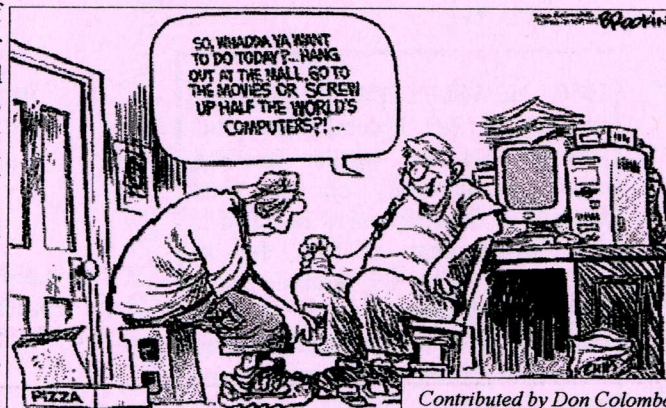
Enabling "hibernate"

"Sleep" mode is available on most new Dell PCs, while "hibernate" is available to any user with Windows XP and previous versions (from Windows 98 Second Edition on). To enable "hibernate," simply go to your Control Panel, click on "power options," and set your PC to "hibernate" after a specified time (most recommend 30 minutes).

If you are away from your PC a lot during the work day, you may want to set it to "hibernate" after 45 minutes to an hour, and set it to "standby" to 15 minutes. Under "standby," you'll be conserving power but you won't be saving your computer memory onto your hard disk, as you will with "hibernate." Standby" is meant for shorter absences.

A SPEEDY DRIVE THAT CAN SLIP INTO YOUR POCKET
(by J. D. Biersdorfer of the NY TIMES)

Luckily for people whose file sizes have outgrown the mere megabyte or so of space on a diskette, pocket-size flash memory drives that can hold 32 megabytes or more keep getting smaller and faster. The tiny Verbatim Store 'n' Go USB drive, equipped with a high-speed USB 2.0 connection, can copy 256 megabytes of data in 30 seconds, making it at least five times faster than drives that have the older U.S.B. 1.1 connection.

The Store 'n' Go drives are available with storage capacities of 32 megabytes to 1 gigabyte. When plugged into a computer's USB port, they appear on the screen as an external drive; files can be copied by all the usual methods.

Although the data-copying speeds are slower than with U.S.B. 2.0 connections, the Store 'n' Go drive will also work with USB 1.1 ports.

The drive needs no batteries and works with Windows 98 SE and later, Mac OS 8.6 and later and Linux kernel 2.4 and later. Windows users can assign passwords to limit access files stored on the device.

Prices range from $29 for the 32-megabyte model to $349 for the 1-gigabyte drive. More information can be found under the Products link at www.verbatim.com.

Although these drives are diminutive, there is an easy way to avoid worrying about losing one: the Store 'n' Go comes with a lanyard so you can wear your files as a fashion statement.

(Editor's Note: I recently purchased a Dell Inspiron 5100. I received a 64mg Store "n" Go drive with the laptop. Since I do a lot of work at home, it is much more convenient to carry large files back to my workplace on this form of storage than to write to a CD-RW or use an external Zip drive.)

NEW MEMBER
(by Ilene Shope)

Sally Taylor made it to her first HCC Meeting on August 16, 2003. She said her knowledge of computers could be dangerous. She joined HCC in October. One reason for her delay was tickets for Lion King with her grandson last November. Welcome!

WHO COINED THE TERM "BUG"?
(PC World, 10/03)

Engineers have been referring to *bugs*—flaws in a piece of machinery—since the 1800s. But the *computer bug* is of more recent vintage.

Back in 1947, Grace Murray Hopper was toiling away at Harvard's Mark II computer and found a moth lodged in the components. She extricated the ill-fated beastie and pasted it into the computer's logbook, with the notation "First actual case of bug being found."

The terms *bug* and *debugging* entered the vernacular almost immediately there-after. The famous moth now resides in the Smithsonian, where it fascinates computer historians and annoys entomologists, who know that technically a moth is not a true bug.
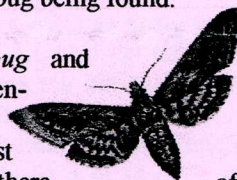
HCC NEWSLETTER is published monthly at 267 Federal Twist Rd., shortly after the regular meeting, which is normally on the third Saturday. Subscription is included in the annual dues of $25. for an individual, $30. for family. Non-member subscriptions, out of state only, are $8.00 a year. Contributions are eagerly sought, and may be on paper, by phone, on disk, or file or email to mreuter@ptdprolog.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 WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN OUR COMPUTER CLUB**
    _____

✂ ✂

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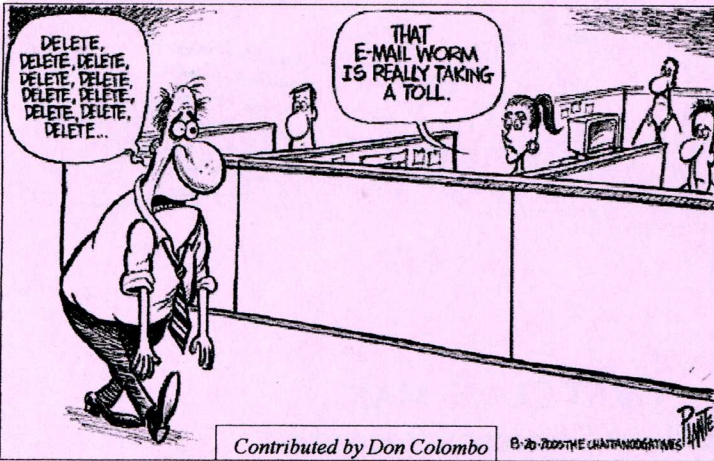
Submissions for articles, cartoons, pictures, or other information pertinent to the club are due to the editor by the 3rd of each month. If you plan to email your submission, please be sure to include HCC in your subject line.   Send to:

mreuter@ptdprolog.net

or

marlynreuter@hotmail.com

or use snailmail

Hunterdon Computer Club

Next Meeting Saturday, August 16, 2003
Hunterdon Medical Center
Rt. 31 Flemington NJ

8:30 A.M. To Noon

PROGRAM: Discussion — Viruses and Worms

Guests Welcome — all ages all levels

9/20

HCC NEWSLETTER

HUNTERDON COMPUTER CLUB

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37 USA

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22 Goritz Rd
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