

Newsletter

Volume 12 Issue 9

September 1999

THE NEXT MEETING

HCC will meet on September 25, the fourth Saturday, at Hunterdon Medical Center, auditorium only, so keep on down the hall from the main entrance until you come to the bagel eaters, in the lobby outside the auditorium.

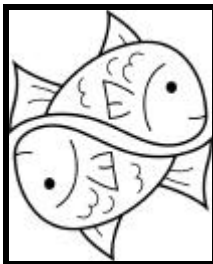
The topic of the month is home networking. Bill Woodall offers to talk about it from the professional point of view and perhaps setup a network before your very eyes, and Jim Russ will go at it from the opposite shore, ask

ing questions a network novice, e.g.

1) Why would I want to home network my computers? and showing

a network system "Home Free"

by Diamond Multimedia, a phone line network which uses your in-home wiring (phone lines) to connect your computers.



Pisces

THE AUGUST MEETING

The regular meeting of HCC was held on Saturday, August 21, 1999, at the Hunterdon Medical Center, Flemington, NJ. President Lon Horsford called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. Guests welcomed included Rosemary Covert, Carol Jeharz and Gregg Andrews. Alvina Sassano joined us for her first meeting, saying she

finds it a handicap not to know something about computers. Rosemary is using both a PC and a Mac. Carol wants to go even further into advanced graphics.

In the **Q and A** section, the September *PC World* magazine was quoted as saying that Windows 95 or 98 should be wiped out once a year and reinstalled. Bill Woodall said that's a terrible idea, losing all your program configurations, settings, etc. He went on to say that most of the members of our club have more experience with computers than most magazine writers.

Ken Jones brought up questions about upgrading to 98. Lon suggested waiting for version 2, and then waiting for the MS ServicePack. Bill W. suggested subscribing to Microsoft's monthly disks which provide patches for all their products.

John Gbur noted that eFax.com gives you free incoming FAX but you pay to send out.

There was no report from the treasurer.

The Secretary mentioned the Ken Gordon show in Edison to-day and Sunday, and reminded people to wear hiking boots if they planned to attend. Joe Burger said it was even better to wear farm clothes fresh from barn chores as this caused people to move away from you and allowed you space at tables.

In his more serious report, V.P. Joe Burger said AOL is up to version 5, and will now allow use of real names, up to 16 characters. AOL now has 18 million users [and still no local access for Hunterdon!] Microsoft wants to combine with

5 other providers to compete with AOL, and accuses AOL of being a monopoly.

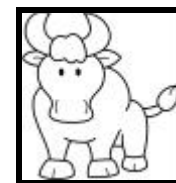
Joe said there is a new virus Win32, the first to work on 95,98 and NT, which destroys the CMOS. It is allegedly set to work on Christmas Day.

AMD has a new chip with better specs than the Pentium II.

Membership chairman Don Colombo reported six calls and six successes with members rejoining.

Web Master Paul Glatstein reported he has put up the list of local ISP's which offer local access numbers.

John Gbur had the best red ticket, and Doris Moore traded her orange ticket for Sierra Cards Plus. Phil Stonesifer added 3 water bottles and various souvenirs from the latest NEC conference, to the raffle supply.



Taurus

THE PROGRAM

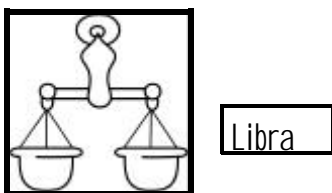
Linux, by Bill Woodall

What is it? An operating system. How do you pronounce it? Accent the Lin as in Linen and sort of swallow the ux. It is an outgrowth of Unix. So what's Unix? An operating

system developed by Bell Labs in the 70's. Unable to sell it, they gave it to colleges, which are still the hotbed of Unix use. Who started Linux? A 21 year old student in Helsinki named Linus Torvalds. He still controls Linux and issues licenses which require users to make any use of the software freely available to everyone else. (Ref. *Wall St Journal* 9/10/99 p.B1.)

Bill displayed 9 CD's of Linux, all different, 4 of which won't run, to demonstrate that there is no standard version. Linux can run on marginal hardware. Bill showed **Dragon** Linux on the big screen. It comes on 7 diskettes and has 12 pages total documentation. It has been maintained by college kids for 20 years. A major feature of Linux is that it is open source, meaning the code is available to anyone. If you like to write programs and get close to the inner working of your machine, you will like Linux. Lon said he thought Linux might chase Microsoft out of the market. Bill said not in our lifetime. Linux has no graphical user interface.

Microsoft has begun to give away some code.



Unix is imbedded in all phone equipment. It was for 15 years Radio Shack's choice for sales terminals. The US government uses it for less important areas. The Hunterdon County library system is based on Unix. The first Unix version came out in 1975, The first version for PC's came in 1983. Networking utilities are built into it.

Asked if it's useful in production, Bill said it is superior for e-mail and most providers have at least one machine running Unix or Linux..

Unix is a commercial operating system, costing thousands of dollars, and offering good technical support. Linux is free or cheap, \$75. For the Red Hat version, with minimal support.

The screen displays Bill showed us were daunting to a person seeing her first Linux code, but now we know what Linux is. Thanks to Bill once more.

EXCERPTS FROM A DESCRIPTION of Red Hat Linux downloaded FROM XOOM

Do you want to unleash the full power of your PC? Tired of needing to upgrade your computer every couple of years? Do you want to own a computer that has all of the power of a full-blown Internet server without the expense of a high-end workstation?

Then look no further! This software is so good that XOOM.com uses RedHat Linux to run its own web site! Linux is a full-blown operating system and comes complete with system utilities, a Graphical User Interface (GUI) similar to Microsoft Windows, hundreds of web utilities, server software, and much more! You can install Linux on the same PC with another, existing operating system. Simply choose which operating system to boot when you turn your PC on. It's that easy! Linux is an "open-source" operating system that was developed by thousands of volunteers around the world. Because the source code is freely distributed between programmers everywhere, literally thousands of applications are available on the Internet which take advantage of this amazing operating system.

Linux has all of the features of a modern operating system, and is constantly being upgraded by developers looking to push the limits of computing. Red Hat Linux 6.0 features:

Built-in Internet application support, including Netscape Communicator browser and mail reader; web, mail, and print server software; and more!

Pre-emptive multitasking for flawless performance; Multithreading for blazing speed;

Graphical User Interface (X-Windows with GNOME) with literally hundreds of FREE applications on special Enhanced Linux Application bonus CD, including spreadsheets, document editors, and more!

C/C++ compiler and Perl installation with WWW programming modules

A printed user's guide to installation and system maintenance.

Not only can you install Linux on your PC without erasing your Microsoft Windows data, you can also download FREE Microsoft Office(R) -compatible applications from the Internet which allow you to read and write Microsoft Word(R) and Microsoft Excel(R) files while running Red Hat Linux! Red Hat Linux 6.0 also comes with the GNOME desktop running on X-Windows, giving you all the comfort of a Windows style interface combined with the power and bug-free reliability of Linux!

Nick Marden

Linux Product Manager >
XOOM.com, Inc

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URL Free Fonts - fun to look at
<http://www.fontaday.com/New/new.htm>

HIGHER LEARNING

By John Warsinski

Joe started the whole thing. It's really his fault.

I met our Vice President, Joe Burger, at the small computer show at the Holiday Inn in P'Burg. He was buying a new motherboard. I had been thinking of upgrading, and saw that one of the vendors had a model which I had been considering. It was a Soyo SY-5EHM, on the approved list from AMD, whose chip I was planning to use. Also, the fact that Joe was buying the same board gave me the push needed to part with my hardly earned cash (3% less than on plastic). I wanted an AMD K6/450 to give me good speed in doing photo retouching, my new passion. Throw in 128 megs of pc100 ram, and the three big ones were covered, the Ben Franklins as well as my desires.

After a couple days of anticipation, while poring over the documentation and checking jumper and switch settings, I had the right vibes to rip off the cover and eviscerate my old machine. The new board almost fell into place. Within about twenty minutes I was connecting the wires and hitting the switch, a whole new world was awaiting. Power on; boot up, black screen, and then the appearance of the message "Windows protection error.... Reboot your machine". No problem, I hit the reset button, the drives groaned a little and everything repeated, only this time no scary message. When the familiar logo appeared, I relaxed. Then My Desktop came on, only it was all grainy in appearance, and in all four corners the words "Safe Mode". For this I paid three hundred dollars?

I had always had a slight error on my sub-divided hard drive, could that be the problem? I began to operate, slicing away useless bits of fluff and oddball junk which tends to accumulate over the years. I tried to start up several times, and always the same sequence. First I'd get the message, then re-boot and get the safe mode. After several hours of ad-

vanced learning and surgery by DOS, I decided to re-install my old board and go into my contemplative mode. Re-installing the board was easy, but I had screwed up the software with my electronic scalpel, and now it would not come up even with the old stuff. Re-install Win95 was the only cure. Fortunately, I always copy the CD onto my hard drive, so with or without a CD-ROM I can always (well almost always) re-install.

Up and running at last! I had to rebuild my set-up to get back onto the net. Where did I put that paper with all the numbers needed to get e-mail, news, etc.? Finally I'm back on the web going to various sites looking for information re my problem.

Buried under several layers in an obscure corner of Microsoft's site, I found a reference to a white paper on the subject of a patch available for Win95 release 2 to make it possible to run on an AMD K6 at faster than 300mhz. It seems that there are some timing loops which get confused at the higher speeds. Operation is erratic at 300mhz, and goes downhill from there. Whoopee!!! Can I be so lucky? The fine print explained that there was no fix either extant or planned for plain old original, no letter, no suffix Win95. It also said that the changes were incorporated into Win98 (surprise, surprise). A trip to AMD's site confirmed that MICROSOFT did indeed have a problem with the higher speeds. Who'd 'a thunk it? All the new machines with the faster chips are shipped with, you guessed it, Win98, and they run just fine.

Since I felt that MS was really responsible for my troubles, I decided to borrow a copy of Win98 and bite the bullet. I installed 98 with my old board, and made sure everything was O.K. before proceeding.

Out with the old, and in with the new. It was even easier the second time around. Connect the wires hit the power switch, and watch the screen stall at "Verifying DMI Pool Data.....". Now it won't even boot from the hard drive. It seems that maybe my old problem, which was ignored by 95, might be a problem in 98, or had I

screwed-up something else? Fortunately, I had made a start-up disk when I installed 98, complete with CD access, and was able to boot to DOS from a floppy.

I started to salvage some stuff, but became exasperated with the tedium. I just decided to reformat, re-divide, copy the CD to my E: drive, and start from square zero (in computers, zero is the first digit). Everything went quite smoothly, 98 will install in about 25 minutes from a hard drive. In a flash (comparatively), I had a fresh new machine running windows 98 and NOTHING ELSE! All was not yet rosy. While checking around for my settings, I suddenly could not find the "Sounds" icon in Control Panel. I had sounds, but could not alter or re-assign them without the icon to access the utility. I tried several "fixes", and engaged in several hours of advanced learning, but nothing worked. There was no "Sounds" icon. I also don't remember seeing the "System" icon anymore. Could I have clicked on an "OK" before reading the ENTIRE message? Naaaa.

As I said, 98 will install in about 25 minutes from a hard drive. This time, everything I could check seemed to be O. K. All icons are present and operational. I began to rebuild my naked machine. Over the years I had archived most of the programming, but my data went the way of '95, at faster than 300mhz.

Today, I am back up and running, still mostly naked (the machine). I can edit photos so fast that it scares me, I am happy as a pig in, I am even considering another 128 megs of memory. It is amazing what a simple little upgrade and four or five "spare" evenings will do for an aging machine. Did I mention that I also bought a new AGP video card?

If you wonder how I learned so much about computers without any formal training.....**DON'T ASK!**

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Lon Hosford

Linux was laid on the line at our last meeting. Distinguished member Bill Woodall clarified the view of Linux by showing us how it looks.

I could see faces of some members newer to computers expressing "why would I want to be doing this?". I also smelled a small but unthreatening split among some more technical members as to Linux's importance. Well we will see.

We thank Bill for his contribution to our ongoing education.



Aquarius

And now for at least one more installment of Flash Hosford in "Flash's Microsoft Magical Mystery Tour"

Flash recovering from a mental drain in a recent visit to the planet Microsoft (bigger than Jupiter) learned that Ming has persuaded one of Flash's financial benefactors to switch from MS SQL Server 6.5 to MS SQL Server 7.0.

Flash faced with a loss of big bucks had to quickly change plans. MS SQL 7.0 had to replace SQL 6.5 to complete very complicated work necessary to obtain funds. Reading the 7.0 installation documentation first, Flash soon became mentally ill.

Working in a daze, Flash contacted the Microsoftian Coneheads for support. Not clear if he was dreaming or checking in at heaven, he could hear the clicking of computer keys as he poured out personal data about himself over the voice line.

Over 15 minutes and three people were

required to get Flash's data into the computer. Flash nearly dead from waiting and answering questions was temporarily revived with a miracle at the ordeal's end. Flash had qualified for three free support incidents for 12 months.

Later Flash will learn that the free support was part of a Microsoftian service he pays big bucks to have.

Soon Flash was connected to a Microsoftian Conehead specializing in MS SQL 7.0 who proceeded to interrogate Flash for identification before providing aid. Speaking with a heavy mid-eastern accent and at the rate of ball bearings falling on a concrete floor, the conehead revealed the possibility to install both MS SQL 6.5 and MS SQL 7.0 on the same computer and have menu choice to switch between them.

Still in a dream state, Flash proceeded to the task of installing this dual arrangement. After testing and other like fumbling, everything worked according to the good Microsoftian fairy. Or did it.....?

Stay tuned next time when you learn if Flash passed into a parallel world where you can get support that results in successful solutions or if Flash is wandering in a semi-conscious state through a computer junk yard poisoned with Ming's phosphor ion ray guns (VGA monitors out of their cases and turned backwards).

Webmaster for "Information Technology Learning Dictionary"
at www.defineit.com =20

Web site: www.hosfordusa.com

Prez Hunterdon County Computer Club
www.woodall.com/doshug.html

May many happy bits flow your way!

DIAL UP NETWORKING FOR DUMMIES

See that icon for Dial up Networking? Everybody said, "Don't touch it". Then I installed a downstairs computer and wanted to read email. It only took 10 calls to Prolog, my kindly provider, with 10 different kindly techs, to make it work. Nothing to it. Click My Computer, click Dial up Networking, click new connection, click Prolog. On a blackboard, I mean BLACK, enter your user name from when you first signed up with your ISP, then your password, don't forget ENTER after each one, then type PPP, enter, and F7, who knows why, then close Prolog, close My Computer, open your mail program. Now you know what that icon is for. The upstairs machine is not set to anything special, it is turned off, and the downstairs machine gets the messages from Prolog. Maybe after the September meeting I will write Networking for Dummies. ehs



Leo

Iomega- the Last Word

The Iomega Zip Drive is "just another hard drive" and that's what's so great about it. It just works, to save to and retrieve from, to save data on or install programs, to store all that stuff you download from the net to look at some day. I had the bad luck to get the click of death on my first one. John Warsinski says they can be repaired at home, but I didn't know that, and sent it back, in line with Iomega's announcement that they would replace any machine that clicked.

I was using the zip drive so much that I bought a replacement right away, not knowing when one might come in the mail. Presently the one I bought clicked, and I sent that back too. By that time Iomega had sent a new one which I installed and which is still running.

Meanwhile I installed a CD-R drive, thinking that would be a more reliable extra drive than the Zips had proved to be. Wrong. It may be reliable storage, but it is terribly slow to retrieve anything from. The fact that it holds a ridiculous number of files is impressive at first, then aggravating, as I wait for the machine to read and read and read. Sometimes it reads the entire disk before it will open a disk on the drive with the next letter. It is also tricky to learn to use, and to know when it is ok to remove it if you want to write more later, or if you want other CD drives to read your data disk. With the Zip drive there is none of this. If you can manage with 100 Mb disks, use a Zip drive and forget the CD until they make it easier to use. With the Zip drive you only have to remember to use sub directories, keep the drive on a flat surface, and don't move it while it's running. And there's a true story of a man whose Zip drive was in the tower on the floor and shot a disk at his shin every time he turned his machine off.

Well, long after I returned the second clicker, Iomega called and asked if I wanted a refund or a replacement. I thought a refund would be best, but the very polite voice said she couldn't issue a refund unless I gave her a definite purchase date, which I had long since forgotten, so we parted, and she sent that remarkable letter which said it was Iomega's intent to delight every customer but sad to say in my case this had not happened.

And now, long, long after the return, another pleasant voice called to check

my address and said she would take care of the refund right away, and so she did. A check for \$99.95 arrived, without discussion of what I paid, might have paid, or purchase date. Iomega has another "delighted" customer, and I am using the Zip drive more and more and the CD-R less and less.



Virgo

PC POSTAGE – stamps on line At **estsamp.com** and **Stamps.**, you can pay for postage with a credit card, then print on your mail. Estamp requires a device plugged into the back of your computer, but Stamps.com does not. Both charge about 10% of the postage, as a fee. Pitney Bowes and Neopost are trying out their systems and hope to be approved by the USPS presently.

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Computer Volunteers
ALL MEMBERS

IF YOU KEEP A THING SEVEN YEARS

In PC Computing for April '92, Dvorak and Seymour argue about Windows 3.1.

D: I don't use Windows all the time but the way things are going I'm going to be forced into it. I haven't switched because I really like the speed of my machine and I hate to sacrifice it for a few programs. And there aren't many interesting applications except niche graphics.

S: I like the snap in DOS too. You just don't get it with Windows, even on a 486. ...In my experience, very few power users in corporate America stay in Windows all the time, but most at least have it on their machines.

D: I hope you don't start raving about Word for Windows.

S: Well, Word for Windows 2.0 is a sensational product. But I love the clean screens and relentless focus on the words that you get when you use DOS word processors.

D: Not only that but there is a huge variety of great writing utilities that work best under DOS.

SWindows.... Is a pretty good memory manager, especially if you toss out ... Smart Drive and install 386MAX. I like how Windows lets you use hot keys to get in and out of DOS. I like the memory tricks so much that I now have 12 MB of main memory in my PC, so I don't run into memory problems when I want to open several DOS programs at once. .. Windows does have advantages, even for DOS fanatics.

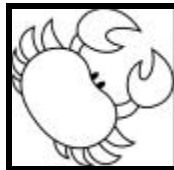
D: ... the OS/2 faithfuls will tell you that Windows is a mess compared with OS/2... I still wonder what corporation can afford to upgrade its operating systems and software just to move up a

S:....I'm skeptical that most office workers want or need what Windows offers.

D: ...Memory at \$40 a megabyte is dirt cheap.

D: ...Novell is shipping DR DOS with its networks which means that a lot of machines will be running DOS for a long time.

S: ...a good recommendation is to stay in DOS if you do relatively simple work at your PC and you already have apps that you know and like. If you're the rare bird who wants to pipeline stuff back and forth, or stick pictures in your spread sheets, if you like a Windows app that's clearly the best of its kind on any platform, such as Excel.... Get Windows 3.1 And forget about OS/2.



Cancer

Saving an ACCESS data base

When I asked the club loop members for help in saving the club mailing list that's too big for a floppy, several people said PKZip and WinZip will zip and save to multiple floppies.

Paul Glattstein recommends a \$12 shareware program called RZSPLIT.

Bill Woodall sent detailed instructions related specifically to Access

412.shareware program called maybe it's compact) which makes a copy of the database into a new file sans any deleted

Access. "First compress the database. That's I under Database> Utilities> Compress (or Compact)..That makes a new copy of the data base in a new file, which may make the database small enough.

Otherwise, open the database, select the table and export just the table. It may work better to export the table as another format, such as Excel. Most other formats are significantly more efficient on storage space. "

ehs

New E Mail

Ken Jones is now krjones@goes.com

Eleanor Cole ecole@blast.net

Bill Dearborn billd206@erold.com



End of Summer

Members Ted and Jean Scharenberg and Linda Canulette have joined the teaching staff of the Senior Center Computer classes. Our waiting list continues to grow.

LIGHT BULB JOKES

----- Forwarded by
William Dearborn/

Q: How many Windows programmers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Four hundred and seventy-two. One to write WinGetLightBulbHandle, one to write WinQueryStatusLightBulb, one to write WinGetLightSwitchHandle...

Q: How many technical support personnel does it take to change a light bulb?

A: We have an exact copy of the light bulb here, and it seems to be working fine. Can you tell me what kind of system you have? OK.

Now, exactly how dark is it? OK. There could be four or five things wrong... Have you tried the light switch?

Q: How many managers does it take to change a light bulb?

Q: How many Microsoft technicians does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Three. Two to hold the ladder and one to screw the bulb into the faucet.

Q: How many MIS guys does it take to change a light bulb?

A: MIS has received your request concerning your hardware problem and has

assigned you request service number 39,712. Please use this number for any future reference to this light bulb issue.

Q: How many C++ programmers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: You're still thinking procedurally. A properly designed light bulb object would inherit a change method from a generic light bulb class, so all you'd have to do is send a light-bulb-change message.

Q: How many developers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: The light bulb works fine in my office ...

Q: How many IBM types does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Just one, provided there's an engineer around to explain how to do it.

A: 100. Ten to do it, and 90 to write document number GC7500439-0001, Multitasking Incandescent Source System Facility, of which 10% of the pages state only "This page intentionally left blank", and 20% of the definitions are of the form "A consists of sequences of non-blank characters separated by blanks".

Q: How many IBM CPU's does it take to turn on a light bulb?

A: 33 - 1 to process the instruction and 32 to process the interrupt.

Q: How many Apple and IBM nuts does it take to change a lightbulb ?

A: An infinite number: nothing useful gets done while they're arguing. Finally a disgusted generic computer user (who will use any type that is in front of him) gets up and changes the bulb, elbowing the participants aside. The size of the crowd arguing seems to be a function of time, although whether or not the function is exponential is not known.

Q: How many Apple employees does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A: Seven. One to screw it in and six to design the tee-shirts.

Q: How many Apple programmers does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Only one, but why bother ? Your light socket will just be obsolete in six months anyway.

Q: How many Microsoft employees does it take to change a lightbulb ?

A: It burned out? You must be using a non-standard socket.

A: None. They just write it up as a new and useful feature.

Hunterdon Computer Club

Next Meeting Saturday, September 25, 1999

Hunterdon Medical Center

Rt 31 Flemington NJ

8:30 A.M. To Noon

Bill Woodall and Jim Russ present Home Networking

Guests Welcome– all ages, all interests

Guests Welcome – all ages all levels

HCC NEWSLETTER

HUNTERDON COMPUTER CLUB

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