Linux On The Horizon

So Close & Yet So Far Away
By Gregory Anderson

What would you say if we offered you an OS (operating system) powerful enough to run server farms, flexible enough to customize your desktop, stable enough to run for years without crashing, and secure enough that practically no viruses infect it? What if we offered it free?

Every year, millions turn down just such an offer made by the Linux development community. Despite its success in server and other niche markets, Linux has been more hype than reality. Why isn't it more popular with consumers? Ease of use.

An Introduction

An understanding of open-source software is necessary before discussing Linux and its place in the market. The open-source movement centers on a unique licensing agreement. Open-source licensing lets users access and modify a program's source code (normally a tightly controlled secret) however they'd like, as long as they make the results available to others. Entire developer communities evolve surrounding major projects, all working in conjunction (and sometimes at odds) on software versions. This collabora-tion and transparency ensures a more stable, secure, and flexible product which also happens, in many cases, to be free.

Enter Linux. A Finnish student named Linus Torvalds introduced the OS in 1991. Torvalds sought to develop an OS matching the power and stability of powerhouse Unix distributions, but without the licensing fees and hardware costs. Linux runs on regular PC hardware. He offered his creation to the open-source development community via Usenet (view the archived post at http://www.google.com/googlegroups/archive_announce_20.html), and it caught on. Soon, he had a team of volunteers managing development and parsing contributions. That process

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Hunterdon Computer Club

Next Meeting: **Saturday, November 20, 2004**
Hunterdon Medical Center
Rt. 31 Flemington NJ
8:30 A.M. To Noon

PROGRAM — *Linux Fedora Core 2*— **Ken Jones** will demonstrate **LINUX Fedora Core 2.**
Red Hat Linux now has two descendents, Red Hat Enterprise Linux and The Fedora Project. The Fedora Project is an openly-developed project designed by Red Hat, open for general participation, led by a meritocracy, following a set of project objectives.
Linux Fedora Core is virtually virus free and quite secure. Ken will explain where to get the free software and how to install it. His own system is a dual boot Windows 2000 and Linux.
http://fedora.redhat.com/

*(**Linux** Continued from Page 1)*

continues today: Torvalds and a core group control updates to the OS **kernel** (the core code running an application's most basic functions), and developers around the world create additional software and add-ons. Nothing in the open-source license of Linux prevents people from selling their creations, but they are required to make the source code available. In essence, you can download Linux code free. But if you want documentation, support, installation discs, or other perks, you have to buy Linux from one of the several companies selling their customized versions (also called **flavors**).

Keep It Simple

That twist (basics for free, perks for a fee) brings us to Achilles' heel: the usability question. The value for mainstream success in the consumer desktop market is simplicity. Convenience, availability, and support are crucial to simplicity. The home-computer market has evolved from a hobbyist's pastime to being the way Grandma stays in touch with family and balances the budget. The technology has, in many ways, become transparent: It's a means to an end, rather than an end itself. Linux hasn't conquered the desktop because it hasn't become transparent enough. It's still too complex to set up and use for most consumers.

Installation

Let's start with installation. The freedom to tweak has a flipside: a splintering of the core product. After you pick from dozens of flavors (see our sidebar, "32 Flavors & Then Some"), you have two choices. One, buy or download Linux in a box with CDs, installation manuals, and customer support information for less than the latest Windows version ($30 to $80, compared to $100 and more). Or two, download the disc images free from the distributing company. At about 650MB per disc (and from one to three discs), you'll be waiting awhile. You need to create CDs from those images (with a CD-burning program). After creating installation CDs, you can download

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CRASH COURSE IN GAME DEVELOPMENT

Saturday November 13

1:00pm - 4:00pm

The RVCC Computer Club and The NJ Chapter of the International Game Developers Association present

"A Crash Course in Game Development" Saturday November 13th 1:00pm - 4:00pm in the Conference Center, Grand Conference Room at Raritan Valley Community College.

Topics: Intro to Game Development, Art in Games, Game Programming, NJ Game Companies, Game Design, Audio, Production and Quality Assurance. A panel of experts will be available to answer your questions.

Contact Stephen Brower 908-526-1200 x8259.

Or contact Bill Woodall, who is a member of the RVCC Computer Club.

woodall@woodall.com

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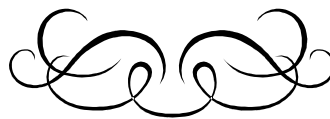
*(**Windows SP 2** Continued from Page 7)*

programs. That way, you'll know about any potential crises before committing your "real" copy of Windows to SP2.

(Editor's Note: Visit http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/technology/circuits.html to read David Pogue's Nov 4 follow up to this article.)

Visit David Pogue on the Web at DavidPogue.com.

(Submitted by Bill Woodall)

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Visit us at:
www.hunterdoncomputerclub.org

MEETING NOTES
By Ilene Shope

(Editor's Note: The following *unedited* notes reflect meeting and program observations from October 16 as recorded by Ilene Shope)

NOMINATIONS

Club's VP, Peter Czerwinski- called for nominations of officers according to the Club's By-Laws. Peter Bickford was nominated Vice-President.

GUESTS AND RECENT NEW MEMBERS

Luba Farmiga brought her mother Nadia to visit with us. Alex Farmiga helped Carmella Vowinkel with her Desktop screen Startup problem. Fred Diehl of Readington is in Sara's computer class at the Senior Center. He said he knows Evelyn too. Hans Salopek of Readington Township saw our HCC Ad in the Hunterdon Democrat. During the meeting he answered Don Colombo's plea for a volunteer pianist for our December Holiday Meeting. Hans said his daughter plays the piano. Walter MacGregor said he would post Club "Join-Us" flyers in his community.

IN THE MEETING

Barbara Middleton won the 50/50 raffle. She is our frequent winner. Lon Hosford left word that someone should retrieve the bagel-cutter after the Meeting in his absence. Peter Czerwinski got rid of the non-winning red raffle tickets after the Meeting. Sara Oderwald said the 'rounded' amount in the Treasury is $530.74.

Peter Czerwinski, successfully installed WindowsXP-SP2 with its four updates. Intermittent Microsoft Alerts can be turned off. (Bill Powell interjected that it is 'never Microsoft's fault' for anything!) Hans Salopek said Dell's suggestion was to undo SP2 when complaints showed up in home machines. Bill Woodall said complaints about SP2 are in the games area, with older hardware, with CD style utilities, or with spyware infestation. For Corporate usage of SP2, it is fine said Bill Woodall. He suggested

installing SP2 right away if you are using Microsoft Office 2000 or Office 2003.

Evelyn Stewart arrived with "The Secret Guide to Computers" by Russ Walter. Don Colombo assisted her, selling them during the meeting. He also showed Bill Woodall's black and white photographs. Printing in three shades of black, produced a 3-D effect with richness of the color black, in photo (a) "Locomotive Train No.142" and photo (b) is "The stone ruins of an Old Church."

Q&A

Patricia Frusco had problems with pop-ups, security, anti-virus product management updates. Bill Woodall advised that Symantec would discontinue updates on Norton 2002 on Nov.30, 2004. George Knoedl asked and Bill Powell said WindowsXP-SP2 on CD is first installed. The 4 updates are downloaded, saved, burned to a CD and then Add-Remove-Programs works with Microsoft's. Bill Woodall used his Best Buy -Toshiba laptop for his program. He commented it was an economical price when he bought it ($900 of last year.) John Warsinski said the E-machine is a good buy at $350 after rebate.

Backup methods:
Peter Bickford uses Xcopy32. Bill Woodall prefers using a second hard-drive as Backup. Paul Glattstein uses an external Maxtor 120MB Hard-drive with USB connectivity. The button is on the front. Carol Meyer was told memory sticks are limited. John Gbur said the USB Drives are 128MB or 256MB. (Note: USB Drives are carried on the person like on a key chain or as a pendant on a neck-chain or bracelet, as fashion.) John Warsinski said the Windows system must be up before the USB works.

Luba Farmiga inquired about multi OS's. Evelyn cautioned users of multi operating systems (e.g. *Win98SE and *WindowsXP.) Be careful. Bill Woodall recalled, at the Senior Center the dual OS caused havoc. George Knoedl suggested partitions, with choice. Hans Salopek said installation is in the order of Low to High (i.e.

Win98, then WinXP). Multi system, partitions, choice, clean. Low to High. Bill Woodall suggests using Windows XP and put Win98 aside in obsolescence.

Ilene Shope asked about the free Adobe Acrobat Reader. Bill Powell said the file is huge for Acrobat 6.01. Someone said PC Magazine mentioned that only three plug-in are needed. John Gbur said he could send the instructions later on the Discussion board.

PRESENTATION

by BILL WOODALL- "Power-User Browsers and Tools" Bill Woodall stated that Internet Explorer is an inherent component of Windows operating system. This browser must be in. However other browsers can be installed and will not conflict with each other. Go right ahead and try as many browsers as you care to, Bill said.

Woodall has used Agent as his Email and news server, since 1996. However, he sees strides in Thunderbird (Mail Client). Bill puts Firefox V.10 as his current best (4MB) browser. It has a clean look. It does not have Direct X. and Active X is in MSFT's IE. Peter Bickford said a plug-in might work. Mozilla (12MB) is a browser and email client.) Bill opened Opera for us. Opera is Scandinavian and charges for use, but Ads are prevalent on screen. He deleted Opera when he finished showing it to us. He said Netscape 7.2 is bloated to sell AOL's version of Mozilla. (Mozilla 1.6 is Netscape 7.0).

Bill was clear on cache. No more than 10% of the hard-drive capacity and 20MB, is enough he said when Hans Salodek asked. If the cache is too big, the hard-drive slows down. Yahoo's filters are good. Spam is controlled and John Warsinski advised that Yahoo's 2GB of extra storage is $20. Bill mentioned Systems Internals (www sysinternals.com) and Freeware from AT&T, Boltek Storm Tracker, a download on tightvnc.com (Virtual Network Connections). Storm tracking is in real-time within a 50mile radius. We could see the blips. He acknowl

HUNTERDON SENIOR MULTI-PURPOSE CENTER

COMPUTER LESSONS AVAILABLE FOR HUNTERDON COUNTY RESIDENTS 60 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER

Adobe Photoshop Review
F. Diehl
Tuesday
November 16
Noon-1:30 pm
Registration Required
Donations Welcomed

Print Artist
E. Stewart
Mondays
9:30—11:30
Nov 15   Anna Griffin Paper & Video
Nov 22   Thanksgiving Circle Card
Nov 29   NO CLASS
Registration Required—Donations Welcomed

Basics Refresher Classes—*General Questions**
L. Ferrari
Fridays 10:00—11:30
Nov 12   Applications (MS Word, Excel, Quicken, etc.)
Nov 19   Applications (MS Word, Excel, Quicken, etc.)
Dec 3   Applications (MS Word, Excel, Quicken, etc.)
Dec 10   Applications (MS Word, Excel, Quicken, etc.)
Dec 17   Internet, Email & Attachments
Jan 7   Internet, Email & Attachments

*BASICS prerequisite

Registration Required—You may sign up for any or all of these classes.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
If you would like to volunteer to teach, or tutor one-on-one, please contact Grace Marcus.
908-788-1359

How to Upgrade Your Computer
Tuesday
November 23
9:30—11:30
Learn how to install memory, USB cards, and expansion cards (necessary for DSL & cable)

Computer Maintenance & Cleaning
Tuesday
November 30
9:30—11:30
Learn the safest, most effective way to clean your monitor, keyboard and computer. Hands on class. Cleaning materials supplied.

Registration Required—Donations Welcomed

File Management
E. Stewart

Thursday
November 18
1:00-2:30 pm

Registration Required
Donations Welcomed

For more information please contact Grace Marcus at 908-788-1359
http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/aging/smpc/computerclasses.htm

OPEN COMPUTER LAB

The Hunterdon County Senior Center's Computer Lab is open every Monday (except holidays) from 1:00 - 2:30. All Seniors over the age of sixty are welcome.

Bring your computer questions. The instructor on duty will do his/ her best to assist you. Donations gratefully accepted.

SELF-GUIDED TUTORIALS AVAILABLE

Seniors over the age of sixty may reserve the SMPC lab to use the following interactive CDs:

**Typing Tutor
MS Word XP
MS Word 2000
Excel XP
Excel 2000
Outlook XP
Outlook 2000
PowerPoint XP
PowerPoint 2000
Access XP
Access 2000**

Call Grace Marcus: 908-788-1359

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*(**Meeting Notes** Continued from Page 3)*

edged Peter Czerwinski's question to interlink computers by way of desktop icons on Virtual Network Connection allowing access to an off-site computer, although this cannot be done with the College's (RVCC) computer system. VNC has viewer and server components.

Evelyn brought Bill's attention to the Firewall flasher light, blinking, bottom right of his screen. Bill opened Zone Alarm, his free Firewall. It showed in real time, incomings of spams. He could identify some spammers by their IP code addresses. Someone remarked how rapidly spam accumulates. (Over 2000 count.)
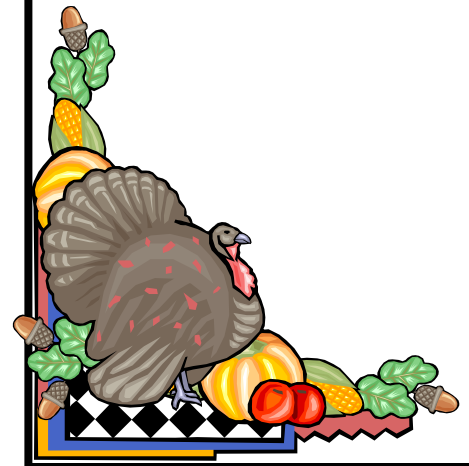

TREASURER'S REPORT
Sara Oderwald

Still nothing new to report. We pay $47.10 per month for coffee service, plus $9 for cream cheese. As a community service, **Staples** prints our Newsletter for free. Envelopes cost about $.06 each. Postage runs about $26 per month.

Account Balance: **$603.48**

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

From the members of the Hunterdon Computer Club

WELCOME NEW MEMEBERS

Fred Diehl
Alex Farmiga
Valerie Pantina
Bill Powell
Carmella Vowinkel

THE LOOP LIVES ON
By John Gbur

Recently the club's "loop" has been resurrected in the form of an email group hosted by Yahoogroups.com Any member of the HCC group can send a message to hunterdoncomputerclub@yahoogroups.com. This message will be sent to all members of the group. With a current membership of more than twenty-five, this is a good way to tap into the knowledge of Hunterdon Computer Club members outside of meetings. Currently, there are three "moderators", who act as a filter and approve messages before being sent to the entire group. They are Jim Aller, John Gbur, and Bill Woodall.

TO SIGN UP

If you would like to join the group, send an email to johngbur@earthlink.net. You will get an email "invitation" to join the group. Simply reply to this message. **DO NOT** click on any link in the message. If you do, you will have to fill out a long form to join Yahoo. YOU DO NOT have to do this. Simply Reply to this message and you are in!

(LINUX Continued from Page 2)

and print installation manuals.

Start with a clean hard drive, insert the first installation CD, and boot up. Choose which kind of setup you want, how to organize and partition your hard drive (you'll want at least three or four partitions for various Linux functions), and which packages you want to install. You can choose among several default setup profiles or go into an exhaustive menu tree containing hundreds of individual programs. After letting the install run (for anywhere from 30 minutes to five hours or more, depending on your settings and hardware), you'll have a working Linux installation, complete with dozens of free new programs to learn. Windows (until recently) wasn't always much easier to set up. But you probably bought your computer with Windows preinstalled.

Software

After installation, you have to find something to do with it. A key element to ease of use is transparency. How well can you work without paying attention to the enabling technology? For software, transparency comes down to two things: availability and simplicity. Compatible software with the necessary features must exist. And it must be user-friendly. Both limit the reach of Linux. Software sources are splintered and not always easy to find. You won't find much at the store, so you'll have to hunt for downloads. And some software that appeals to consumers isn't available on Linux.

When you do find something, you're likely to have to download packages of TAR (tape archive) files and figure out how to unpackage, install, and configure the software on your own. A standard Linux installation mode has yet to coalesce. Unless you purchased software from a retailer, you're probably on your own for documentation, support, and updates. Because open-source development is generally development-focused and feature-driven, interface design and the user experience are often afterthoughts.

Hardware

Hardware compatibility and availability affect mass appeal, as well. For consumers, peripherals such as photo printers, CD burners, and TV tuner cards, aren't optional. They're as essential to our computing experience as browsing, email, and word processors. Without a critical mass of such devices (and supporting drivers, software utilities, and add-ons), it will be hard for consumers to make a switch.

Even devices with Linux compatibility usually don't have the same level of support or documentation as they do for Windows. You can probably find network card, printer, and video card drivers. But you may have a lot more tweaking and configuration than you're used to.

Documentation & Support

It's easy to forget about the importance of documentation and support. And Linux distributions generally provide documentation and support when you purchase retail versions. However, using a new OS with new software and new methods of installation and configuration, you're more likely to need support. Even when support for the OS is strong, most apps have scant documentation and very little support available. In most cases, you have to rely on plain-text MAN (manual) files, online discussion boards, and local LUGs (Linux Users Groups). You can find answers with all these methods, but they aren't as convenient as software with easy access to support and help resources.

But Wait— It's Not All Bad

Linux isn't without benefits. Beyond its significantly lower price, Linux is more stable, secure, and flexible than proprietary OSes. It's a very useful and powerful tool for people with the technical aptitude and inclination to tinker. Linux is a wonderful and cost-effective tool for users seeking to improve their technical support, networking, server management, and other skill sets. It's important for casual observers to keep an eye on Linux. Development of the platform and competition benefit everyone.

None of the ease-of-use limitations are individually difficult or complicated. But add them up, and you have a hassle for most people. We've come to expect nothing in computing if not convenience. Linux is more akin to the PC world in its hobbyist days. Linux, as the PC market before it, will need critical mass in usability and available hardware/software to make inroads to the mass market. A single, central entity must provide incentives and subsidize others to develop the platform. That motivating force for Linux is unclear. Without such a savior, the same distributed processes that gave Linux many technical advantages will likely limit its appeal in the mass-consumer market.

(Submitted by Don Colombo)

JOIN US

next month for our annual holiday celebration. We will not have a scheduled presentation, instead we invite you to join us for a morning of joy and shared friendship as we celebrate the season. Please bring 'good eats' to supplement our coffee and bagels. Musical entertainment will be graciously provided by Hans Salopek's daughter, Emese.

We also ask that you help us fight hunger in NJ by donat-

ing canned goods. As in years past, we will collect the cans and deliver them to a worthy charity.

From the Desk of David Pogue: **Windows SP2, Step by Step**

Reprinted from *Circuits From N*YTimes.com
Thursday, October 28, 2004

To view this article with images, go to:
http://www.nytimes.com/circuitsemail?8cir

A few weeks ago, I reviewed the Service Pack 2. (See:
http://tech2.nytimes.com/2004/09/23/technology/circuits/23stat.html)
I concluded that this bundle of security patches for Windows XP doesn't go far enough in protecting your PC from viruses and Internet attacks, but it's much better than nothing. (That's true even if you're already using virus, spyware and firewall software, because SP2 also includes a long list of smaller, underlying fortifications against attacks.) Everyone, I wrote, should install it.

I don't regret those words, but I do regret the number of people who wrote to report that SP2 "broke" their computers. They reported everything from programs that no longer work to PC's that won't even start up. When you're talking about 200 million customers, even half a percent of fouled-up installations is a heck of a lot of unhappy campers.

These horror stories leave a lot of people in an upsetting bind. They're afraid to install SP2 because they've heard of the potential for problems, yet they're afraid to leave their computers unprotected by its advances.

I spent more time on today's e-mail newsletter than any I've ever written. It's a step-by-step prep guide for a problem-free SP2 installation. I wrote it up with the assistance of Windows experts, Windows book authors and, for final verification, Microsoft's own Service Pack 2 product manager.

Following these steps makes the upgrade take longer, but will greatly reduce the likelihood that you'll run into trouble with SP2. Clip, save and pass around.

SEVEN STEPS TO A SMOOTH SERVICE PACK 2 INSTALLATION

The best way to avoid problems is to be slow and methodical BEFORE you install SP2. Proceed through this checklist with all the care of an archaeologist unearthing a skeleton.

STEP 1: Check your hard drive for free space.
You need at least 500 megabytes of free space, or SP2 won't even install. (For the speediest installation, defragment your hard drive first, if you know what that means.)

STEP 2: Remove spyware.
Spyware (software that you don't realize you have because it piggybacked on something else you downloaded, like Kazaa) can gum up the works of an SP2 installation. Scan your hard drive using a free program like Ad-Aware (www.lavasoftusa.com) or Spybot Search & Destroy (www.safer-networking.org) to make sure your PC is free of these programs.

STEP 3: Visit the Windows Update Web site.
A preliminary visit to www.windowsupdate.com is an important prerequisite. This Web site will actually interactively inspect your PC to see what condition your copy of Windows is in. If you're missing pieces, they'll be filled in for you -- an important step before the big Service Pack 2 installation.

Click the Express Install link to begin. After a moment of computation, you'll see a list of updates that Microsoft thinks you need, under the heading High Priority Updates. Installing them now will ensure that, when Service Pack 2 comes along, your copy of Windows will be everything the installer expects.

STEP 4: Visit the Web page of your PC manufacturer.
Search for information regarding SP2. It may turn out that your PC won't work with Service Pack 2 unless you first update your BIOS (the built-in

software that controls your keyboard, screen, disk drives, communications, and so on). In that case, you would find, at www.dell.com or www.gateway.com (for example), a BIOS updater program that you're supposed to download and run.

STEP 5: Back up your stuff.
If you can back up your entire hard drive, do so; but at the very least, make safety copies of your photos, email, music, documents, and so on. Think of it this way: Your PC is going in for brain surgery.

STEP 6: Uninstall your virus and firewall programs.
Installing Service Pack 2 on top of outdated utilities can produce two different unpleasant side effects. First, the new Security Center doesn't recognize older versions of these programs. Second, your PC might not even be able to start up after the installation -- which is, you have to admit, something of a drawback. (Later, after the installation, put your virus and firewall programs back -- updated versions, if possible -- one at a time.)

STEP 7: Log off everyone but yourself.
In other words, if you have Fast User Switching turned on, make sure all the other accounts have been signed off. You should now be ready to install SP2 successfully, whether from the Windows Update Web page, a CD that you've ordered, or from the Automatic Updates dialog box that appears on your screen one day.

Finally, another tip, courtesy of author David Karp, my own personal Windows XP guru: If your PC is your life -- or your job, at least -- you may want to take one additional, advanced step: Install a SECOND copy of Windows XP. This arrangement, known by geeks as dual-booting, takes some technical expertise. But it means that you can install SP2 on the duplicate copy of Windows to test your most essential

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Send To: Sara Oderwald, HCC Treasurer, 202 Jacobs Creek Road, Titusville, NJ 08560-1429

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please indicate if this membership is: New ☐ Renewal ☐ Newsletter Only ☐
ANNUAL DUES (please circle one): $25 Single / $30 Family (same-address household) /
$8 Newsletter Only (outside of New Jersey)

PLEASE <u>PRINT</u> THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

First Name _____ **Last Name** _____

Address _____

City_____**State**_____ **Zip Code**_____

Home Phone (_____) _____ **e-mail** _____

<u>Information that will help us help you:</u>

1. **HOW WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HELP THE CLUB ? (check one or more)**

   ☐Club officer ☐Technical advisor ☐Setting up for the meeting ☐Taking club minutes ☐Newsletter ☐Programs
   Other_____

2. **PLEASE TELL US IF YOU HAVE AN AREA OF COMPUTER EXPERTISE?____ IF SO, WHAT IS IT?**
   _____

3. **PLEASE COMMENT ON YOUR INTEREST IN JOINING THE HUNTERDON COMPUTER CLUB**
   _____

Many thanks to the following Club members for their contributions to this month's Newsletter:

Don Colombo * John Gbur * Ilene Shope
Bill Woodall

Special thanks to the **BAGEL CLUB** (coupons below) for generously donating good eats. And continued thanks to **Barbara and Mike Middleton** for ensuring that we always have refreshments available during HCC meetings.

Submissions for articles, cartoons, pictures, or other information pertinent to the club are due to the editor by the **first Friday of each month**. When you e-mail your submission, please be sure to include **HCC Newsletter** in the subject line. Send to:

editor@hunterdoncomputerclub.org