North Texas

NTPCUG

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D E A D L I N E
Copy deadline for January
North Texas PC NEWS:
Friday, January 2, 2004

Meeting Dates:
December 20, 3rd Saturday
January 17, 3rd Saturday
February 21, 3rd Saturday

In This Issue...
Articles and Announcements:

Special Items:

Submit Newsletter articles to: *newsletter@ntpcug.org*
Visit the North Texas PC Users Group Web page:
http://www.ntpcug.org

Submitting Articles and Stories to the Newsletter

The North Texas PC NEWS is now on-line—and it's more important than ever that the NTPCUG newsletter contain timely and informative content of interest to our members. We will welcome pertinent "How to do it" articles, book reviews, software reviews and other materials that would be helpful and interesting to NTPCUG members.

For prospective authors, there are a few, but very important, "Do's and Don'ts" involved in article submission to the newsletter, first of which is accuracy. Be sure of your facts (unless you report them as "rumors") and always remember to report the source(s) as well.

Please don't submit articles that are taken from another source without crediting the source in your article, i.e., if you excerpt something from the Microsoft (or other) Web site, please state that in the article.

Remember to "sign" your article/ story at the bottom. A simple "by Your Name" will be quite helpful, particularly if the editors have questions or suggestions about the story.

Please don't submit the article or story in HTM or .PDF format. It can make editing and formatting quite time consuming and difficult.

We can accept MS Word 97, most WordPerfect files and ASCII .TXT files. The absolutely latest version of any word processor may not convert gracefully to our format and may have to be rejected as a result.

Graphics should be submitted in one of the "standard" formats, i.e., .TIF, .EPS, .GIF, .PCX or .JPG files. While "native" CorelDraw (CDR) files are also OK, other graphics editor native formats may not be convertible.

Again, we want your articles and thank you in advance for your input and co-operation.

Finally, submit as e-mail attachments to: *newsletter@ntpcug.org*, or to *reagana@ntpcug.org*

Reagan Andrews

PROGRAMS & PRESENTATIONS . . . *Linda Moore*

No December Giant Vendor Raffle!

Linda Moore, NTPCUG President-Elect, announced in early December that the planned vendor raffle would have to be postponed until January or March, 2004.

Bill Parker, NTPCUG President, announced in his *Prez Sez* column that the December Business Meeting would have some items to be given away in a raffle in addition to free food for members remaining for the 12:30 business meeting.

Last Chance for NTPCUG Members to get Great Prices— PowerQuest to Close UG Support Operation?

Gene Barlow, long time friend of the NTPCUG and UG Representative for Power-Quest, warned that the PQ user group support effort may end December 31, 2003, following PowerQuest's acquisition by Symantec.

He did add that significant price reductions on PQ products would be available until December 31, including special holiday offers.

"To check out our latest products and great prices, go to:
http://www.ugr.com/holidays.html."

To take advantage of these disappearing prices, complete the order form including the special code of **UGXMS03**. Act now before Symantec turns off these great user-group discount prices.

DECEMBER 20

Prez Sez Dec. 2003

In December we will have free run of the campus since no classes are meeting. We also may use some different classrooms that have projectors built in since the A/V staff will not be working that day to deliver projectors to us. Make sure to get a room schedule when you check in, to see if your normal room assignments have changed.

A real 'Spam Killer'

Got Spam? Most anyone that uses email these days has more spam than they want. Do you have a NTPCUG email address? It is one of the best ways to eliminate spam, and that makes it a great member benefit! **Doug Gorrie** manages our email server, and he is relentless about combating spam.

We have much more flexibility than the average ISP in being able to block spam. In addition to content filtering, Doug blocks whole ranges of ip addresses from countries where much of the spam is generated.

Doug also goes the extra mile in scanning the rejected emails to see if any "good" email was blocked.

Establish an NTPCUG e-mail account

Any member can establish a user group email account, e.g. *mailto:yourname@ntpcug.org*. It is easy to use this simultaneously with an email account you have from your ISP. To request an account, email to *mailto:postmaster@ntpcug.org*. Our standard practice is to have the address be *first.last*, e.g. *mailto:bill.parker@ntpcug.org*.

Doug will soon be installing an upgrade to our mail server that will allow users to access their mail from a web browser. This makes it a bit more convenient to check mail when you are traveling.

User group email addresses may not be a well-known member benefit, but in this age of relentless spam it is becoming more valuable all the time. If you need a testimonial to the effectiveness of spam fighting on these accounts, just ask **Larry Linson.**

'Converging services' programs

This month two SIGs have programs on "converging services". Communications SIG welcomes ICG Telecommunications who will discuss their service for voice and data over the internet. The PDA SIG will discuss the Treo 600 pda/phone/browser.

Prez Sez... Ctd.

No December Giant Vendor Raffle

We will not be doing the Giant Vendor Raffle that Linda Moore had planned this month. We will have it as soon as she is able to get everything together. In the meantime, the business meeting will be the venue for raffling a number of prizes in December.

Another NTPCUG bonus

As another bonus, NTPCUG will provide FREE FOOD at the December business meeting. (Lets see how many people actually read to the end of the column to get the word!) If you would like to bring some Christmas munchies to share with the group, that will make the day even more festive.

Have a great Holiday Season, and bring a friend to the meeting!

Bill Parker

NTPCUG Member News

By Linda Moore

At the Microsoft NTPCUG launch for Office 2003, a member asked about Microsoft's Mindshare website, *http://www.microsoft.com/mindshare/,* and he wanted to know more about the website.

The Mindshare website is divided into three sections. The 1st and 3rd sections are open for anyone to access. The 1st section is for finding a user group or a user group event. The second section is for an NTPCUG officer to request product for product reviews and to then submit those product reviews.

The last section is provided so that user group members can obtain information about chats with product managers, demos, newsletter, special offers, product support, product trials & downloads, etc. More features are being added every week.

Here are interesting links to check out:

Microsoft Insider Offers & Rebates:

http://www.microsoft.com/insider/rebates/

Mindshare Special Offers:

http://www.microsoft.com/mindshare/offers.mspx

Mindshare Trials & Downloads:

http://www.microsoft.com/insider/trials/default.asp

It certainly pays to join NTPCUG.

Ann Titsworth and her husband have been coming to our meetings for a number of months. Ann finally decided to join at the November meeting and guess what.

She won one of the Office 2003 Pro ($540 incl. sales tax) software packages. This is just another potential benefit of being a NTPCUG member.

Other big winners at the Microsoft presentation were **Tom Blackwell**, **Jesse Hastcoat**, **Larry Linson**, **Rodney Loos**, **Lee Lowrie**, **Barbara Meery**, **Thomas Melena**, **Joe Merle**, **Bill Parker**, **Ralph Swanson**, **Ray Szczesniak**, and **Henry Williams** were also big raffle prize-winners.

Joe Merle must be carrying a 4-leaf clover because he also won last month's raffle for the 5-day seminar on counter-hacking ($1,1950). Marvin Brooke won the other 5-day seminar.

NTPCUG would like to extend a warm welcome to all of the new members, who joined since the October meeting. The new members are:

- ❖ **Lewis Hall,**
- ❖ **Stuart Potter**,
- ❖ **Ken Penrod**,
- ❖ **Ralph Swanson**
- ❖ **Ann Titsworth**

So, spread the word about NTPCUG to your friends and associates. Better yet, invite them to come with you to the next meeting.

Linda Moore
President – Elect
Linda.Moore@ntpcug.org

nik Sharpener Pro! Complete

By James Dunn

You've worked hard with that masterpiece photo. It's color corrected, spotted, cropped and ready to commit to hard copy. Stop, before you push the print button, there's one last thing to consider, which is sharpening. Sharpening should always be the very last thing done to a photo. You should have sharpening turned off in your camera or scanner. After all of the editing is finished, then you can use the *Sharpener Pro* tool to apply sharpening. The Sharpener Pro provides the user with the ability to sharpen any image easily and quickly.

Sharpener Pro is a software plug-in for *Adobe PhotoShop*, version 4+ or for *Corel PHOTO-Paint*, version 8.0+. What Sharpener Pro does is to sharpen images. This plug-in application is devoted strictly to the task of sharpening images in either PhotoShop or applications able to accept PhotoShop plug-ins, which now includes about all of the major photo editing applications.

Digital sharpening filters rely on a visual trick that's been known for hundreds of years. It seems that the human eye is very good at shape recognition. Our eyes depend on edge contrast to help define each object. To make objects appear more in focus and better-defined, artists exaggerate the transitions at the edges, by applying a halo or black border around the object. Also a second lighter halo is drawn around the first. If done subtly enough, the viewer will

not notice these halos. This can be highly effective, at tricking people to see stronger boundaries and thus making the object appear in better focus.

Many image editing programs, like PhotoShop, Print Shop Pro and Corel PhotoPaint and others come with a built-in filter with the counter-intuitive name of Unsharp Mask (USM). It sounds like it would do the opposite, but USM is one of the best sharpening filters we have to increase the apparent sharpness of photo images.

The USM filter uses the same visual trick that artists use. USM filters detect the edges of objects and adjust the densities of pixels around the edges thus increasing the apparent contrast at the border of the object. Of course it's not quite that easy. An oil painter knows just where to put the halos. However, creating software to do edge detection in a photograph is no mean feat. Unfortunately, every object gets equal treatment and the USM effect can sometimes look "kind of funny". Another problem is that any noise or grain in the image will also end up enhanced.

When too much sharpening is applied, the printed image can have a 'hard' look, or even worse, the objects may have a discernable "halo" around them. Both are quite objectionable. Where USM is concerned, it is best to err on the side of less rather than more. It's almost impossible for a mere computer program to get this "right". Because of this, USM has several manual adjustments that the user must set to control the effect of the filter. These settings can be quite confusing.

These are examples of nik Sharpener Pro mentioned later in the article. Below, Left, is Example 2A and Example 2B is below, Right. The lowNewsletter resolution doesn't do these justice.

For instance, PhotoShop calls these settings the pixel radius, the threshold and the amount. The exact settings you should use for each image

depends greatly on the size of the print image, as well as, the resolution of the print. It also depends on the quality of the original image, as well as, the inherent contrast of the image. The required settings can vary quite a lot.

What's worse, is that it is very difficult to judge on a monitor screen, the effect of USM on a print made with a different resolution and with inks that may differ from the phosphors of the monitor. Most of the time, the repetitive trial and error method is the only way to adjust the USM mask for the best effect, so that it is subtle enough that people will not notice. Because of this, a lot of people just don't use USM.

This situation becomes worse when the trial and error method is impossible, because you are sending the image off to a publisher, who will do the actual printing. The first time you see the final effect, may be when you see it in print!

To solve these problems and to help photographers get the best USM effectiveness, the folks at nik multimedia, *http://www.nikmultimedia.com/*, have created Sharpener Pro, which is a plug-in for PhotoShop and programs compatible with PhotoShop plug-in architecture.

The nik programmers have devised a methodology, which allows users to control how much sharpening they apply yet still have enough control to fine tune the result, if the user so desires. The sharpening methodology is based on parameters, such as:

- ❖ Personal taste,
- ❖ Output size & resolution,
- ❖ Viewing distance,
- ❖ Original image quality
- ❖ End destination, such as web, inkjet or offset press.

The personal taste option is controlled by the use of a Personal Profile. The three predefined profiles are: Anna, John, and Zap. Anna represents less aggressive, John normal and Zap more aggressive. For instance, you might use Anna when the subject is a close up of a woman and you don't want every pore in her skin as sharp as a tack. Anyway, you get the idea.

Output & Resolution are set in inches and dpi. The viewing distance settings are: Book, Small Box, Large Box, Small Poster, and Large Poster. These represent the average distance a viewer of the image would ordinarily stand away from the image. For instance, Book is about 12 inches, the distance you would hold a book away from your eyes.

The settings for Image source are: APS, Small Format Slide, Middle Format Slide, Large Transparency, Digital Camera (low range), Digital Camera (mid range), Digital Camera (high end), Scan (low range), Scan (mid range) and, Scan (high end).

The image quality settings are: bad, below average, average, above average and, good. By defining all these parameters, the nik program decides how much USM to apply. In addition, there is an AutoScan function, which uses some artificial intelligence routines to scan the original image to determine some of these parameters, such as image source and quality. The AutoScan feature displays it's findings on the screen, but you can, override it's suggestions. There are a lot of other features, such as batch processing, hue protection, and special logic in the program to detect foliage and reduce USM in that area only.

[Ed. Note: due to limitations in newsletter production, much of the visual impact of the following examples will be highly reduced. James may include high resolution graphics in a separate review article on the NTPCUG Website.]

How does it look? I have two examples for you. The image labeled Example1A is a digital photo of my son's new puppy dog – before sharpening. Example 1B is with nik Sharpener pro using the web settings and the Anna profile. Example1C is the same except with the John profile and Example1D is with the Zap profile. I think most

Example 2C

people would agree that 1D is a little too much sharpening. 1B or 1C is probably the best depending on your personal preference.

Example2A was rezed (resized) down from a high pixel count scan from a 35mm negative to the same size as Example1. Once again 2A is the original. Example 2B is with nik sharpener Pro with the web sharpener and the John profile. Example 2C, however was done with nik Sharpener Pro's Inkjet with autoscan sharpener, also with John profile. It's appearance is very close to Example 2B. Bear in mind that this is before printing. You would need to see the printed hard copy to judge it accurately. Come to the December meeting and see it in person.

The results are excellent and more importantly, easily obtainable on the first try.

One thing you should keep in mind is that sharpening will not save a poorly focused picture. We've all seen the movies where the spies use a satellite image to read the tag number of a bad guy's car. It takes a piece of mush and renders it perfectly readable. That only works in the movies. Plug-ins like this can only do so much. But if used properly, Sharpener Pro can take a good picture and make it even better. If you want to get it right the first time, then try Sharpener Pro. Currently, you can download a trial demo copy at the nik website, ***http://www.nikmultimedia.com/***.

There are three editions of Sharpener Pro, which are *Complete*, *Inkjet* and *Home*. Sharpener Pro Complete retails for $329.95, but the street price is $279.95. The inkjet edition retails for $169.95, but the street price is $149.95. The home edition retails for $79.95, but the street price is $69.95. The different versions are subsets of the Complete version. Needless to say that street prices can vary, so do a Google search on the product name to get the latest prices.

The NTPCUG has special pricing available for members. See the NTPCUG Website for details.

The nik Sharpener Pro Complete edition is designed for photographic, graphic design, and print professionals. This edition offers 7 sharpening calculation engines for all print processes for inkjet, continuous toning (photographic, laser, dye-sub, and LED), offset, and Internet images. The user can:

  ❖ Sharpen images for any print size,

Example 1A is above befrore sharpening with nik Sharpener Pro. After the sharpening operation, Example 1B is shown below. Please remember that subtle differences in image quality tend to disappear in this newsletter.

  ❖ Sharpen based on the viewing distance of the image,

  ❖ Receive warnings when images have insufficient detail (or low dpi),

  ❖ Sharpen based on the viewing distance of the image, or

  ❖ View the "Real Resolution" clarity index of an image.

The inkjet edition offers the same technology and features provided in the complete edition of Sharpener Pro, but it includes only three calculation engines for Inkjet printing and Internet images. This version is for anyone who prints using an inkjet printer and wants more options when sharpening their images. The user can sharpen images for any print size, receive warnings when images have insufficient detail (or low dpi), sharpen based on the viewing distance of the image, and view the "Real Resolution" clarity index of an image.

The award winning sharpening technology of Sharpener Pro Home edition, is for home inkjet printers and for online photo print services like *http://www.shutterfly.com/, http://www.Ofoto.com/*, and *http://www.Snapfish.com/*. The user can sharpen images for inkjet print sizes up to 8.5" x 11", while sharpening based on the printing dpi of your printer. You can sharpen your photos for online printing services quickly and easily for print sizes, which includes 2" x 3", 4" x 6", 5" x 7", and 8" x 10" photos. See nik's web site mentioned above for a more complete list of program it is compatible with.

If you are interested in sharpening your images, I will be doing a demo of this program in the Digital Photography SIG on December 20. I will also be showing how to sharpen only selective areas of your images using these tools. See you there.

James Dunn
NTPCUG Digital Photography SIG Leader
Jdunn@ImagesbyJamesDunn.com

Example 1C is shown below, Left, and Example 1D is seen below, Right.

Personality Characteristics in Digital Photography

by Reagan Andrews

[This article is a result of a conversation with James Dunn, Leader of the Digital Photography SIG after the November NTPCUG meeting. It is written with the user who is becoming serious about painting with light (photography) and not aimed at casual, record-keeping users. It is not filled with illustrative graphics for two reasons: First is characteristic of the media, a newsletter, that includes real constraints on graphic file size that can be accommodated; and, secondly the very subtle nature of the subject matter discussed.]

Personality: *distinctive character or qualities of a person, often as distinct from others.*

Persona: *aspect of the personality as shown to or perceived by others.*

Those are the dictionary definitions of two character descriptions very important, but usually unappreciated, in either film or digital photography. Each is inherent to the photographic process.

For purposes of this brief note, I'll look at three areas where "personality" has substance: the camera itself, the lens on the camera and the media (film or CCD/CMOS sensor) in the camera. Each of these is important in camera selection and use.

Camera Personality First

Start with the camera first. Every camera has its own personality characteristics and different personalities will appeal to different users. That is, the camera that's really at home in my hands might feel clumsy and difficult to another user's hands. What I look for is "feel" and control location. If I can't hold the camera comfortably and find the controls easily without repeatedly looking for them, the camera won't be appropriate for me. (Yes, I know the user can "learn" the control locations over time, but it is still a matter of the user accommodating to the camera.)

Example: I have two (old) 35 mm SLR's, an Olympus OM-1 and a Nikon F2, both of which are very good cameras and both of which have their own distinct personality in terms of control location and use characteristics. The Nikon is much heavier than the Olympus, and has a very loud shutter and mirror-return as opposed the Olympus' light weight and very quiet shutter and mirror-return operation. I prefer to use the Nikon on a tripod for posed portraits and landscapes, but use the Olympus for unobtrusive, candid people shots.

Neither has autofocus—for which I am quite grateful. Each also has built-in light metering, but neither of the cameras' meters is terribly accurate for anything other than daylight and relatively simple scenes.

Both require me to think about what I'm doing.

You might think from the above that I'm wedded to antiques in a sort of photographic *Luddism*. Perhaps. Perhaps not.

What I do have are two cameras with bodies and lenses that I know well. I know the "personalities" of each of the lenses and the films that I use with both. I know that the Zuiko lenses on the Olympus don't display the edge contrast I see in the Nikkor lenses on the Nikon, but do give better tonal range in some settings as a result.

Let's take this to Digital

Looking at most recent digital cameras, users will notice that almost all come with 3X to 6X optical zoom lenses ranging from moderate wide angle to telephoto capabilities. Here's the rub with zoom lenses, "personality" can shift as effective focal length shifts across the range. Granted, modern aspherical optics have "corrected" a significant amount of such shifting, but it is still a factor.

If at all possible, the prospective buyer should be allowed experience with the camera and lens combination being considered. The buyer should spend enough time with the camera (and manual) to be both comfortable and familiar with controls and operation.

Preferably, he or she should spend time doing the type of photography intended for the camera and make a number of prints from each of the modes available, i.e., TIFFs, JPEGs and/or RAWs at varying degrees of resolution. I describe using the three major file formats because each will have its own personality in large prints.

Another factor enters here

The camera computer and its image handling algorithms are another important issue in considering personality. Users will usually have opportunity to make adjustments in degree of "sharpness" ranging from somewhat soft for portraits to enhanced edge contrast/sharpness for scenics and or close-up nature photography or product shots.

This can be a significant advantage over film—if handled correctly. Yet it does give the users one more aspect to consider in personality control. Some of the most breathtaking landscapes I've seen (Ansel Adams and Edward Weston) are razor sharp with extreme tonal range.

On the other hand, I've seen equally breathtaking landscapes that are soft and almost diffuse in quality, particularly some scenes from old southern plantation houses with mists over the rivers and bayous. Same goes for portraits, soft can be good, sharp can be better, all depending on the mood and intent.

With film, the user has to depend on lenses or filters to make the image quality shift. After the fact softening could be done in the darkroom with a crumpled cigarette wrapper or glass plate smeared with Vase-

line or similar. (It really wasn't the same although it could approximate a soft-focus lens.)

Media personality

In spite of the advantages of digital over film described above, once the user has purchased a digital camera, he or she is stuck with the CCD/CMOS sensor in the camera. That's either an advantage or a drawback, depending on the user's perspective.

The advantage is that the user grows to "know" the characteristics of the camera's sensor and can (hopefully) predict the camera's behavior in a variety of light conditions.

One problem inherent to the solid-state sensor is fact that effective ISO rating is a function of amplification. The CCD/CMOS sensor doesn't change. The image is electronically amplified to add higher ISO numbers.

All about ISO numbers

ISO ratings are a measurement of film or CCD/ CMOS sensor sensitivity to light with higher numbers reflecting higher speed. ISO is a numeric scale established by the International Organization for Standardization and is roughly equivalent to the earlier ASA/ DIN ratings. ISO is independent of camera type/size. The higher the number, the faster the film or higher the sensor sensitivity to a given amount of light. Typical values range from 20 (slow) to 1000+ (fast).

What this really means to the photographer is that less light is necessary to capture a good image than a lower/ slower ISO rating would require.

In digital cameras, the higher effective ISO numbers require higher signal amplification and higher amplification in solid-state devices increases electronic "noise" as a result. Canon made a recent shift from CCD sensors to CMOS sensors in the new *Rebel* digital SLR camera, perhaps to take advantage of a lower noise level at higher effective ISO ratings.

"Experts" for several years have extolled the superiority of CCD sensors over less expensive CMOS sensors and inferred that CMOS sensors were relegated to low-level, inexpensive digital cameras. That may be, but the new Canon Rebel is definitely not a low-level, inexpensive machine at $995.

!!! Mark Your Calendar !!!

Future Newsletter Deadlines and Meeting Dates

Please Note: The December meeting will be on December 20 at Building "C" on the North Lake Community College in Irving, TX.

Our main meeting presentations [and most SIGs] will be on the **third Saturday** of each month. The **newsletter deadline** each month will be **fifteen days before** the main meeting. See the schedule below at right for a listing of those dates.
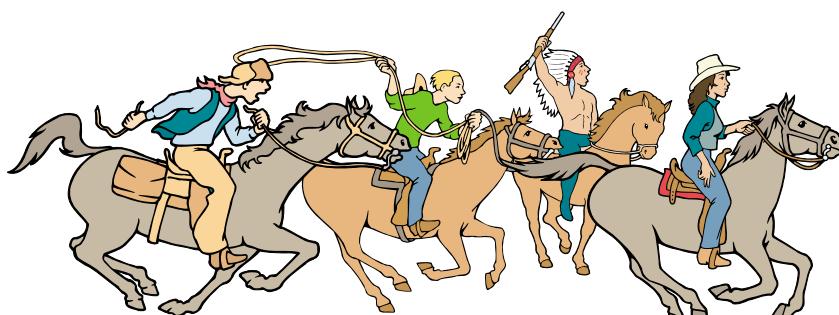
NTPCUG Members are really anxious to see the latest Newsletter Exchange issues...

Newsletter Deadline	Meeting Date
December 5	December 20 3rd Sat
January 2, 2004	January 17, 3rd Sat
February 6	February 21, 3rd Sat.

Off-Site SIGs

The North Texas Microsoft Developers SIGs Beginning Visual Basic, Advanced Visual Basic, Access, and Application Developers Issues SIGs) will meet the **second** Saturday of each month at Microsoft Corporation's Building #1 located at 7000 State Highway 161 in Irving, Texas.

Up-to-date Information

Make it a habit to check our Web site at *http://www.ntpcug.org* for any last minute changes. Keep informed through our Web site.

The Perfect Gift!

Looking for a last-minute gift that's quick, easy and keeps on giving for the entire year? Take a tip from Doug Gorrie and consider giving a one-year membership in the North Texas PC Users Group. This is an especially appropriate gift for a friend or relative who is new to computing and interested in learning how to use and enjoy the PC.

Point out the Genealogy SIGs to people who are collecting information about their families, tell friends how much the Internet SIGs can help in easing their way into really using the Web, and the benefits of friendly, early computer lessons in the Introduction to the PC SIG.

More experienced users would appreciate value of vendor presentations in making important software and hardware decisions during the year.

If you have a friend or relative who constantly "borrows" your copy of the latest *North Texas PC News*, a gift membership might be especially welcome.

Doug

Every Member
NTPCUG
Get a New Member

Humor Line

A rich millionaire throws a massive party for his 50th birthday. During this party, he grabs the microphone and announces to his guests that down in the garden of his mansion he has a swimming pool with two great white sharks in it.

"I will give anything of mine to the man who swims across that pool."

So the party continues with no events in the pool until SUDDENLY, there is a great splash and all the guests of the party run to the pool to see what has happened.

In the pool a man is swimming as hard as he can and fins come out of the water and jaws are snapping and this guy just keeps on going. The sharks are gaining on him and this guy reaches the end and gets out of the pool, tired and soaked. The millionaire grabs the microphone and says, "I am a man of my word. Anything of mine I will give: my Ferraris, my house, absolutely anything, for you are the bravest man I have ever seen. So sir what will it be?"

The guy grabs the microphone and says, "Why don't we start with the name of the jerk who pushed me in!"

A police officer in a small town stopped a motorist who was speeding down Main Street.

"But officer." the man began, "I can explain,".

"Just be quiet," snapped the officer. "I'm going to let you cool your heels in jail until the chief gets back..."

"But officer, I just wanted to say...."

"And I said to keep quiet! You're going to jail!"

A few hours later the officer looked in on his prisoner and said, "Lucky for you that the chief is at his daughter's wedding. He'll be in a good mood when he gets back."

"Don't count on it," answered the fellow in the cell. "I'm the groom."

At the end of my first day working at a 24-hour convenience store, a customer walked in and asked, "Is this store open all day, seven days a week, 365 days a year?"

"Yes," I answered, puzzled at the question.

"Well, then," he continued as he walked out, "why are there locks on the doors?"

Pastor Dave Charlton says, "After a worship service at First Baptist Church in Newcastle, Kentucky, a mother with a fidgety seven-year-old boy told me how she finally got her son to sit still and be quiet.

"About halfway through the sermon, she leaned over and whispered, 'If you don't be quiet, Pastor Charlton is going to lose his place and will have to start his sermon all over again!'"

"It worked."

Humor Line

Selected SIG Reports . . .

News and meeting notes of Special Interest Groups
Further background information about a SIG is available from the SIG's Web page at **http://www.ntpcug.org**

Access

The *Microsoft Access SIG* meets with other developer SIGs on the *Second Saturday* of the month, at Microsoft's facility in Irving on the President George Bush Parkway (State Hwy. 161), just North of State Highway 114. If you exit Highway 114 going North, stay on the access road and you'll find the Microsoft entrance before you reach the first tollbooth entrance onto the President George Bush Parkway. The Access SIG website at *http://members.tripod.com/ntaccess/* has directions, a link to a map, and meeting times.

On December 13, 2003: SIG Co-Leaders **Jack Atkinson** and **Larry Linson** will continue our tradition of having one meeting a year devoted to *Tips and Tricks*. They will start the discussion by presenting some of their favorite tips, tricks, and traps-to-avoid when using *Microsoft Access*. Then the floor will be opened up to all participants to tell about their own favorite tips and tricks. Plan ahead -- be thinking of some tips and tricks to mention or show and, especially, your cautions about traps to avoid. We are looking for a 'good time to be had by all' at our last meeting in 2003.

In November, 2003: Technical difficulties beyond our control prevented SIG Co-Leader **Larry Linson** from presenting a *First Look at Access 2003*, the database component of what is now named the *Microsoft Office 2003* **System**. We discussed Access 2003 without a demo, and we had at least one valuable prize for each attendee at our drawing. Larry's brief review of the product, however, did appear in the North Texas PC News for November. We'll either re-schedule this topic for a later date, or just use some new features in presentations on other subjects.

We have always said that *value*, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Expect, as usual, to have a drawing for one or more *valuable* prizes at the December meeting.

Larry Linson

Access - Beginning

December, 2003 -- **No Meeting**

It is not clear that a room will be available for the December meeting. In addition there is a shortage of projectors. We can meet again anytime there is an expressed interest in advance to allow time for preparation of an agenda. If you wish this group to continue, be sure to let Bob McNeil know at the registration desk.

Jim Wehe

Application Developers Issues

Introducing the ASP.NET SIG. The Application Developer Issues SIG is changing its name again. It is becoming the ASP.NET SIG. My vision for this SIG is a place that developers that are new to ASP.NET can come and learn what they need to learn to successfully develop a production ASP.NET application.

Toi B. Wright, President of Metroplex Access Developers, www.madtx.org has taken over as SIG leader.

In December, we plan to discuss C# vs. VB.NET, and in January, Databound Web Sever Controls.

SIG Meeting Schedule

8:00
Microsoft Networking
Hardware Solutions
Excel/Spreadsheets
e-Commerce
Quicken

9:00
Communications
Operating Systems
PC Concepts
Alpha Five Data Base
Dallas Corel
Microsoft FrontPage
Microsoft Word

10:00
Access – Beginning
PC Concepts (Continued)
Microsoft Word (Continued)
Personal Digital Assistants
Professional MIDI and Audio
Rhino 3D

11:00
Internet
C# SIG
Web Design
PC Concepts (Continued)
WordPerfect for Windows
Digital Photography

12:00
NTPCUG Business Meeting

12:30
Investors
DSDA
Linux
The Master Genealogist
Family Tree Maker

1:30
DSDA (Continued)
The Master Genealogist
   (continued)
Linux (Continued)

SIG meetings are listed by time for the November 15 meeting. Times may change, and members are advised to check the NTPCUG Web site for latest listings. Room locations will be posted on the day of the meeting.

The following SIGs are meeting at separate locations, and are not included in the schedule above. Check the SIG notes for time and location.

Meets on 11/08
   Access
   Application Developers Issues
   Visual BASIC - Advanced
   Visual BASIC - Beginning

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Our November meeting was a continuation of our discussion on controls. In October we discussed HTML Controls and HTML Server Controls. Now, we will move our attention to Web Server Controls.

Toi B Wright

C# Programming

Due to lack of interest the NTPCUG C# SIG has been discontinued. For those still seeking a C# programming user group, I help run another SIG which meets at Microsoft the first Thursday of each month. For more info check out http://www.dallas-csharp-sig.com

John Davis

Communications

Converged Services

In December, we will have a presentation from **Tom McCrary** of ICG Telecommunications. Tom will be speaking on converged services. Converged services is the combining of voice and data services over one WAN connection.

The idea of combining voice and data is not new. Companies offering converged services claim they can reduce a companies cost for dedicated lines by 3% to 20%. There were some predictions that the local phone company would disappear and all voice traffic would access the Internet.

The concept of converged services sounds simple, but few companies have been able to make the dream a reality. Every company that provides converged services uses different equipment and Internet connections.

Tom McCrary's product, *VoicePipe*, is a single solution that bundles IP business telephone service, a generous number of long-distance minutes and bandwidth for high-speed Internet ac-

cess. You get all the features of IP telephony with telephone quality service. Voice traffic never touches the public Internet and you don't need a PBX or key system.

A traditional T1 could only be split into 24 voice lines. VoicePipe can be share voice and data services. When people are not on the phone, the entire bandwidth is available for Internet access.

VoicePipe is an open architecture system. Phones plug into an existing Ethernet LAN or a computer on the LAN. Phones get an IP address just like a computer. If you move to another office you don't need to reprogram the phone. Regular phones will also work on the network. Converged services is one of those products that has growth potential.

Join us in the December SIG. Have a Happy Holiday.

Birl Smith

Dallas Corel

December Program
Cynthia Burtch will be our presenter for the December meeting. She will show us how to make Calendars in Corel Draw Graphics 11. Cynthia will also demonstrate uses for these calendars. This is bound to be another great talk.

November In Review
For the November meeting, Martin Hellar showed the *CorelDraw Essentials2* package. It contained the Essentials2 program as well as *Corel Photobook* and *Corel PhotoAlbum*.

Essentials2 is a poor man's Corel Draw 11. It has most of the CorelDraw tools and a lot of the features. They are arranged a little differently than CorelDraw and in some respects are easier to use. The Photoalbum is very nice and easy to use. It is closely cou-

SIGs . . . .

pled to the Photobook and lets you make a lot of quick easy correction to your Photos. Martin showed some these features and some of the shortcomings. The Photo Album contains many nice Photo editing features which make it easy to make substantial improvements in the photos. The session was recorded and can be viewed going to
http://mail.ntpcug.org/sigs/corel/New/CorelDrawEssentials.exe.

Be warned that the file download is 13 Megs and will take several minutes time to load with a fast internet connection.

October In Review
For October, **Martin Hellar** showed how Corel Draw can be used to make Web Pages in the sub set SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics) of XML. Since the push in Internet Page design seems to be more and more towards XML format, most graphics products are making the SVG format as one of the Save TO options. The more that you can put the graphics in SVG, the faster the pages will load in the browser.

XML in itself allows the designer to have more flexibility and control in their web page designs. SVG is a text based program. This allows you to quickly modify your web page.

CorelDraw will convert your Vector based page to SVG file. Adobe Illustrator and Jasc's Web Draw 1 will also do this. Web Draw 1 makes a fairly clean code conversion. Corel's is quite verbose. Code made from scratch is about one-tenth the size of the Corel code for a relatively simple drawing.

While SVG is not the perfect answer yet, progress is continuing in standards and new features.

Samples of what can be done with simple text code can be viewed on the web at *http://test.dsda.org/svg.html.* If you don't already have a patch to IE or Netscape you will be asked if you want to install it. Better say yes or you can't see the examples. The next generation of Browsers will have the patch in place. Happy viewing. To see the code right click on the sample and select "view svg source".

September In Review
Bob Campbell saved the day by showing the plaque that he developed for his high school reunion. Since he got some help from Gene Brown in getting the photograph of the old high school cleaned up and copies printed, Gene gets credit in "Show &Telling".

Bob, described the process and equipment used to produce enough copies for all of the attendees at the reunion. Since there were no more "Showers" Martin carried out his threat to talk about his recent experiences in Wichita Kansas at the Air World Tour of vintage aircraft (over 20 planes designed prior to 1932).
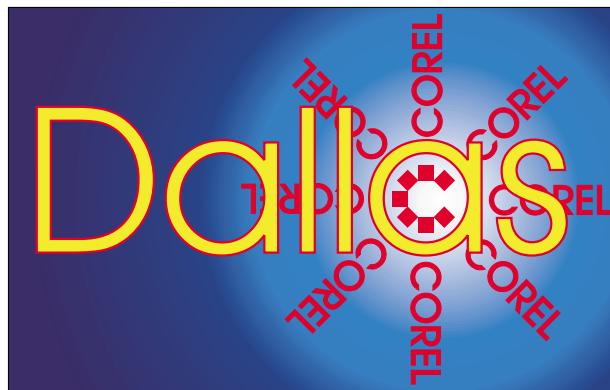
SIG of North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

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2003 Program Schedule

January	Marsha Drebelbis
February	Martin Hellar
March	Gene Brown
April	Martin Hellar
May	Martin Hellar
June	Marsha Drebelbis
July	Cynthia Burtch
August	Cynthia Burtch
September	Show &Tell
October	Martin Hellar
November	Martin Hellar
December	?

IMPORTANT COREL ADDRESSES & PHONE NUMBERS

**Corel Corporation
1600 Carling Avenue,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1Z 8R7**

❖Technical Support Representatives...................... 888-267-3548

❖G1 Release, CD-Rom only(latest "fixes" and patches for Corel products)
.... 800-772-6735

❖Customer Service Representatives
.... 800-772-6735

❖IVAN (Interactive Voice Answering Network)...................... 613-728-1990

❖24 Hour Automated Fax System
.... 613-728-0826 Ext.3080

❖Technical Support hours are 4AM to 8PM (EST) excluding holidays

❖To obtain our catalogue please request document #2000

For Support on all Corel Products, access Support at Corel at *http://www.corel.com/support/ftpsite*

For past program information Access Dallas Corel's full Web site and archives at *http://www.ntpcug.org/sigs/corel/new/meet.htm*.

KnockOut 2.0 Now Available at: *http://www.altman.com/resources/software.htm.* Foster D. Coburn III pre-built catalogs for all versions of CorelDraw clipart CDs, going back to version 6, and also CGM (Corel Gallery Magic library of 200,000 images). They are available for you to download FREE via *http://www.unleash.com/articles/romcat.*

Martin Hellar

Digital Photography

In December, I plan on covering the topic of sharpening. When to sharpen - how to sharpen - and how much sharpening to apply is sometimes confusing. I'll try to make it all a bit clearer.

I'll be showing the software from NIK Multimedia called NIK Sharpener Pro so that you can see firsthand how it works. I have written a review of this product and hopefully, if everything goes well, it will be in the newsletter this month and in the Product Reviews section on the NTPCUG web site.

In previous months, there has been some interest in the topic of Desk-Top Video. The prices of DVD burners continue to drop and MiniDV cameras seem to be very popular this Christmas. If there is enough interest in this topic, I would consider presenting future programs in this area. If this interests you, please let me know.

Please note that my e-mail address has changed. The new address is *jdunn@ImagesByJamesDunn.com*. As always, please put NTPCUG on the

subject line so I don't delete your e-mail thinking it is SPAM.

James Dunn

e-Commerce

At our December meeting, we will return to the "Jewelry" themed affiliate website that Alan's wife, Gwen, is building to see how that is developing. We'll review the use of **Ken Evoy**'s "Site Build-It" tool that has been used

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PC Concepts
Harold (Spike) Smith
.... (972) 231-0730 h
Spike3@attbi.com

Personal Digital Assistants
Birl Smith **............** (972) 670-0103 w
birl.smith@ntpcug.org
Craig Winder....... (214) 597-1165 w
clwinder@yahoo.com
David Martin
davidm@attbi.com

Rhino 3D
Bob Campbell ..... (817) 540-1273
bob@campbelldesigns.com

Visual Basic .NET — Beginning
Tuc Goodwin ...... (972) 345-9934
dorsai01@msn.com

Visual Basic .NET — Advanced
Stephen Johnson (214) 532-9788
stephen@rsj-services.com

Web Design - Programming
Steve Shanafeldt (972) 523-4846
steve@developercourses.com

Web Design
Hollis Hutchinson (214) 328-2251
TutorsOnTap@aol.com
John McNeil,
john.mcneil@ntpcug.org

WordPerfect / Windows
Cindy Adams ...... (817) 481-1300 wM
cadams11@earthlink.net
Diane Bentley ..... (972) 724-0855 w&h
diane.bently@ntpcug.org

in the development of that website and compare and contrast it to other available single-source solutions. We'll also begin looking at specific linking techniques that are effective in building page reputation and popularity. And of course, we will continue our general discussion of all related topics.

Our meeting begins promptly at 8:00 am. Be sure to check at the sign in desk for the exact room location.

Alan Lummus

Family Tree Maker

We're covering the file menu of the program this month. Due to the holidays, we are meeting on 13 December at another location. Contact the SIG leader for details and directions. Handouts are available for all previous meetings.

Tresa Tatyrek

Internet

Best Practices for Password Creation

In December, the topic will be Best Practices for Creating Passwords. I'll also cover the 10 biggest myths regarding what makes a good password, and then look at ways to protect your passwords.

At our November 15 meeting, we concluded (for now) our discussion of how to Spam-Proof Your EMail Address.

Although attendance at the SIG meeting was lower because of the scheduling conflict with Microsoft's Office 2003 presentation, we still had a lively discussion of people's email problems and solutions. We also discussed the differences between Microsoft Outlook and Outlook Express.

Glynn Brooks

Investors

The next meeting is Saturday, December 20, 2003. Please double check on the day of the meeting for the room location for that specific day.

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It is year end review time - how did you do this year? Good or bad? We will talk about projections and plans for the New Year and what sites and tools we can use to make 2004 a great investing year.

Also, an interesting web site to look at **http://www.e-analytics.com/index.htm**

Kathryn (Kathy) Kirby

Job Search

Today's job hunt is completely different from job seeking just a year ago. Many job seekers have turned to the Internet to find a job and end up spend endless hours researching job boards and applying on-line only to end up frustrated due to the lack of response. Topics covered include "All about Monster", "How to Effectively Work with Recruiters", "How and Why to Research Companies" and "All about Networking".

The Job Focus SIG will meet quarterly to cover these topics. Be sure to check the website for new job postings.

Tanya Steffen

Linux

In December, we will have a Q&A session. If your Linux distro is giving you problems, bring your processor and we

will help you debug it. You don't need to bring your monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc.

John McNeil
Gil Brand

Microsoft FrontPage

In December, we will have a general discussion plus question and answer session regarding all things FrontPage. As time allows, we will continue our review of the use of FrontPage as a tool in the creation and development of the "travel" themed website Alan started recently.

Our meeting time is 9:00 am, and the SIG immediately follows the e-commerce SIG at 8. Check at the sign in desk for exact room location.

Whether you are a novice or an experienced user of FrontPage, come and share your experience, questions and answers as we explore both the capabilities and limitations of this software, both for personal and commercial websites.

Alan Lummus

Microsoft Networking

In December, we will complete the demonstration of the new server backup process utilizing PowerQuest V2i Protector. This new approach will create weekly backups and several (6-8) incremental backups each day, providing recovery to within a couple of hours of any outage. Stop by and take a look.

We will also have a Q&A session. Bring your Q's and we will have the A's.

Gil Brand

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Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word SIG Meeting Topics
December - Understanding and Setting
Tabs
January - Tables Foundation - Part 1
February - Tables Formatting - Part 2

Topics are tentative and may change

Our newsletter, *The Word*, can now be accessed from here. Follow the links at the end of this Web page.

D E C E M B E R
Setting a tab should be simple. And it can be ... once you understand the seven different types of tabs and how to set them. You may have set up a tab from the dialog box, yet returned to your document to find they were not there. You may have set a tab from the ruler bar to find they disappeared when you moved to another location in the document. Join us to find out why these things happened.

J A N U A R Y
Tables are a feature that almost everyone can use ... for organizing lists, in place of tabular columns, as a database, as a spreadsheet with some mathematical capabilities, for sorting data, to hold graphics, and so on. We will cover the foundation of tables.

F E B R U A R Y
Now that we've got the foundation of tables covered, we're going to get into some formatting features. These will take your tables beyond being text-in-a-box.

D R A G O N   N A T U R A L L Y
S P E A K I N G
If you would like to be part of an e-mail group to share information and experiences in learning and using Nat-Speak *(as the Pros call it)*, let me know (*diane.bentley@ntpcug.org*)!!

W O W!   I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Viewing the Keyboard Shortcuts for the Toolbar Buttons
Have you ever noticed that when you cut and paste text in Word 2000, it almost always winds up with the correct spacing? This is because Word enables a feature called Smart Cut And Paste by default.

With Smart Cut And Paste turned on, Word guesses how you would like your text spacing and inserts it automatically. So, for example, if the text you're pasting has a space at the end of it and you're inserting it in a place with an additional space, Word will eliminate one of the spaces to avoid the double space.

Some, however, don't like it when Word tries to outsmart them and would prefer to have the spacing remain as they've selected it. If this is you, you will want to:

1.   Tools | Options | Edit

2.   Unmark: Use smart cut and paste

3.   OK

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

Got a problem with Word? Describe the problem to me in an e-mail. I will do my best to provide a satisfactory answer. I will also post the question and answer on this Web page, as well as in the next newsletter so others may benefit from the information.

WHAT'S NEW AT MICROSOFT?

Windows Longhorn Might Not Arrive Until 2006

Microsoft has pushed the next generation of Windows XP - code-named Longhorn - to 2005, but Jupiter Research finds 2006 more likely for general availability.

Microsoft Windows Longhorn, the code-name for the next generation of windows XP, probably won't be generally available until 2006, according to researchers with Jupiter Research in a report on Longhorn. Microsoft originally planned to release Longhorn in 2004 but has shifted the planned delivery date to 2005.

In the report, Jupiter Research discusses reasons for the delay and how Microsoft partners and competitors can deal with the later delivery.

One of the main reasons Longhorn will take longer to become available is it's scheduled to come with a radically different file system. Jupiter Research says the change to the file system will lengthen the testing period to minimize compatibility problems with older versions. Longhorn versions of other major Microsoft products will also ship around this timeframe, which also may contribute to the delay.

The report also predicts consumer and business transition to Longhorn might extend through at least 2009. Jupiter Research says slowly growing Windows XP business sales and new versions of Windows Media Center will maintain Windows, PC, and third-party software sales until Longhorn ships. For more information, visit *(and then click Internet.com icon):*
http://www.jupitermedia.com

Diane Bentley

Operating Systems SIG

December brings the last Operating Systems SIG meeting of 2003. May be a good time for reflection and reevaluation. I've received some criticism concerning the unstructured nature of SIG meetings coupled with suggestion these be replaced by scheduled OS presentations.

We have done structured presentations in the past and will probably do so again when the next version of Windows debuts. I said "probably" for a reason. Windows 2000 and XP have undergone a number of "slipstream" upgrades in the form of Service Packs (SP's) and security upgrades, none of

which could really be named "New Versions."

'Longhorn' will be an exception

My choice to make the OS SIG a relatively unstructured, problem-solving process rather than a platform for formal presentations came from need to address current problem areas and provide a forum for users to gain answers from other users' experience. It's the same process that works well in many problem-solving group efforts.

Meanwhile, if SIG members have suggestions for presentations that would be helpful to the group as a whole, please let Chuck or I know about them. If it sounds appropriate and interesting, we'll try to arrange it.

There are some constraints that need consideration, however. Presentations need to be something that can be adequately conducted in 40 - 50 minutes with time left for user questions and discussion of the issues involved. There's also the question of in which SIG would it be most appropriate, i.e., might this be better done in one of the other NTPCUG SIGs than in the OS SIG.

Security issues heating up

There's lots of media talk about federally mandated security measures at the IT level with industry concern over implications this may hold. We all know what rolls downhill and probability that rules originally intended for large IT shops and ISP's may become a fact of life for all users down the road.

If you think this is extreme (i.e., a fantasy), chat a bit with small medical groups or individual practitioners about

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achieving HIPAA compliance on their systems.

Should be a good focus for discussion in December.

Reagan Andrews
& Chuck Stark

PC Concepts

Is Murphy's Law a Concept?

When we *upgrade* by adding or replacing newer applications, hardware, and entire machines – we wish for our transformations and conversions to be as smooth and effortless as possible, culminating into a rewarding and pleasant experience. Sometimes this happens in a matter-of-fact manner and we slough it off and go on with our business while casually reaping enjoyment over using a better work tool or entertaining object.

Since the world came up with the infamous *Irishman* named *Murphy* and whose antics led to the creation of a possible curse, *Murphy's Law*, our technological marvels have never been the same as in those imaginary days of yore often cited as *'Those good old days.'*

Things never are as bad as they seem, but Murphy's Law stating that "*anything that can go wrong, will go wrong"* is an exaggeration. When I attempted my latest conversions from a clone with Windows Me, and a Compaq (the original clone) with Windows

98 SE into a Hewlett-Packard design-it-yourself model with Windows XP Pro, my knowledge of probabilities of Murphy's Law was verified.

To begin my recent conversion into major steps for upgrading, I shared some of the events of trials – having the earmarks of tribulations, during our Concept SIG meetings.

While planning the venture, we examined Microsoft's introduction and helpful exercise titled. "*Upgrade Advisor"* available from **http://www.microsoft.com** Windows 98 upgrade. This advisor is highly recommended for those not yet having moved to the *XP* operating system. You may download the advisor or preferably run the advisory online and obtain more valuable information.

Following are the advanced warnings for potential problem areas that I should expect with an XP upgrade:

Listed by product

- ❖ Epson Perfectionist 1640 Image Scanner
- ❖ Conexant V90DSL 56K Modem
- ❖ ALPS MD-1000 Color Printer
- ❖ Epson Stylus Photo 780
- ❖ Canon Powershot G1
- ❖ Ezonics EZX Cam II
- ❖ cd!backup
- ❖ Compaq Diagnostics
- ❖ Iomega 100 MB Zip Disk Drive
- ❖ McAfee VirusScan
- ❖ DVD Movie Player

I had acquired this list in April and then by September, I had forgotten some of the potential areas of concern. However, fair warnings were given. When I had moved some programs and hardware from WIN 98 to my WIN Me sys-

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tem, some would not load or perform and new drivers for all hardware were not available. With inherent differences in the XP operating system, even more product needs to be updated or discarded. What this means to me is I will keep a legacy machine handy (WIN 98 SE) for older applications so that I will not necessarily have to buy new software and hardware right away, or at least delay purchasing new – until after the XP replacement operating system comes out.

Since the potential problem list provided by the Microsoft Advisor was not all inclusive, I will continue presenting, at our regular meetings, those representative (real) problems that I may still encounter.

I network my notebook computer and three desktop computers. I am not sure if part of my former networking problems were solved by replacing one of my older computers with the *hp XP* model, but now I can successfully share drives on all four computers, use printer sharing on all, and share the Internet connection. [Good!]

My upgrade to the XP operating system leads to associated problems with *Microsoft Outlook* which accompanied Microsoft Office XP. The absolutely and most horrific problems, however, are associated with Hewlett-Packard *pre-installed software* of theirs and other vendors in their OEM package that will remain more or less a nuisance as long as I own the machine – which leads one to wonder why they are buying a machine and end up paying for someone else's advertising.

We will continue our discussions during the December SIG meeting concerning upgrades and whether we should do it now or delay. We will also spend fun time with photo and imaging applications.

Our goal is to cover a variety of concepts in our SIG. We cater to those who have never handled a personal computer before through those who have several and wish to learn a new approach or different techniques. We do not compete head-on with NTPCUG's other valuable SIGs but we are a great place for getting started with a new computer, digital cameras, image editing, word processing, data management, and working around Murphy's Law and its nuances.

Harold (Spike) Smith

Personal Digital Assistants (PDA)

December Meeting
Treo 600

In December we talk about the *Treo 600*. As you know Palm and Handspring merged. The Treo combines a full featured phone with a organizer, e-mail, text messaging and web browsing. The Treo 600 has a bright color display, thumb keyboard, SD slot and a integrated camera. The phone includes the Palm 5.2 operating system and has a 144MHz Texas Instruments processor. The Treo will play mp3's and a adapter is available for stereo head-

phones. Network support is available for CDMA and GSM phones. The internal Lithium Ion battery is not user replaceable, but a external battery pack will be available. We will talk more about this phone and other PDA's in our monthly SIG.
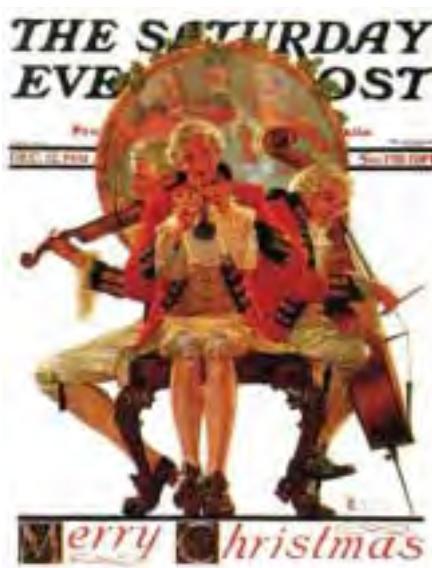
Birl Smith
Craig Winder
David Martin

Professional MIDI and Audio

December will be a general discussion session on any topic of interest in computer related MIDI and Audio. As time allows, we may also begin looking at the topic of DVD mastering and recording, comparing and contrasting that application with CD mastering and recording.

Our meeting time is now 10:00 am and will immediately follow the E-commerce and FrontPage SIGs. Come and share your experience, questions and answers about all things audio & MIDI on computer, from recording to editing to composing, arranging and playing music on your system.

J. Alan Lummus

Quicken

The Quicken SIG will not meet this month. It is not clear that a room will be available at any time members would be present. The time shown above was a one month trial for which no one came.

Jim Wehe

Visual Basic - Beginning

We will be meeting at 9:00 AM on Saturday, December 13th at the Las Colinas campus of Microsoft Corporation.

The December meeting will be about Visual Basic "Classic". There have been more than a few requests to discuss ADO and perhaps some of what ADO.NET is about. So you could call this presentation: "Everything you wanted to know about ADO and were afraid to ask...".

If there is enough discussion, then we will talk a little bit about ADO.NET, but the main focus will be on ADO... January we will resume building our Password application in .NET

Upcoming Meeting Information:

Tuc Goodwin

Web Design

In December, by special request, we will cover **How to Design a Geneal-ogy Website**. Genealogy has some special needs and will serve as a very good example of designing a site around the user, rather than the author.

- ❖ **Purpose**
- ❖ **GEDCOM production and con-version**
- ❖ **Formats and Styles for the out-put**
- ❖ **Speed/Download time**
- ❖ **Navigation Problems**
- ❖ **Supplemental Information Pages**
- ❖ **Adding photos**
- ❖ **Setting up the Research Links**

Genealogists want huge amounts of in-formation. They want it free and they want it NOW!!! Designing a site that lets them evaluate your material, add or make corrections, ask questions, and do real research requires some addi-tional planning and thought. Come on it to see some examples of how you

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can share your data and (hopefully) get others to share theirs with you.

It has been suggested that we spend time each month evaluating a mem-ber's website for both strengths and weaknesses. If you have a website you would like for us to take a look at, please bring the URL with you to the next meeting - Dec 20th. See y'all there!

Further information on Web Design can be accessed through the NTPCUG WebBoard and at the Tutors On Tap site at *http://www.tutors-on-tap.com/index.html*.

Topics covered in previous sessions:
Nov 2003 - HTML Editors
Sep 2003 - HTML and Beyond
Aug 2003 - Web site creation overview
Jul 2003 - Web site hijacking
Feb - Jun 2003 - Sabbatical
Jan 2003 - CSS1 (Part 1), cont.
Dec 2002 - CSS1 (Part 1)
Nov 2002 - Browser Wars
Oct 2002 - HTML-Kit (Part 2)
Sep 2002 - HTML-Kit (Part 1)
Aug 2002 - CSS2 Positioning
Jul 2002 - Analyzing Web Logs
Jun 2002 - Communicating With Color
May 2002 - Site Sampling
Apr 2002 - The Need for Speed
Mar 2002 - Head Matters

Feb 2002 - CSS, Part 2
Jan 2002 - Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), Part 1
Dec 2001 - Web Words (Vocabulary)
Nov 2001 - Site Navigation
Oct 2001 - Search Engines
Sep 2001 - Site Layout
Aug 2001 - Planning a Website
Jul 2001 - HTML Editors
Jun 2001 - Intro to HTML

Hutchy

WordPerfect

WordPerfect SIG Meeting Topics
December — Styles — Making Your Work Easier
January — WordPerfect 11 ... What is Available from the Screen
February — WP11 — Selecting, Undo/Redo

These topics are tentative and may change at any time.

Our newsletter, *In a WordPerfect Minute...*, can now be accessed from the WordPerfect SIG area on the NTPCUG Website.

D E C E M B E R
We used Heading Styles when creat-ing a Table of Contents at the Au-gust Meeting ... but that's not the only time to use them! You can use them anywhere throughout your document. We will give you exam-ples for using them, as well as show you how to edit them.

J A N U A R Y
With the apparent 'hit' of WordPerfect 11, we're going to start from the begin-ning. That is, taking a close look at the WordPerfect screen, explaining fea-tures you may have been ignoring or never even paid attention. I promise you will learn something new, whether you are a beginner or experienced user.

F E B R U A R Y
Experienced users are always looking

Visual Basic - Beginning **— Upcoming Meetings**		
Date	Theme	Description
December 13	TBD	Beginning VB.NET - Tuc Goodwin/ Terry Witt Building a .NET solution as an XML Web Service (Password Manager)
January 10 (2004)	TBD	Beginning VB.NET - Terry Witt Building a DataPool Object
February 14	TBD	Beginning VB.NET - Tuc Goodwin Exploring GDI+ and Irregular Shape Forms
March 13	TBD	Beginning VB.NET - Terry Witt Using Threading and Multi-Threading in .NET solutions

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for ways to make their computer use faster and more efficient. Selecting text may be the most common function we perform. Does Undo allow you to go as far back as you need? We'll show you ways to improve your use of these features.

DRAGON NATURALLYS PEAKING

If you would like to be part of an e-mail group to share information and experiences in learning and using Nat-Speak *(as the Pros call it),* let me know at *diane.bentley@ntpcug.org*.

W O W ! I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Moving Text between Documents
Is something wrong with your Menu Bar? Have you been messing around with it ... making changes, and now you wish you could just get it back the way it was? Or, do you insist you didn't do anything, but it's not right anyway? Whatever happened, try this:

1.	Right-click the Menu Bar

2.	If you ***'didn't do anything',*** **select the Menu Bar for the version you're using | Reset | Yes**

If this doesn't fix it, then maybe someone is playing a trick on you, and you probably know exactly who that would be.

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

Got a problem with WordPerfect? Describe the problem in an E-mail. We will do our best to provide a satisfactory answer. The question and answer will also be posted on this web page, as well as in the next newsletter for the benefit of others who might have the same problem.

WHAT'S NEW WITH WORDPERFECT?

WordPerfect® 11 New & Improved Features - Part II
Navigation Tools: WordPerfect 11 includes a wide variety of ways to move through a document, saving you valuable time. For example, you can access many of the dialog boxes and commands by using keystrokes or by clicking buttons on the various toolbars.

Document Map **— If you work with**

WILLIAM HAZLETT UPSON · FRANK H. SIMONDS
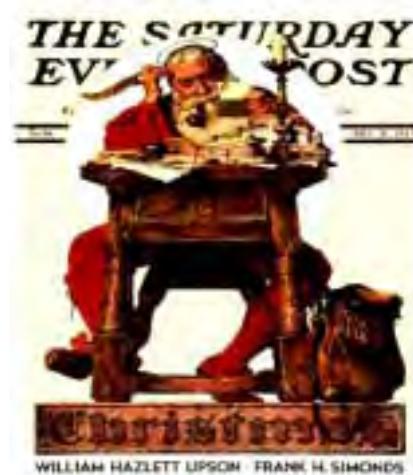
long documents, you'll find the Document Map invaluable. This new feature lets you view and navigate to elements in your document in an easy-to-use tree structure located in a dialog box. This time-saving feature displays markers in a document for the index, table of contents, table of authorities and lists. Clicking an entry in the Document Map takes you to that spot in the document. The new Document Map feature lets users view elements of their document.

AutoScroll Tool — AutoScroll lets you scroll through a document quickly without using the arrow keys or the scroll bars. The scrolling speed increases if you move the pointer further away from the AutoScroll tool and decreases if you move the pointer closer. The AutoScroll tool gives you

the functionality similar to that of the Microsoft® IntelliMouse® with your regular mouse.

Browse — The Browse command, located on the vertical scroll bar, lets users browse through a document by elements, including by page, footnote, table, hyperlink, bookmark, redline, strikeout, text boxes, equations and many more. These elements are also available in the Go To dialog box.

Previous and Next — The Previous and Next commands, located on either side of the Browse button, let you select items with the Browse button and then scroll to the previous or next item.

Back and Forward — The Back and Forward commands, located on the horizontal toolbar, let you move the insertion point to a previous position or back again. This function was designed to be similar to the way users can move backwards and forwards within a Web browser.

Keyboard shortcuts — You can take advantage of keyboard shortcuts to access all of the menu commands and features in WordPerfect 11. You can also customize any of the keyboard shortcuts and create buttons for other commands by using the Customize dialog box.

Long Document Control: Reference tools let you quickly mark and generate tables of contents, tables of authorities, indices, cross references and lists. Now in WordPerfect 11, you have the option to use a line number as a cross-reference marker. In addition, WordPerfect 11 has also made tables of authorities even easier to create. The Variable feature has always been a great time saver, but it's now even more useful in WordPerfect 11. Variables allow you to mark text that you know will change: dates, version numbers, or client names, for example. Now a

WordPerfect®
///////// Office 2002)
STANDARD

variable can be saved to a default template for reuse, so you only have to create it once. WordPerfect 11 can also notify you if there are any unused variables in a document.

SIGs . . . .

Collaboration in Document Creation: WordPerfect 11 is ideal for working with documents written by multiple authors or that require feedback from a number of reviewers.

WordPerfect has always offered great document review tools and functionality. WordPerfect 11 has taken document reviewing to new heights by allowing you to route a document. The routing process allows you to send a document to several reviewers, one reviewer at a time, allowing each of the reviewers to see the changes made by the previous reviewer(s).

When routing a document, it is inserted in an e-mail as an attachment. You must have Microsoft Outlook 2000 or higher as your default address book for this option.

WordPerfect 11 also gives you the option of creating a master document from several documents. By dividing the document into a master document/subdocument structure, you can assign specific subdocuments to different authors.

WordPerfect 11 makes it impossible for them to overwrite another person's work or make unauthorized changes.

This feature is also indispensable when you're creating a document so large that finding and replacing, generating, and editing the document is slow, difficult, or both. In addition, the subdocuments you use to build a master document can be created in Microsoft Word or any other file format supported by WordPerfect 11.

Tables: When tables are an integral part of your document, WordPerfect 11 makes the job easy. You can create basic tables quickly, but it's when you need complex tables that WordPerfect 11 really shines.

You can create tables that have an unmatched number of cells in each row or column. And when you have to join or split cells or columns, WordPerfect 11 has flexible, time-saving features. You can use the QuickJoin feature to combine two cells or columns into a single cell, or the QuickSplit feature to split cells or columns into two, or split a cell into rows and columns.

And when a table needs to catch the reader's eye, you can use the Skew feature to slant the header row or an outside column.

WordPerfect 11 tables also offer great spreadsheet-like functionality. You can add formulas and functions to tables using arithmetic and logical operators.

The Cell Formula Markers feature gives you an easy way to tell if a table cell contains a formula and provides more options for manipulating formulas. Positioning the pointer on a Cell Formula Marker displays the cell's formula in a tool tip and clicking a Cell Formula Marker displays the Formula toolbar. And, copying formulas from one cell to another can be done with a simple drag-and-drop.

You can specify the order in which a document is distributed for review. When you need to incorporate data from other sources, such as a database or mailing list, into a WordPerfect document, you can convert text to tables, or tables to text or a merge file. When converting tables to text, you can also specify the desired delimiter, or you can convert the table to a merge data file with the option of designating the top row as a header row.

Cindy Adams

Personality… Ctd.

Some facts about lenses

First, the user should know that no two lenses are exactly alike. Remember the "test drive" I suggested above? If the user really likes the results and is very pleased with resulting prints, they should buy the camera actually tested. They know what it will do. Another camera of the same model exactly equipped as the test camera will produce different results to the discerning eye. (Recall that this piece is for serious photographers.)

Some lenses will be "warmer" than mates in the same production run while others may be "cooler" and perceived sharpness can shift as well. It's a fact of lens life although not as problematic now as in the past.

Example, I have a Minolta Autocord twin lens reflex (TLR) with four-element Tessar-style lenses that I have loved over the years. I briefly had access to an "identical" Autocord with a close serial number to that of my camera and discovered that I really didn't like the prints made from the other camera using the same film and processing.

Some of the differences may be correctable via camera controls or a good graphics editor such as PhotoShop and some can't. It won't hurt to try using the camera's white balance controls, if available. A shift of 100 degrees Kelvin can make a significant difference in the outcome. It will take a lot of experimentation and effort to achieve whether using camera controls or editor controls.

Viewing distance important

This applies to both digital and film camera lenses. Viewing distance is an important function of perceived sharpness, apparent grain and perspective. Although it isn't quite so true now, there are "normal" focal lengths associated with camera use. Most common refer to 35-mm usage with "normal" lenses of 50-mm - 55-mm, supposedly approximating the human eye's capabilities. (European cameras traditionally came with 50-mm lenses and later, Japanese, camera came with 55-mm lenses as well as 50-mm lenses.

At "normal" viewing distances, these lenses would give "normal" perspective. Use of a wide-angle lens would require closer viewing to achieve "normal" perspective while the opposite is true for telephoto lenses

(or focal lengths.) The perspective shift/ distortion is most easily seen in portraits taken with very-wide angle focal lengths (not suggested at all) with significant distortion apparent in facial features such as elongated noses, etc.

Very "long" lenses will have just the opposite effect and may flatten perspective to the point that the shot loses its 3-dimensional perspective. If done correctly and on purpose, this can have a very striking impact on the subject matter.

A lot of digital cameras with zoom lenses don't have the "effective" focal length marked. Some of the more expensive cameras do have this marking and include depth of field indications as well. This last can be quite important if the user wants as much as possible in sharp focus—or, on-the-other-hand wants to exclude a busy background in a portrait shot.

Notice I used the term "effective" here. Since the CCD/ CMOS sensor is actually (usually) much smaller than the 35 mm 1" x 1-1/2" negative or trans-

parency, actual focal lengths will be somewhat less than on lenses for a 35 mm film camera.

That's why most digital camera zoom lenses are described by the zoom ratio rather than by "hard" numbers such as 28-mm - 90-mm as they would be on a 35-mm film camera.

Best rule in this case is to try the lens at both its wide-angle and telephoto settings to judge the perspective distortion that results. Cameras with interchangable lenses will allow the most latitude, especially if the CCD/ CMOS sensor is close to the size of a 35-mm negative or transparency and will accept standard SLR lenses.

A final note

Trying to obtain real information about digital camera candidates can be very, very challenging. Going to the vendors' Websites is frequently frustrating since most are used as marketing tools with lots of positive spin and hype, and obtaining real technical information is somewhat of a chore.

Don't give up. They are generally available hidden away in part of the Support pages on the site. Often, after finding them, when you look at the specifica-

tions listed for the particular camera, you find that how the vendor lists and describes them is as confusing as the marketing hype.

I'll quote an example from the Fujifilm Site where a camera's CCD sensor was described as 1 x 1.7 inches. That's clear enough even though its not the same ratio as a 35-mm negative or transparency. Later on the specifications sheet the zoom lens was described as "equivalent" to a 35-mm zoom lens ratio. That's the kicker since that's the term used for the zoom lenses on digital cameras with somewhat smaller sensor chips.

I'll look for technical information on the Internet, but purchasing a high-end digital camera is another matter. I want to work with a reputable dealer who knows the camera and can discuss its features in a realistic rather than a marketing manner.

Reagan Andrews
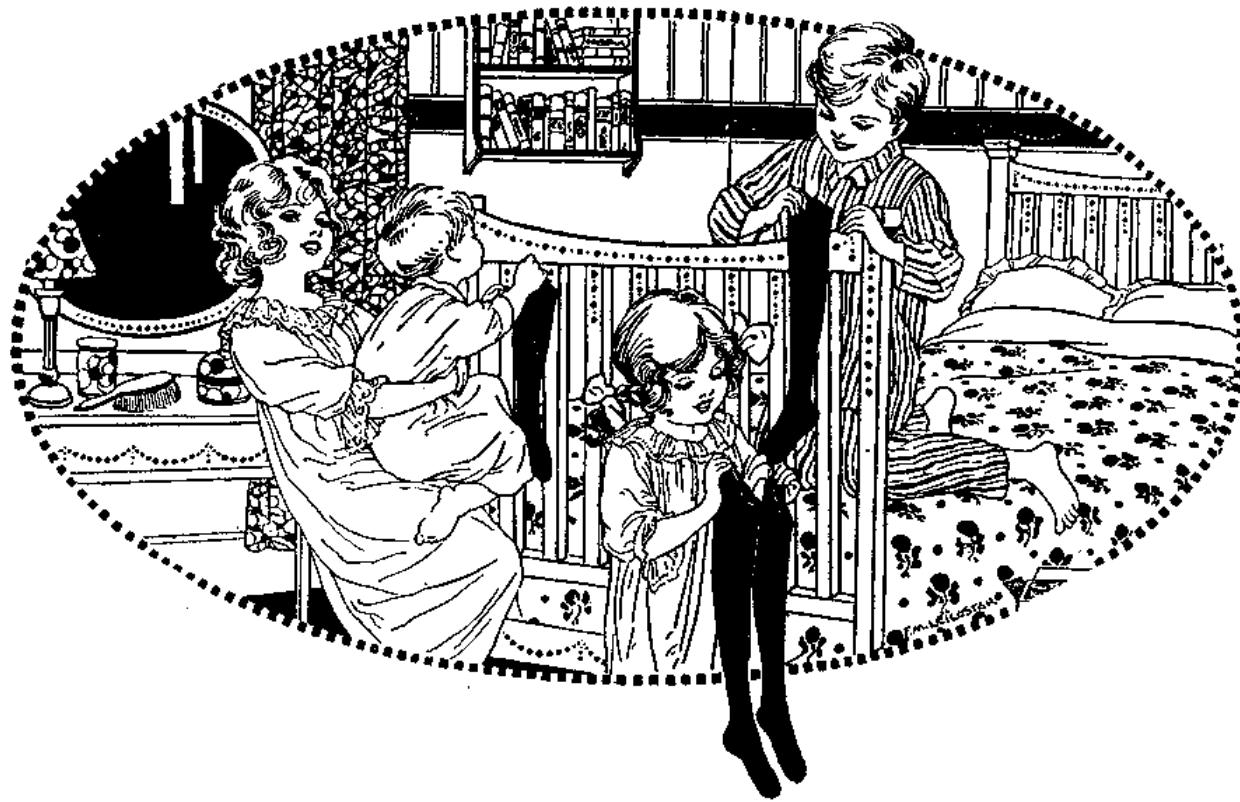
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The Group meets once each month, usually on the third Saturday. See inside front cover for date, time and place of the next North Texas PC Users Group meeting.

NORTH TEXAS PC USERS GROUP

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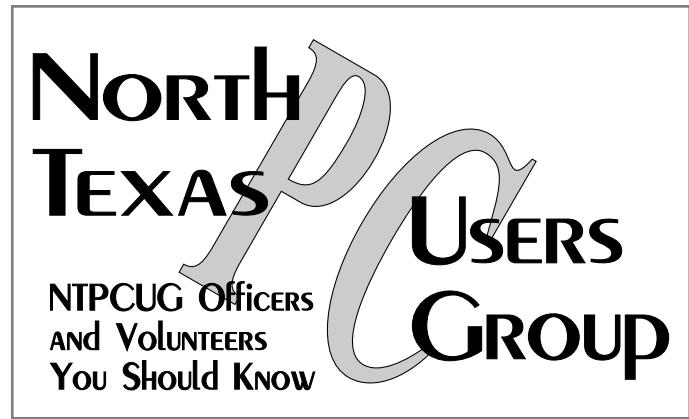
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