

# Newsletter

Volume 17 Issue 2 February 2004



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

(by Lon Hosford)

The February meeting topic is one you may not easily find again or anywhere else.

Member Carl Kukula plans to present how to get that video you have on 8mm film into a digital format. I understand it has something to do with a hat and rabbit.

I welcome Mac-Sara Queen Oderwald as club Treasurer. She is already in the process of taking over the organizational empire built by Jac Caroll over the past years.



"Burnout was our greatest challenge until we changed our mission statement."

Sara also hosted the second officers meeting at her delightful home on February 7th. Besides Sara the attendees included myself, Peter Czerwinski, Jim Aller, Paul Glattstein, John Gbur, Marlyn Reuter, Bill Woodall and Jac Caroll.

The meeting was very productive and energizing for the future of the Hunterdon Computer Club.

I am often asked about the club's SIGs and when we will have topics or meetings.

The club SIGs are run by the members

who are actively involved in the SIG. Generally the active members arrange to get together and work on joint activities and determine if they need to have an open presentation to the club.

This is the idea behind the SIGs. The SIG members usually want to focus on the details of their respective areas.

If you are interested in a SIG contact the SIG coordinator for more information. Currently they are

General Users - Marlyn Reuter Digital Photography - Bill Woodall Web Master - Lon Hosford (Acting) Digital Video - Peter Czerwinski

These are the folks who know what is going on inside the SIG.

Remember the club gets free bagels from the Bagel Club. Be sure you use them and the coupon printed in the newsletter each month.

The club is need of an augmented program function. The recent officers' meeting determined we need more than one mem-

ber to coordinate the program function.

So we are now looking for members to join a program committee. The tasks on the committee include items such as follow through on scheduled presentations, assisting with equipment, internet access tasks such a list of dial-up numbers and logins, generating topics and in general assuring a stream of presentations.

You should contact Bill Woodall or me to participate. Also be prepared to be recruited!

# YOUR CLUB PROGRAM

(by Lon Hosford)

The following are full program topics in the works for consideration with potential speakers.

Transfer of Photos To Photo Web Sites - John Gbur

Microsoft Publisher - Marlyn Reuter

Printer and monitor calibration - Bill Woodall

Dragon Naturally Speaking - Don Franklin

Wireless networking at home - \*\*\*

Using Adobe Premier - \*\*\*

Powerpoint Interactive Features - \*\*\*

How to set up and administer discussion groups at Yahoo - \*\*\*

Suggest more topics for this list. +++

The following are filler topics for meetings when we do not have a full program:

Genealogy web sites \*\*\*

Tricks and Tips for using Google \*\*\*

Tricks and Tips for using Yahoo \*\*\*

Suggest more topics for this list +++

\*\*\* Volunteer to present this topic or arrange for an outside presenter. Contact Bill Woodall.

+++ We are actively looking for topics from members for review and consideration by the Program Committee.

You can suggest topics to Bill Woodall for consideration by the Program Committee.

# WHY COMPUTERS SOMETIMES CRASH

(submitted by Don Colombo)

Why Computers Sometimes Crash!

by Dr. Seuss
(Read this to yourself aloud - it's great!)

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port, and the bus is interrupted at a very last resort, and the access of the memory makes your floppy disk abort, then the socket packet pocket has an error to report.



If your cursor finds a menu item followed by a dash, and doublethe icon clicking puts your window in the trash, and your data is corrupted cause the index doesn't hash, then your situation's hopeless and your system's gonna crash!

If the label on the cable on the table at your house, says the network is connected to the button on your mouse, but your packets want to tunnel to another protocol, that's repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall.

And your screen is all distorted by the side effects of gauss, so your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse; then you may as well reboot and go out with a bang, 'cuz sure as I'm a poet, the sucker's gonna hang.

When the copy on your floppy's getting sloppy in the disk, and the macro code instructions is causing unnecessary risk, then you'll have to flash the memory and you'll want to RAM your ROM, and then quickly turn off the computer and be sure to tell your Mom!

Well, that certainly clears things up for me. How about you?

### TOP THREATS

(submitted by John Warsinski)

Worm/Nachi.B

12.2. New variant of Worm/Nachi virus

I-Worm/Doomjuice.B

11.2. New variant of I-Worm/Doomjuice virus

I-Worm/Doomjuice.A 9.2. New virus I-Worm/Doomjuice.A

I-Worm/Mydoom.B 28.1. New variant of I-Worm/Mydoom (aka Novarg)

I-Worm/Mydoom 27.1. Fast spreading worm I-Worm/ Mydoom (aka Novarg)

I-Worm/Mimail.Q 26.1. A new polymorphic mass-mailer I-Worm/Mimail.Q

I-Worm/Dumaru 26.1. Another variant of I-Worm/Dumaru

I-Worm/Bagle 19.1. New virus I-Worm/Bagle

I-Worm/Mimail.J 18.11. Successfully spreading new I-Worm/Mimail.J

I-Worm/Mimail.I 14.11. Next variant of I-Worm/Mimail

# INSTANT REFERENCE GUIDE TO PC MAINTENANCE

(submitted by Don Colombo) (from PC World, 02/04)

Spend some time taking care of your PC, and it will reward you with years of reliable service. These tips, tools, and resources can help keep any machine happy, healthy, and trouble-free.

### Things to Do

Like your car, your PC benefits from regular upkeep. But you don't need a mechanic to maintain your computer--you can easily do it yourself. Put it through this routine of simple checks and updates to keep it humming.

# **Every Day**

Update your virus definitions: Viruses spread within hours, so keeping your antivirus software up-to-date is essential.

Do an incremental backup: Making a copy of files that have changed since your last full backup is quick and easy.

Reboot when programs crash: Failed applications can cause other programs to falter. Restart your system after every crash to clear it out.

### Every Week

Perform a full virus scan: Find anything nasty hiding on your system by regularly scheduling a total scan.

Do a complete backup: Better safe than sorry. A backup of all of your data will help you recover if your drive fails.

Run Windows Update: Get the latest patches from Microsoft to secure your system, by running this from the Start menu.

Run a spyware-and-adware removal program: A tool like Spybot Search & Destroy can quickly find and remove sneaky spyware.

### **Every Month**

Update your programs: To make your apps more stable, check for vendors' software updates or visit a site such as Version-Tracker.



Check for new drivers: Installing the latest drivers for your devices can help speed up and stabilize your PC.

Use a one-click utility-suite checkup program: A utility suite (like those reviewed this month) can give your system a thorough checkup.

# Every Year

Clean out your PC case: Use a vacuum cleaner to carefully clear out the dust that collects in a case and can clog up the fans.

Spring-clean your programs: If your PC seems sluggish and bloated, make a full backup and then use the restore CD to return the system to its original state.

Conduct a full diagnostic check: A hardware-diagnostic program can test your equipment and track down faulty components before they fail completely.

### **TECH TV**

(by John Warsinski)

At last, the folks of Hunterdon County can enjoy one of the real pleasures of life. I am referring to the upgrade of the Patmedia Cable and the associated additional programming.

On channel 63 you will find Tech-TV, something you have all needed for a long time (I have had it on my system). Among the offerings are two very good programs for computer nerds and newbies alike.



The first is "Call For Help" every week-day afternoon at three o'clock with a repeat at nine the following morning. This is a light program with information, help, and entertainment all related to computers. An especially valuable segment is the Adobe Photo Shop expert who gives tips every Wednesday afternoon. For beginners, I believe one will find all sorts of tips to make your computing more fun.

The second is "The Screen Savers" every evening at seven o'clock, with repeats at midnight and eight the following morning. This show is for the more advanced. Of course you will never become "advanced" if you are not exposed to "advanced" materials. Here you will also find "Dark Tips", some of the operations and methods which tread the fine line between legal and illegal. Also covered on the show is news of the computer field. Did you know that Gateway is buying Emachines? The latest worms and other bugs are disclosed on the program. Of course there is also a lot of computer fun.

Both of these shows are on the TechTV website. You can read about the personalities and search through the "show notes" to find out about a problem or solution which was discussed sometime in the past, complete with links to all sorts of downloads.

Unless you are a real technophobe, you can tape the shows, like many people tape the "Soaps", and watch them at your leisure.

# OPTIMIZE YOUR PC FOR FASSTER START-UP TIMES

(submitted by Don Colombo) (by Stan Miastkowski of PC World)

# 1. Tweak the PC Setup program:

Your PC's hardware can keep you waiting for quite a while before Windows has a chance to start. You can reduce the delay by changing a few settings in your PC Setup program.

Enter the Program: The right way to do this varies, but usually you hold down <Delete> or some other key while your system starts up. Watch for an on-screen message, or check your PC or mother-board manual.

The settings you're looking for are often located within subcategories, and the terms for each setting vary. Read the screens carefully for options and navigation commands.

Quick Power On Self-Test: Set this to Fast or Enabled to skip some time-consuming memory and hardware start-up tests. The downside is that you might miss a developing problem with RAM or the motherboard.

Floppy Seek: If your PC's floppy has been working fine, there's no reason to test it every time you boot. Set this to Disabled.

IDE Drives: Look for a list of your Primary and Secondary IDE channels. When these options are set to Auto, your PC pauses to identify each IDE device as it boots. Set this to None on IDE channels you aren't using.

# 2. Check for viruses, spyware, and adware:

Hidden malicious or annoying programs often load at system start-up, slowing down the process. Get rid of them by scanning for viruses and pests regularly.

Don't have antivirus and spyware utilities? You're living dangerously! At Trend Micro, you can find a free online virus check. Ad-aware can help you remove spyware and adware from your system, or you can try at PestScan's free online detector.

For more tools to defeat the nasties, see "Pest Zappers."

# 3. Eliminate unneeded start-up programs:

In Windows 98, Me, and XP, you can see what programs load at start-up by going to Start, Run, typing msconfig, and clicking OK. (Msconfig isn't in Windows 2000, but programs like Startup Control Panel can fill in for it.)

Click the Startup tab to see a list of programs that launch at start-up. You'll need to experiment to see what you can do without. Just uncheck the boxes on the left-hand side of the Msconfig window to keep them from loading. The name and location of each file can help you figure out what it does.

In Windows XP, Msconfig has a Services tab that shows other application and OS components. Some can be unchecked so they won't load at start-up; others are essential to Windows. For more on services in XP and 2000, see "Supercharge Windows by Paring Unneeded Services."

### 4. Tune up the Registry:

Programs like RegClean can sweep out defunct hardware and software settings that can clog up your Registry. RegClean works for older versions of Windows. For XP, commercial programs, such as Symantec's Norton SystemWorks (pictured below) and V Communications' SystemSuite, and shareware like Registry First Aid can do the job.

For more on the Registry, see my May 2002 column, "Care and Feeding of the Windows Registry."

# 5. Defragment your hard drive:

Your hard drive doesn't always save a file in one place. Instead, it tucks parts of the file wherever there's free space. Use Disk Defragmenter on each of your drives to make those files contiguous, improving both start-up and overall Windows performance. Select Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter, select a drive, and click Start.

# **ANTI-SPYWARE**

(submitted by Don Colombo) (from Yahoo)



Antivirus programs combat the traditional threats of viruses, worms, and Trojan horses but do little, if any-

thing, about spyware installed by sneaky Web sites or suspicious employers, or via software downloads. Yet spyware is a growing scourge: ISP EarthLink says 40 percent of calls to its tech support are spyware-related.

We included a sampling of spyware in our antivirus zoo tests, with abysmal results. In our first round, only McAfee registered any at all, flagging one spyware component. Later, we downloaded an optional free spyware database from Kaspersky's Web site and were able to catch a handful of items with the antivirus scanner.

One reason for the tepid response from antivirus companies is a hesitancy to label spyware as malicious. While some pieces sneak onto your PC, many spyware programs are disclosed in the end-user license agreements of the freeware programs they ride in on. By accepting the agreement, you permit the installation of spyware that fetches targeted advertising or gathers marketing data.

Reading the fine print is the first step toward avoiding many types of spyware. But if the critters are already on your hard drive (and they likely are), your best defense is to run a program that scans your hard disk for known spyware files, folders, Registry entries, and tracking cookies, and then gives you the option to remove them. In addition, several antispyware utilities scan your PC's memory in real time to keep unwanted programs from installing and running in the first place.

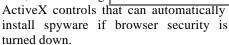
Software firewalls, such as Zone Labs ZoneAlarm or Sygate Personal Firewall (both free), provide another line of defense against spyware by alerting you to and blocking programs on your PC that try to access the Internet. Several of the antivirus programs reviewed here include a firewall, something no well-connected

PC should be without. See the April 2003 Internet Tips column ("Protect Your PC and Data With the Security Checklist") for advice on firewalls.

# To Catch a Snoop, Sometimes

We tested four of the best anti-spyware scanners: Lavasoft Ad-aware Plus 6, PepiMK Software Spybot Search & Destroy 1.2, PestPatrol Software PestPatrol 4.2, and Webroot Software Spy Sweeper 1.5. For each, we installed the scanner and then introduced spyware. Our collection included two utilities, IMesh 3.1 and Hotbar 4, which contained profiling and ad-serving software and files (known as adware) such as Gator GAIN and CommonName. We also added an ActiveX control called Secret Admirer that caused

our PC modem to call a 900 number associated with a porn Web site; and we installed five surveillance programs that run in stealth mode, recording keystrokes and grabbing screen shots. Finally, we moused around a Web site, OrbitExplorer. com. containing



Each product rooted out a large proportion of the freeloaders, with Spybot Search & Destroy catching the most. But no program was perfect. After scanning and opting to remove detected spyware with one program, we found that running a second or third program almost always caught all or part of a spyware item that the first had missed. With each product, we also managed to find and remove additional spyware elements when we reran the scanner. That's because spyware has many hooks into the system that try to reinstall themselves after an attempted removal. So your anti-spyware motto should be: Scan, remove, reboot, repeat.

In addition to scanning best, Spybot Search & Destroy was the most competent at removing spyware without doing harm. In contrast, PestPatrol locked up and refused to run again after we instructed it to delete the spyware it had found.

Like antivirus utilities, the four antispyware programs also scan your PC's memory in real time to keep unwanted software from installing in the first place. However, we didn't see stellar performance from any of the programs. In most cases they noticed only a fraction of the spyware as we downloaded and installed it, but Ad-aware Plus performed better than the others. Memory-scanning is a brand-new feature in Spy Sweeper, which failed to find most programs we pitted it against; in Spybot Search & Destroy, it's limited to ActiveX controls and

other code embedded in Web pages.

The four programs didn't differ greatly in features. You can set each to load and scan automatically at Windows startup, and each can instantly notify you when



"Originally, P.D.A. stood for 'pretty darned amazing' ...but that didn't sound high-tech enough."

spyware database updates are available. All four also back up files before deleting them (restoring a piece of spyware may be necessary to re-enable the free software it came with).

### Two Are Better Than One

Anti-Spyware is still an infant class of software, but it's the best tool available right now. We recommend that instead of running any one program you combine our two favorites: Spybot Search & Destroy and Ad-aware. The former was the best at scanning disks in our tests, though its interface is a bit clumsy. The latter has a friendlier interface, and the \$27 Plus version has the memory-resident scanner that did best in our tests. Spybot Search & Destroy warned us that Ad-aware might mistake its quarantined files for active spyware, but we didn't encounter this problem in our evaluation.

# HIRING AN ASSASSIN FOR SPAMMERS

(by Lon Hosford)

Where can I find an unscrupulous no questions asked assassin for spammers?

You know. You wait at a pay phone at a specific time in a part of town with all abandoned burned out buildings and debris strewn streets.

Then phone rings and you hear a short message to go to some out of the way dive of a bar dimly lighted with a lingering smoky haze and to sit in the table way in the back.

Across the table from a hard to trace face you listen to the details of money and no further contact after this meeting.

You push across the table printouts of spam with email headers and cash. As fast

as your hand returns to your side, your guest is gone and a spammer's fate is cast.

Now you need only wait until your inbox is reduced to the few emails that you love to expect. "We found a solution to your spam problem.
We replaced all of the keys with 'delete' buttons,"

Well it appears that my web hosting service provides me with a close enough assassination service called SpamAssassin.

They even have their own blatantly open web site www.spamassassin.org.

Do not gasp as they do not provide an actual service terminating the spammers. They do however provide a free software program for email servers to analyze your email and tag it as spam.

Then you can choose to delete or store the tagged mail in a spam folder using a single email filter entry.

Further if you are receiving your email

through your own web site, you can elect to have the spam deleted into digital oblivion before you ever know it came in.

SpamAssassin allows you to add to the subject line any keyword identifying the spam. I use SPAM TO DIGITAL DUST. The default is \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\*.

I found filtering the asterisks was more than I wanted to know how to do as they usually represent wild cards in filter logic.

SpamAssassin uses email header analysis, text analysis, blacklists, and Vipul's Razor to build a score on the email you receive. These all represent a long list of tests each having a score value.

You can select the total score value that SpamAssassin classifies email as spam. They provide some recommended numbers to try.

I adopted their aggressive recommendation of 5. No mercy I say!

The header analysis looks at the ways spammers alter headers to fool you or your spam filters into thinking you received valid email.

How about in the

headers of your email a date that is 12 to 24 hours before or after Received: header date. Maybe a header with no host name and other stuff you could care less to know about but reveals a spam email message.

With text analysis, telltale phrases and use of stealth HTML are evaluated. Nothing in life and in a email is free, no risk and guaranteed to make you richer and more popular without being spam. HTML can hide the face of spam as well.

Blacklists are simply places that list those who are known spammers such as at http://www.mail-abuse.org/.

Vipul's Razor at http://razor.sf.net/ is a

database that results from a group of folks collaborating to share email received. When the same message is received by more than one collaborator, it gets honorary but unceremonious induction into the database.

You can check out the multitude of tests SpamAssassin provides at their web site. For example multiple body lines of ALL CAPITAL LETTERS or claims that echo "We strongly oppose the use of spam email too".

To avoid accidental assassination of your email to me at osfordusahay.omcay or to the Hunterdon Computer Club at unterdoncomputerclubhay.orgway, I think you may find the list of tests worth studying to learn what to avoid in your emails.

Otherwise it is the veritable digital void for your email message.

### **COMPUTER CLASSES**

(by Grace Marcus)

Thurs. Feb. 19th 1:00—3:00 - File Management - creating folders

Mon. Feb 23rd - Explore PA 2003 some more and look at tea bag folding.

Thurs. Feb. 26th 1:00—3:00 Beyond Help - Using the Help function to full advantage

Friday February 27th – 12:30 – Computer Social – Bag Lunch (all computer users welcome)

Thursday March 18th 9:00 – 10:30 CD Burner BASICS (one session class)

Thursday March 25th 9:00 –10:30 CD Burner Basics (one session class)

OPEN LAB Mondays 1:00 -2:30 (except Holidays)

Anyone interested in a workshop on Preparing Taxes with software such as Turbo Tax please let me know & we'll set one up.

Also if you would be kind enough to email me any & all subjects on which you would like computer instruction I will do my best to accommodate your computer needs.

# ALL WET ON THE NET

(submitted by Don Colombo) (from "Environmental Health")

The Web is a great tool, but it's easy to find advice online that's off base.

Want to find health information on the Internet? As the sergeant on Hill Street Blues used to say, "Be careful out there."

The Net takes you to what is, in a sense, the world's best health library. But the ease that makes the Net and e-mail such potent information tools also makes them ripe for mangled facts, rumors, cons, come-ons and hoaxes such as:

MYTH—Costa Rican bananas cause flesh-eating bacteria disease.

MYTH—Coral Calcium can cure cancer.

MYTH—Coughing can save you in a heart attack.

MYTH—Soda cans or grocery packages can spread hantavirus.

MYTH—Antiperspirants or deodorants cause breast cancer.

MYTH—Your mail may bring you poisonous perfume samples.

Here are a few useful web sites that could save you from health myths:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (hoaxes and rumors): www.cdc.gov/hoax rumors.htm

Food and Drug Administration (dietary supplement):

www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/qa-sup19.html

American Medical Association (health site guidelines):

w w w . a m a - a s s n . o r g / a m a / p u b / category/1905.html

Sites that debunk rumors and hoaxes:

www.urbanlegends.com

www.snopes.com

www.quackwatch.org

### **QUICK TIPS**

(from Smart Computing)

# AMAZON.COM

Amazon.com now has a feature called Search Inside The Book. With it, you can search for any word or phrase inside a book and view the entire contents of more than 120,000 books. Point your browser toward the Amazon.com (http:// www.amazon.com) Web site and conduct a search as you normally would. When the search results appear, look for paragraphs beginning with words "Excerpt From" and followed by a link to see a scanned image of that page. This process is even faster than thumbing through the books on your bookshelf. To use the feature, you must register with Amazon.com, but registration is free and definitely worth the effort.

# **WIRELESS NETWORKS**

While most wireless access points have enough range to cover an average-sized house, signal strength can vary wildly depending on many factors. If you're having trouble getting a signal in one location, try moving the access point a few feet. Another option is to try rotating it or changing the orientation of the antenna on the access point or computer. You can also try changing the elevation of the access point, which can change the signal path just enough to make all the difference.

HCC NEWSLETTER is published monthly at 267 Federal Twist Rd., Stockton, NJ shortly after the regular meeting, which is normally on the third Saturday. Subscription is included in the annual dues of \$25 for an individual, and \$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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Computer Volunteers
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# H.C.C. HUNTERDON COMPUTER CLUB

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2. DO YOU HAVE AN AREA OF COM	IPUTER EXPERTISE?	IF SO, WHAT IS IT?		
3. PLEASE LIST ANY COMMENT AN	ND/OR LIST WHAT WOULI	O YOU LIKE TO SEE II	N OUR COMPU	JTER CLUB



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





# FIRST CLASS MAIL Address Correction Requested

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HUNTERDON COMPUTER CLUB

# HCC NEWSLETTER

# Hunterdon Computer Club

Mext Meeting Saturday, February 21, 2004
Hunterdon Medical Center
Rt. 31 Flemington MJ

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PROGRAM — How to Preserve Your Home Movies Now and In The Future

Hunterdon Computer Club member Carl Kukula will present how you can transfer 8 mm film and video tape to t day's DVD formats. Carl is covering the limitation and eventual deterioration of 8mm film, video tape and even CD disks and DVDs. The central focus of Carl's presentation is the demonstration of how he converted 8MM film to DVD formats. Carl will also disc use the technologies soon to be available in the near distant future that will replace optical disks like DVD including holograp hic technology.

Guests Welcome - all ages all levels