North Texas PC News

Yes, Fifteen Years for a SIG is, indeed, a Big Deal!

On Saturday, April 17, 1993 at the *InfoMart* on Stemmons Freeway, **Larry Linson** held the organizational meeting of the NTPCUG Microsoft Access Special Interest Group. Requirements for a SIG at that time were "a SIG Leader and eight people who will attend on a more-or-less regular basis". The organizational meeting was attended by over 60 interested members and we walked away with three enthusiastic volunteer Assistant SIG Leaders, **Jack Atkinson**, **Dianna DiCicco**, and **Frank McCoy**.

We have been in continuous operation ever since, sometimes augmented by a Beginning Access SIG, sometimes merged into a single entity. On a few occasions, we have had over 100 attendees, and on a (fortunately few) others, "too few to mention". In the last few years, attendance has averaged from ten to twenty on a regular basis.

Over the years, we have been fortunate to have some outstanding guest speakers and very interested attendees, our own hard-copy newsletter at times, a sign-up list for people who wanted their names released to recruiters at times, and, at almost every meeting, a drawing for valuable prizes.

SIG Co-Leaders **Jim Wehe** and **Larry Linson** and Assistant SIG Leader **Neel Cotten** invite you to join us in recognizing this significant milestone, our Fifteenth Anniversary, on April 19, 2008 and ask your good thoughts and wishes that NTPCUG will continue to have a helpful and informative Access SIG for years to come.

Jim Wehe and Larry Linson   **April 7, 2008**

In This Issue ...

Prez Sez

by Chris Morgan

There is much that our group has to offer, and always has. This month, I would like to classify the "groups" of SIGs we have, in an attempt to simplify the amazing array of offerings into a few categories and to give some focus on these learning "tracks".

As I see it, there are five types of SIGs we offer.

Windows

Some of our most popular offerings are about the Windows OS. This covers a wide range of topics that deal with the basics of using our PCs. Things like dealing with the various versions of Windows, how to do backups, installation and configuration problems and options, utilities, hardware options, buying a PC, servicing computers, etc. are all fair game in the two SIGs dealing with Windows.

From 8 am to 10 am, we have *Windows Tips & Tricks* led by Gil Brand and Chuck Stark. At 12:30 pm, Glynn Brooks leads the *Windows Inside Out* SIG. Both of these SIGs are in the large meeting room LL25.

Office Applications

Next in line is a group of SIGs dealing with word processing and spreadsheet applications. Diane Bentley has ably helped many members get more out of Word and WordPerfect for a number of years. Diane has carefully preserved a valuable collection of her presentations going back over these years for all to enjoy and learn from. Her masterful presentations (not to mention those great donuts) have been a major attraction in our group.

The *Excel* SIG is led by Frank Tubbs. Frank has a 4-point agenda to get more out of Excel: Becoming proficient with the common tools of Excel, becoming faster by learning the shortcuts and special keys, delving into sophisticated tools like filtering and sorting, and employing VBA for power and interactivity with Word. Speaking of VBA, we have a newish SIG dealing just with this feature of the Microsoft Office products, led by Dave MacKenzie.

Developers

Not everyone who uses computers learns to program them. But we have always had a core group of programmers in our midst who are always on the lookout for learning more about the Microsoft programming languages. Currently, we have Tuc Goodwin leading the *.NET* SIG and overseeing the 2nd Saturday offerings at the Microsoft campus in Irving. Tuc is a long-time member and SIG leader in the area of programming. In addition to the *.NET* programming SIG, Tuc has just recruited a co-worker to lead an interesting series of presentations having to do with *Design Patterns* in Object Oriented Programming (OOP). 14 common OOP design patterns will be presented using C# and Java.

Tom Perkins is another energetic leader of developers, ably shepherding a group of us along the path to certification with Microsoft .NET programming. These twice-a-month meetings are on 2nd and 3rd Saturdays at my favorite bookstore in Richardson – Nerdbooks.

Web Site Creation

This past year saw the startup of three new SIGs dealing with creating web sites. On 3rd Saturdays, Alan Lummus starts out with *Building Web Sites*. Alan is currently going through a methodical process of building a web site. In his next hour, Alan shares tips and techniques about *Making Money on the Internet.* He currently sells a line of products from his web site and has successfully negotiated the world of online entrepreneurship.

Following Alan's two SIGs, I lead the *Expression Web* SIG. This software product, which replaced MS Front Page, was introduced just over a year ago and is Microsoft's new program for web site creation.

Digital Photography

Lastly is the series of SIGs having to do with digital photography. Spike Smith leads the *Digital Photography* SIG at 10 am and the *Digital Photo Editing* SIG at 11 am. There are lots of things to know about digital photography, from buying a camera to learning all the new terminology involved with this fascinating world.

In his second hour, Spike focuses on editing pictures using a variety of programs, many of which are free or very inexpensive. Then, at 12:30 pm we have the *Adobe Photoshop* SIG. This SIG deals with just this one product, the most commonly used photo editor among photographers today. While it is not an inexpensive product, for those who want to delve more deeply into the fine art of photo editing, Photoshop may be what you are looking for.

Well, that's my list of "groups" of SIGs. Of course, there are some other SIGs that are great too. Not to leave anybody out, there is *MS Access*, *Mobile Computing*, *Wireless Communications*, *Family History*, *Internet*, *Sharepoint*, and the *IT Professional* SIGs. Each has it's own unique offering of interesting topic to learn about. The big dilemma is: can you decide what you are going to miss by having to choose which SIGs you **will** attend?

See you Saturday

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) ...

Sessions with presentations, discussion, and exchanges of information

2nd Saturday

*Read a comprehensive report on **Second Saturday Events for April**, by Tuc Goodwin, page 16.*

Visual Basic .NET — 9:00 am

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

We are fortunate to have a really keen topic for the 9:00 AM hour. Cory Smith, an MVP, will be presenting a topic called "*Developing for Windows Vista using Visual Studio*".

Design Patterns— 10:00 am

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

In April Joel Fleming will present *"Keeping your Objects in the know – The Observer Pattern*."

Design Patterns is a general reusable solution to a commonly occurring problem in software design. If this is a topic of interest to you, come join Tuc and his co-leaders as he initiates this new, ongoing SIG.

SharePoint — 11:30 am

Ram Yadav
ram_yadav@hotmail.com

We will continue discussing "*Discussion Board*," and how we can apply that on ntpcug.org website.

Microsoft Certification SIG — 2:00 pm
Saturday at Nerdbooks

Tom Perkins
tomperki@gmail.com

Meets at Nerdbooks, 1681 Firman Dr, in Richardson.Continuing examination of XML: XPath, DOM, XML methods available on the Dataset object; review of XML, real-world example, and exam-type questions, discussion regarding 2008 certification.

3rd Saturday

Alphabetically

Adobe Photoshop — 12:30 pm

presented by Hillary Morgan Ferrer

Chris Morgan, SIG Leader
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org

No meeting this month. See you in May. We may have a surprise then.

Building Web Sites — 8:00 am

Bill Parker, SIG Leader
bill.parker@ntpcug.org

We'll complete our DAI template which we didn't get to last month, select and insert some images, and create an SSI simple menu. We will also create another page or two, including a page to accept contributions through credit cards or a PayPal account, and upload it all to a server.

Digital Photography — 10:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org

This month we will look at why the most popular digital cameras may be the poorest values. Come and see what might be best for you.

Goal — to capture better pictures.

Whatever the task is, we remind ourselves that better pictures are the **product of the photographer.** As well as knowing the limitations of our camera – we make ourselves aware of framing, working with existing light and modifiers, environment, and having people show their best attributes.

Digital Photo Editing Software — 11:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org

We will have a tutorial on layers and also discuss reasons for selecting a photo editor for $20, $90 or $250. We welcome beginners through advanced photographers in our seminars.

Excel— 8:00 am

Frank Tubbs
ftubbs@sbcglobal.net

In April, we will go from formula basics to the most common data analysis tool – the filtering feature. You can select data by key elements and pull unique lists to help you apply formulas for additional analysis elements.

Our Priorities

First, to learn the common tools within Excel to become broadly skillful in the use of the application. It seems like imagination always provides more opportunity to employ the basics, and so foundation building is always underway.

Second, to become more efficient at using the product. We are at work learning to accomplish more work with fewer keystrokes, or to design our spreadsheets to get the job done faster.

Third, to employ significant tools provided by Excel to do more sophisticated analysis. These tools require little or no development by the user. Filtering, sorting, validation, all come to mind.

Fourth, to employ Visual Basic for Applications (VBA). This powerful subset of MSVisualBasic can be used to further the power built into Excel, as well as allow the spreadsheet to integrate with the rest of the MS Office suite for even further functionality.

Family History — 12:30 pm

Jim Wehe
jimwehe@gmail.com

Because of guest speaker work schedule conflicts, we will discuss the PAF computer program in April.

First we will examine one method of organizing family photos from several sources, including old albums, film and digital cameras, and internet pictures sent by family members. We do our best to identify date, plsce, and event for each photo.

Then we will look at the three basic views (Family, Pedigree, and Individual) provided in PAF and other genealogy programs.

We will continue by examining the relatively new ability to link stored photos to each individual and several of the available report and list formats. These will include family group sheets, ancester, descendant, and marriage lists, alphabetical place and name lists, and photo scrapbooks with notes.

Our goal is to share experiences and learn alternate ways to accomplish the above tasks.

We have today received confirmation that a Plano genealogy librarian will speak in May and will discuss locally and internet sources, including the expanding facilities at the Plano Haggard Library.

Internet — 10:00 am

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

We will have a presentation of the User Group members' favorite web sites. We all have different ways of surfing the Web so come and see what others are doing.

You can contribute to this month's presentation by completing the survey at http://sp.ntpcug.org/internetSIG/default.aspx. See the left-hand panel – *Surveys – Favorite Web Sites.*

IT Professional — 9:00 am

Doug Gorrie
doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org

Gil Brand will lead a Question and Answer Session on Enterprise IT topics

Making Money on the Internet — 9:00 am

presented by Alan Lummus
Bill Parker, SIG Leader
bill.parker@ntpcug.org

We'll look at the simplest manner of integrating a commercial or non-profit's website with PayPal to accept payments or contributions. We'll also review researching keywords on WordTracker.com, the most useful keyword research tool.

Microsoft Access SIG — 11:00 am

Larry Linson
larry.linson2@ntpcug.org

On April 19, 2008, Co-SIG Leader **Larry Linson** will present "***Calendar Forms and Reports – Not Just Date-Pickers***" This subject occasionally comes up in the Access SIG, and questions on the topic are frequently asked in the newsgroups. Larry will demonstrate and discuss some of his own creations and will also rely on MVP Duane Hookom's excellent examples. (If you just can't wait, you can find a link to Duane's examples on the first page of our own NTPCUG Access SIG SharePoint site at http://sp.ntpcug.org/accesssig/default.aspx)

YES, IT IS A BIG DEAL!

Yes, Fifteen Years for a SIG is, indeed, a Big Deal! On Saturday, April 17, 1993 at the ***InfoMart*** on Stemmons Freeway, we held the first meeting of the NTPCUG Microsoft Access Special Interest Group. Saturday, April 19, 2008 will be our ***Fifteenth Anniversary Meeting***! We have tried, during those fifteen years, to make the Access SIG useful, informative and entertaining. We hope that we have largely been successful in our efforts, and we don't have any intention of stopping now!

Last Month

In March 2008, Co-SIG Leader **Larry Linson** covered multiple ways to "***Search Multiple Fields in Your Database***". ***Microsoft Access*** is very flexible in this area. We discussed searching in datasheet view, creating *ad hoc* and saved queries, and querying data displayed in Forms in a "developed application." We had a "massive giveaway", catching up on our February major prizes, and a host of minor ones – every attendee got a prize.

Look Ahead

Topic Suggestions: We strive to be a user-driven SIG when it comes to subjects to cover. At each meeting, we now will address this topic early (with our enhanced "Valuable Prizes" program, it has been convenient to begin this discussion while Jim is getting set up for the drawing). We want to make sure we don't "short change" this vital part of our meeting.

Please continue to think ahead, and be ready to express your preferences about other topics that will be of interest and useful. In January, we identified an interest in the following topics (Caveat: not necessarily listed in the order they will be presented, nor in order of importance, nor necessarily is presentation guaranteed – for some, we have to obtain guest speakers):

- Event Management Template (Access 2003, Access 2007)
- Templates, in general
- Review and make available the Address Book and Information Keeper database
- Other database software: Alpha 5 (NTPCUG Alpha 5 Sig Leader **Bill Parker**)
- Server databases you can use with Access: Oracle

Special Note: Co-SIG Leader **Jim Wehe** is founding another SIG – a Genealogy SIG. It is scheduled for 12:30PM on Third Saturday in the same room where the Access SIG meets. I'll be there to help Jim, and we invite you to attend and take a look at plans for the next few months! ***See you there!***

Valuable Prizes

Microsoft, creators and vendors of our favorite database and office software, through their sponsorship of the ***CodeZone*** organization to support user groups, has enabled us to resume monthly giveaways. Larry extends his thanks for the software to ***Microsoft***, and especially to **Chris Koenig**, ***South Central District Developer Evangelist***, and sponsor of the ***South Central Developer Guidance Council***, of which **Larry** is privileged to be a member.

In March, we concluded our giveaways of the gifts from **CodeZone** that we received in the first quarter of 2008. Everyone got either a major or a minor prize.

In April, we will have some T-shirts and assorted small odds and ends, for sure. If the Second Quarter shipment already ordered from **CodeZone** has arrived, we'll have more (but not as much as the last time, because we had missed a cycle and they doubled our swag to compensate).

On Our Access SIG SharePoint Site

In addition to this, our meeting announcement (note that it's usually published before the newsletter comes out, and updated with any last-minute changes, corrections, or adjustments), you will also find a list of links to some very valuable resource sites, announcements, and other information pertinent to Access and our SIG.

Breaking news! The NTPCUG SharePoint Team continues to progress on completing the installation, testing, and tuning the new SharePoint 3.0. It will be much improved and more flexible than the current version, *I sincerely hope*.

Many Thanks for the Following

Teresa Hennig is Leader of both the *Pacific Northwest Access User Group* and of the *Pacific Northwest Access Developers Group*, as well as a personal friend. She has graciously consented to let us use the following information that she has, at great personal expenditure of time and effort, gathered on the subjects of **Downloads** and **Resources**. Thank you very much, **Teresa**.

Downloads and Other New Stuff

Download the SQL Server 2008 Express November CTP (February 2008)**:** SQL Server 2008 Express is a free, easy-to-use, lightweight, and embeddable version of SQL Server 2008. Download the Express CTP to explore the new enhancements available and provide the product team your feedback. http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=3BF4C5CA-B905-4EBC-8901-1D4C1D1DA884&displaylang=en

Download SQL Server Compact 3.5 Beta (February 2008)*:* SQL Server Compact 3.5 Beta 2 introduces a host of new features including LINQ to SQL support, Microsoft Synchronization Services for ADO.NET, plus enhanced support for T-SQL statements that lets developers rapidly develop and deploy applications using Visual Studio 2008. http://www.microsoft.com/sql/editions/compact/default.mspx

Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Learning Portal (February 2008)*:* Access is the world's leading database program, and sometimes it's even better when partnered with SQL Server. So, even if you haven't used SQL server in the past, you can benefit by finding out what it can do and when it might be a good fit in your projects. Learn about the versions and features of SQL Server 2008, enjoy free online clinics, and sign up for free eBook(s). http://www.microsoft.com/learning/sql/2008/default.mspx

Access 2003 SP3 Hot Fix Link (March 2008) **:** For every action, there is an equal reaction. And, sometimes it is not as desirable as we would like. This is certainly the case with Office 2003 SP3, which provided some valuable fixes and updates, but also wreaked havoc on other features. To that end, Microsoft has provided a **hotfix** for some of the problems created specific to Access — such as losing combo box functionality. http://support.microsoft.com/kb/945674

Allen Browne, Microsoft MVP, shares some info about reviewing some of the Access bugs introduced by SP 3. http://support.microsoft.com/kb/945674

Windows Vista Service Pack 1 – Released 2/26/08 (March 2008) **:** Windows Vista Service Pack 1 contains changes focused on addressing specific reliability and performance issues, supporting new types of hardware, and adding support for several emerging standards. In addition to previously released updates, Windows Vista SP1 also addresses some management, deployment, and support challenges.

http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/windowsvista/bb738089.aspx

Windows Live SkyDrive - Online File Storage (March 2008) **:** Microsoft is now offering 5 GB of FREE, password protected, online file storage! Store your photos and other files so that you can retrieve them from anywhere, share them with friends, or share them with the world. Check out your options at http://skydrive.live.com

Office 2007 Service Pack 1 (April 2008) **:** The 2007 Microsoft Office suite Service Pack 1 delivers important customer-requested stability and performance improvements, while incorporating further enhancements to user security. Includes all of the updates released for the 2007 Office suite prior to December of 2007. You can get a more complete description of SP1, including a list of issues that were fixed, in the Microsoft Knowledge Base article *936982: Description of the 2007 Microsoft Office suite Service Pack 1*. Service Pack 1 will install even if a

publicly available update has already been installed on your computer. SP1 also includes stability improvements developed as a result of user input from the *Microsoft Online Crash* Analysis and from Microsoft Product Support feedback. Information and download from, http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=9EC51594-992C-4165-A997-25DA01F388F5&displaylang=en

Free Directions via Text Message to Cell Phones (November 2007)**:** OK, so this isn't about Access, but it might help you get to a client, meeting or networking opportunity. For the cost of the text message you can get directions point to point driving directions just by calling DIR-ECT-IONS (347-328-4667) and responding to questions about the start and end points and if you know the way to the highway. Text message(s) will be sent to your phone to give you directions. Visit their website; read the article from the Wall Street Journal http://www.dialdirections.com/The%20Mossberg%20Solution.html

Spice up your PowerPoint Presentations with Custom Images (November 2007)**:**

PowerPoint (2002+) allows you to use gradients and even picture in picture to customize images. See how easy it can be to make it YOUR presentation — without resorting to photo manipulation software. http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint/HA101995971033.aspx

Microsoft Office 2008 calendar templates – Free (November 2007)***:*** It's time to personalize your 2008 calendar. Microsoft offers a variety of free templates that you can download. http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=7738393

Resource Tips

A couple of good sites to search for information and programming assistance are www.mvps.org and Office Developer Center on MSDN. And, we've been mentioning the newsgroups. You can search and drill through thousands of threads. Check out http://www.microsoft.com/office/community/en-us/FlyoutOverview.mspx for a comprehensive display of topics. You may also find what you are looking for by using http://groups.google.com or try www.google.com/microsoft.html for Microsoft related pages or by setting multiple search criteria at www.google.com/advanced_search?hl=en.

Access Blog – by the Access Team: Stay tuned to the community … The team shares insights into their schedule, their favorite features, new features and how to use them. This is also an ideal avenue for the team to talk about issues that are of interest to the Access community. You'll learn about the people and some of the factors that are helping to shape the future of Access. Whether you're a seasoned developer or just learning about Access, you'll find invaluable information and techniques. From creating a database template to getting help when you need it, The Access Blog covers the gamut. http://blogs.msdn.com/access/default.aspx

Get Help When You Need It – Office Online: Available 24/7 on the Web! The Office Online Web site offers dynamically updated Help and online training as well as downloads, templates, and clip art-for new and previous versions of Office. Check this out at: http://office.microsoft.com/

Database Issue Checker: Access MVP **Allen Browne** offer tips and utilities for casual users through expert developers. The Issue Checker can be used during development or to trouble shoot legacy files. Allen's site provides a host of other tips and resources, including a compilation of reserved words. http://allenbrowne.com/AppIssueChecker.html

Access 2007 Product Guide: Read about the new features and see how you can use them to leverage your time and data. After that, download the Office beta and ENJOY! http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/access/FX100487571033.aspx

MSDN magazine is available online: An excellent, searchable resource. You can check out back issues, download articles and source code. Check it out at http://msdn.microsoft.com/msdnmag

A compilation of links to Access Resources: This site provides an impressive array of links to a variety of resources for Access developers and users. http://www.cbel.com/ms_access/

Conrad Systems Development — CSD Tools Version 2.0: **Jeff Conrad**, former Access MVP, and one of the newest members of the Access Test Team, offers an Access Add-In for documenting your database objects.

http://www.accessmvp.com/JConrad/accessjunkie.html

The Seattle Access site: You will also want to check the Links and Downloads pages at www.SeattleAccess.org

Thanks again, **Teresa**, for the extremely useful links and tips!

Membership Reminder

If you are not a member, but you find the NTPCUG meetings and contacts to be useful, consider joining NTPCUG to help financially support, and volunteering to help physically expedite and support NTPCUG activities. If you have a friend who would benefit from NTPCUG, consider giving him/her a membership. If your membership is expiring soon, renew. Join or renew online at http://www.ntpcug.org/join.html.

See You Real Soon!

We're looking forward to seeing you at the ***Microsoft Access SIG***, 11:00AM (check the Info Desk for room assignment and any last-minute changes) on Third Saturday, April 19, 2007 at the ***King of Glory Lutheran Church***, 6411 LBJ Freeway, Dallas.

Thanks for reading!

Microsoft Certification
— 2:15 pm at Nerdbooks

Tom Perkins
tomperki@gmail.com

We will look at ADO.Net Connected Classes and discuss working with XML data.

Microsoft Expression Web — 10:00 am

Chris Morgan
Interim SIG Leader
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org

This month we will have a question and answer session, so I can get a feel for where everybody stands in learning Expression Web (EW) and you can get any lingering mysteries cleared up.

If you would, please submit questions you have or topics you would like to see addressed in advance to chris.morgan@ntpcug.org . That will give me an opportunity to prepare a response or research the issue, if needed, prior to the meeting. Nevertheless, come to the session with your questions and comments and we will handle your queries.

Since the SIG started last summer we have covered all the basics of Expression Web use. But, like most things, it isn't always clear until it is seen at least a couple of times. There is a lot to know in building a web site. It would be nice to think a tool like EW will do it all and we don't have to learn HTML or CSS or Javascript. But, alas, at least some knowledge of these topics is important to being able to get the job done.

As promised, we will get into some meatier areas, like ASP.NET pages, forms, and data access. But before launching into these topics I thought it important to take this pause. Our meetings get rather rushed and we haven't had a good time for asking questions.

Remember, this month we will give away another full copy of Expression Web. If you were at last month's meeting you should have been given a ticket that is good towards this drawing. We will also hand out tickets at this month's meeting. So, you can have either one or two chances to win.

Mobile Computing — 10:00 am

Larry Copeland
larry.copeland@ntpcug.org

Our apologies, but this month's meeting had to be cancelled due to a family emergency. But come join us in May and we'll try to make amends.

Visual Basic for Applications — 9:00 am

Dave MacKenzie
bigmack9@verizon.net

The SIG will be split into very basic computer concepts and VB. The basic part will cover computer languages and going from a high-level language to hardware. The VB part will cover "User Defined Types" and reading and writing to the hard drive.

Windows Tips & Tricks — 8:00 - 9:00 am

Gil Brand — gb1@ntpcug.org
Chuck Stark — chuck.stark@ntpcug.org

A great new bootable CD tool for systems diagnosis and repair and a fabulous door prize! But, since it will be a demo, you'll have to come to the Tips &

ZIGGY by Tom Wilson

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COMPUTER REPAIR
...WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE KIDDING? COMPUTERS DON'T HAVE CARBURETORS!!

Tricks Sig to see it! And you have to be present to win! Best of all, it's FREE!

Windows Inside Out — 12:30 pm

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

What does it take to move all your stuff to a new PC? We'll see how easy Laplink's PCmover software is to use to accomplish that onerous task.

Wireless Communications — 11:00 am

Birl Smith
birl.smith@ntpcug.org

This month we will talk about the progress of WiMax in the US. Is WiMax vaporware or a real possibility?

Word — 9:00 - 11:00 am

Diane Bentley
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

The first hour we will look at a free alternative to MS Word. The second hour, Dave Mackenzie will take about 15 minutes to show how a macro can prepare a calendar like the one we saw in February.

We will then continue the Q&A for Word ... from the PowerPoint presentation.

An index and CD of all newsletters from 2003 through 2007 will be available.

WordPerfect — 11:00 am

Diane Bentley
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

Business documents — in a WordPerfect minute!

Using Projects, we'll create and customize four templates: letter, memo, fax and business card, all within the hour.

An index and CD of all newsletters from 2003 through 2007 will be available.

Membership

Individual — $36 per year
Family — $60 per year

Volunteering

Every board member, officer, chairman, and SIG leader is a volunteer. No one in this organization receives any payment for their work. Without our volunteers, NTPCUG would not exist.

Please consider volunteering for one of these important jobs:

Secretary

Attend Board Meetings on the Monday after the 3rd Saturday meeting and record the minutes of the meeting.

Mentoring — Tom Sweet

tom.sweet@ntpcug.org

Communicate with new members to ensure they are aware of the benefits, SIG opportunities and help them in numerous ways to feel welcome and to know that we care about them.

Program Director

Identify and arrange program topics for our vendor presentations.

Discount Coordinator

Communicate with vendors offering discounts on their products.

Volunteer Coordinator

Coordinate permanent and temporary volunteer participation.

Information Desk — Charles Rem

crem@ntpcug.org

Assist with check-in process at 3rd Saturday. One or more hours will make a difference.

Newsletter — Doug Gorrie, Chuck Fiedler and Diane Bentley

doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

Prepare, contribute to and distribute the monthly newsletter.

This Month in Our History

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

Once again it's time to review the happenings reported in the April 1988 and 1993 issues of *PC News,* 15 and 20 years ago (oh yeah, and some breaking news.)

I previously mentioned a need to copy and scan the archives – paper copies of *PCNews* have been found from April, 1987 through February, 2000 when it all went online in March. The online issues are already available on our website but there is much valuable history yet to be made available.

Fortunately, a member has come forward to copy and scan the paper archives. Now, I don't want to mention her name since I haven't asked if it's OK to do so but it's Word and WordPerfect SIG leader (and provider of monthly donuts), Diane Bentley. So far she has completed April, 1987 (the earliest available — but more about that later) through December, 1990. During April she will work on the 1991 and 1992 volumes.

Also, not to mention a name, but newly-elected Board member, Elva Roy has come forward to volunteer for this project and will be working on the 1993 volume during April.

[Ascend soapbox] All of this raises a very important matter: NTPCUG is an ALL VOLUNTEER organization. You, as a member can come and "Share what you know, learn what you don't" only because others give a little to a lot of their time for the benefit of the members. There are still (always) needs for additional volunteers. Some of those needs require 1-2 hours a month – some much more, but YOU control what you want to agree to and the amount of time it takes out of your schedule.

It has been my personal observation that those with the busiest schedules are the first to come forward and volunteer.

So, think about the Group's needs and consider how YOU might contribute to our continued existence. [Dismount soapbox]

In April '88 the big news was that Microsoft's **Bill Gates** had appeared in March before over 1,100 people at the Informart, sponsored by NTPCUG. Many NTPCUG members worked various aspects of the event, assuring that everything went smoothly.

Reportedly, Gates spoke for nearly two hours to NTPCUG members and invited guests. In Gates' view, the future of computing "revolves around graphical interfaces, multitasking operating systems such as OS/2, Microsoft's joint effort with IBM, and dramatically improved data storage and acquisition." Of course, all of this has proven to be quite true. Few of us in 1988 could imagine the degree to which improvements in hardware would make available the kind of computing power we now take for granted.

Member **Jim Hoisington** had another in his series of articles titled "*On Complexity*" in which he described the difference between expanded memory and extended memory. If I understand the article properly, this distinction was necessary due to the limitations of then-current 16-bit processors and went away with the development of the 80386 32-bit pro-

cessor. Jim closed his article with the comment, "Are you thoroughly confused? I know I am!" So am I.

The DOM (Disk of the Month) Squad consumed a significant portion of the April issue, spanning 7½ pages including 4½ pages detailing the total library of available disks. As last month, there were two additional tax filing programs. The shareware fee was not stated in the reviews of these two programs.

In April '93, there were three vendor presentations at our monthly meeting at the Infomart. At 9:00, David Wainwright, regional manager for Central Point Software demonstrated *PC Tools for Windows*. At 10:00, David Hayden, director of public relations for Lucid Corporation demonstrated a number of Lucid's software offerings. Finally, at 1:00, Dewayne Gimpel, systems engineer for Borland demonstrated *Paradox 1.0 for Windows.* In each case there were drawings for free products for members.

The Variety Store by member **Reagan Andrews** covered 3½ pages of fascinating information. First highlighted was the rapid fall in PC prices reflective of a major price war. As could be expected, a number of "marginal" makers went out of business at this time. He went on to observe, "Largely unnoticed in all this is that component prices have been dropping faster than complete PC prices. Hard disk drives are a good example... 200M IDE drives that cost $450 three months ago and $600 this time last year are now available for $325 (maybe lower by the time you read this.)"

According to Reagan, 1993 was also the year that PCs made it into the general retail stores. "Now I can order a new (name brand) multimedia PC, a canvas boat cover and carpet cleaning machine all at the same time and from the same source… That's style and convenience." Today we take this kind of convenience for granted but it was a new phenomenon in 1993.

Several members submitted significant articles on software they had found. We all have different patterns of searching for information. Maybe *you* have found something interesting that you could write up and share with the group. Why not? If you need help with "wordsmithing", we can do that. If your item is too large to fit in the current month's newsletter, we'll either split it into monthly pieces or defer it to next month.

In 1993 as now, changes to the bylaws were under review. Our current bylaws committee is going through changes and will make a recommendation to the Board with subsequent advice to the members. The report of the bylaws and changes spanned three pages in 1993. Look forward to future reports of the recommendations in 2008.

BREAKING NEWS: NTPCUG President, **Chris Morgan**, was recently doing some cleaning and found and presented a copy of *PCNews* from August **1984** leapfrogging our current archives by three years! Now, in 1984 we were the North Texas **IBM** Personal Computer User's Group. The Newsletter was printed duplex (at a printer since there was no way to output in duplex otherwise), stapled in the upper left corner and mailed. I have learned that the Group got in trouble with the Post Office for not putting little "thingies" to keep it from flopping open as it went through their system.

The peripatetic Users Group was then meeting at Jesuit Prep School on Inwood Road in Dallas.

Well, looky this: seems the acting President in 1984 was a guy named **Chris Morgan**.

Dues **24 years ago** were $24 a year. Kinda makes the current $36 dues a bargain.

SIG sessions then started at 9:00 and ran until 3:00. According to the newsletter there were 28 SIG meetings plus the general membership meeting. What later was to become the AppleCorps met with us and had several of the SIGs devoted to Apple systems or at least focused on both IBM and Apple applications.

The DOM (Disk of the Month) Squad column featured eight items and, gee, they were all "*double sided*"! The column doesn't specifically say, so I must assume there wasn't an option so, folks, these were **5¼** disks!

For many years there was an active newsletter exchange between user groups across the country. The August, '84 issue recounts on 3¼ pages, an article from the Boston Computer Society (BCS). The BCS was once the largest user group in the country – today it is gone.

In 1984 and for many years thereafter we had a column called *Swap Shop* in which members could post four lines of text each month for free. Non-members paid 15 cents a word. There were seven items offered at prices you would *never* pay today. Such was the non-commodity life of computers in 1984.

The back page (outside back cover) noted that ads could be purchased for between $10 for a 1/16 page ad and $60 for a full page ad. The newsletter had several paid ads spread throughout.

I hope you have found this information of interest. If you have reflections to offer, contact chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org and we will consider them for future issues.

Computer Raffle — April & May 2008

It's time for another computer raffle – a way for our attendees to get a *great* system at a *great* price, while helping NTPCUG.

Our raffles typically run for two months. The current raffle will begin on 3rd Saturday in April, with the raffle winner announced at the end of the day on 3rd Saturday in May. Gil Brand advises that he has enough volunteers available to sell raffle tickets at the meetings (although a few more wouldn't hurt, as usual). Look for the raffle booth near the check-in desk as you enter or exit the building.

Tickets for the raffle will be $3.00 each, or even better, *four* tickets for a mere $10.00. And of course, getting some tickets at *both* Saturday meetings will increase your odds of winning.

Gil noted that TCPI (Texas Center for the Physically Impaired) is in the process of upgrading the laptop computer to be raffled. Originally, the expected configuration was as noted below, but the newer specifications will be available at the raffle desk and in the May newsletter. Either way, it's a great deal.

Thanks to TCPI (http://www.handicapability.org/computers.html) for making the computer available for the raffle.

Hardware *(upgrade in progress)*

Toshiba Satellite Pro 6100
P4-1700 MHz, 768MB, 38GB hard drive
DVD-ROM / CD-RW
2 USB, network & modem PORTS
PS/2 mouse

Software

WinXP-pro (OEM)
Windows Defender Anti-spyware
AVG Anti-virus & Anti-Rootkit
Open Office v2.0 (free open source alternatives to Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access)
Deep Burner CD-writer
Firefox Browser
Irfanview Graphics Editor
Adobe Flash Player & Acrobat Reader
WinDirStat hard disk usage monitor
CCleaner Registry Cleaner
Belarc System Profiler

Anti-virus software

by Chuck Fiedler

If you go on the 'net (and who doesn't), you really need to have anti-virus (AV) software. Even if you merely load files from floppies or thumb drives from others, you need AV software. The world is full of folks who feel it necessary to bugger up your data or even take over your machine to further their nefarious purposes. To try to counter this threat, new machines even come with pre-loaded trial versions of Norton or McAfee anti-virus products.

So what should you do with this trial ware? DELETE IT as soon as possible! Get something that doesn't demand so much of your system resources, thereby slowing down your machine.

"But I don't know what to get", you say. "I don't know what options I have." Actually, there are several choices including Kaspersky, which is well rated, and Panda which I have used for several years. The downside: both of these and most of the others cost money. "Well, gee", you say "A bunch of protection is worth *some* money, isn't it?"

How about getting all that protection for — are ya ready? (drum roll, please) — FREE.

Yes, there is a FREE anti-virus program – It's *Free AVG* available for download from free.grisoft.com.

Many of the Information Technology professionals in the NTPCUG recommend and even use AVG personally (although they may use the paid professional version for obvious reasons).

Unlike some other products, AVG does not slow down your machine operations while still providing valuable protection against virus threats.

The downside, from my personal perspective: AVG will update itself when it bloody well feels like it. I have seen video presentations interrupted by a request to let AVG update. You either tell it to do its thing or cancel it for later. (So do your formal presentations without an active 'net connection). I also understand the Free AVG is not updated immediately when a new threat is found to have been launched on the 'net (the paid Professional version *is*, as I understand it).

All told, not a bad product – in fact one pretty highly rated and it's <<FREE>>.

Open Office – One Person's View

By Chuck Fiedler

I own a copy of *Microsoft Office* but I see that the MS license agreement does not permit loading this software on more than one desktop and one laptop machine. Gee, so I need to spend $300 - $500 to be able to load *Office* on my other laptop?

Well, I recently learned about **OpenOffice.org** (www.openoffice.org) with the functionality of *MS Office*. **OpenOffice.org** is open source software. To make the deal even better, the price is FREE. Of course, you can make a contribution if you so desire. Let's say you decide to send them $50 in May out of your Federal Tax Stimulus payment – you're $300 ahead and have contributed to a worthwhile project.

Not only is there nothing in the user agreement prohibiting loading on multiple machines, you are even encouraged to spread the program to others. So I am trying to do so.

To get **OpenOffice.org**, go to their website and download one of three flavors: Windows, Mac or Linux. (For Linux users, there is no comparable *MS Office* application as you probably know.)

The Windows download is 120 MB and goes pretty quickly over broadband. If you're still using dial-up access, either start the download and go to bed or let me know and I'll give you a CD-ROM ($2 for the disks – I had to pay to get them).

OpenOffice.org consists of six parts: **BASE**, a database program compatible with *MS Access*; **CALC**, a spreadsheet program compatible with *MS Excel*; **Draw**, a drawing program compatible with *MS Paint*; **Impress**, a presentation program compatible with *MS PowerPoint*; **Math**, for creating and editing mathematical formulae and equations similar to *MS Equation Editor* ; and **Writer**, compatible with *MS Word*.

Everything I have tested works just like its *MS* counterpart with a similar look and feel of all the *MS* applications. There are even familiar icons and toolbars. In fact, this article was created with **Writer** and saved as a .doc file, then brought up in *MS Word* and viewed with no change in anything. I could also have saved as an RTF or any of nearly 20 other formats. There is even a handy button to export directly to PDF.

Writer has a spell checker but not a grammar checker (arguably an improvement over *Word* in my not so humble opinion.) I was told there are problems with *Word* and *Excel* files containing macros

and am advised that this is correct since the *MS* products and **OpenOffice.org** use different macro languages so this is something of which the user would need to be aware.

OpenOffice.org apps cannot yet handle the various *MS 2007* file formats but an upgrade to version 3.0 is expected for September and is expected to be able to do so.

I have tried opening and using files from *Excel* in **Calc** and files from *PowerPoint* in **Impress**, all functioning just as they would in the *MS* application. Again you will see familiar icons and toolbars.

All told, and at the risk of offending Bill Gates, I see no reason to spend GOOD money on *MS Office* when you can get **OpenOffice.org** for free or with the option of making a voluntary contribution.

For those of you, like me, who depend on our various SIGs to learn things about Microsoft products, keep coming – you can apply everything you learn there to your **Open Office.org** existence.

So, why do I call it "**OpenOffice.org**" rather than just "**Open Office**"? Every EULA (End User License Agreement) has its requirements and that's one here.

New Member Signup Incentive – The Contest Continues

We are now entering our 4th month of our six-month contest, trying our best to give you **free software** of your choice!! As noted in January, the contest is simple, has an increasing reward for every participant, and a Grand Prize for the top two finishers.

In a nutshell, the contest is to see who can sign up the most new NTPCUG members. Included in the "new" category are previous members whose membership has been expired for six months or more.
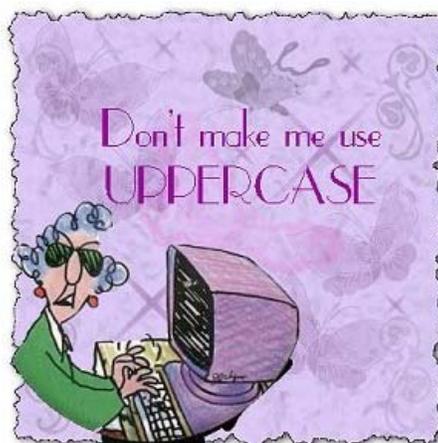
We have always found that word of mouth is the most effective marketing tool that we have, so we want to give all current members an incentive to help us help ourselves. Remember, the more participants we have at meetings, the better the information exchange is for all of us. More members will also translate into more and different SIG opportunities.

Want to know what you are playing for? For each new member that you sponsor, two free months will be added to your membership. The more members you sponsor, the more free months are added to your membership! But wait! There is more! The two members recruiting the most new members will be able to "purchase" a software product of their choice at an unbelievable price. For example, the last time the club was able to do this, Microsoft Windows XP was $7.00 and Microsoft Office Professional was $20. There should be about six titles to choose from. The titles are not finalized yet, but will be announced as soon as we know – and well before the end of the contest. While it is great to win a free prize at one of our meetings, it is even better to get something that you really need and will use!

Don't feel that some go-getter will sign up a boat load of people, so there is no way you have a chance for the Grand Prize. With two Grand Prizes, everyone should have a realistic chance.

NOTE: When the new member signs up, they must give the name or member number of the current member that is sponsoring them. The membership desk will ask this question, to make sure that credit is given where due, but be sure that *you* get the credit you deserve.

So to recap – you get a great incentive for each new member that you sign up – everybody is a winner. And you have a good chance at a Grand Prize that you get to choose yourself. Help us grow the club, and help yourself at the same time.

Valuable Prizes in the Microsoft Access SIG

Larry Linson

Since its inception in 1993, most meetings of the NTPCUG's Microsoft Access Special Interest Group have included a drawing for "valuable prizes" – with the admonition that "Value, like Beauty, is in the eye of the beholder." Those prizes have ranged from copies of sample databases and presentations on free diskettes (when the computer stores used them as a promotion) to commercial software packages with retail value of several hundred dollars.

In March 2008, our drawing was for door prizes donated through Microsoft's CodeZone organization which supports user group activities. Every member received a "major" or "minor" prize. "Major" prizes, limited to NTPCUG members, are significant software packages, books of substantial retail value, and hardware items. "Minor" prizes are advertising novelties, such as pens, coasters, t-shirts, and the like, and are available to any attendee, member or not.

From October 2007 through March 2008, major prizes awarded to members attending the Access SIG have included three copies of Microsoft Office 2007 Ultimate, two copies of Microsoft Expression Web, several books from Microsoft Press, a Microsoft wireless keyboard and mouse set, and a Microsoft fingerprint reader security device.

In short, the MS Access SIG is a great SIG to attend for both prizes *and* learning opportunities.

Monthly NTPCUG Meeting Flyer –
Can You Help Distribute?

Board member, Chuck Fiedler, along with Chris Morgan, has implemented a monthly flyer that members can distribute to friends, family members, colleagues, etc.

The flyer will contain as much information as possible regarding the topics to be covered in each month's SIG meetings. With your help, we hope to generate interest in User Group activities, thereby helping us grow.

Chuck Fiedler will repeat the process each month, soliciting input from SIG Leaders, formatting the information into something easily read by others, then getting the final product out to all members well before the subsequent meeting.

The result of Chuck's initial effort has already been forwarded to our members by e-mail. However, the project is far from over, because getting the flyer to our members is only half the battle. Chuck is relying on members, SIG Leaders, Board members and volunteers to share the information with others. We also need to you to consider new options beyond the obvious – bulletin boards, etc.

But this process will only be effective if we all work together. We're asking SIG Leaders to provide him information about the upcoming month's activities as expeditiously as possible if we are to get the word out early enough to be useful. Then, our membership needs to think of a couple of places they can post it, or e-mail it to anyone who may be interested. In other words, make it a regular thing when it first arrives.

Our thanks to Chuck for taking on the recurring effort of creating our monthly flyer.

*Where have you
sent the April flyer?*

Second Saturday Events for April

by Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

Gang,

This is a reminder that this coming Saturday, **April 12th** is our regular monthly meeting. Be sure to read all the email, because I'm always trying something new and changing up this reminder... This month's schedule will be at the very bottom of this email.

Special Guest Speaker for April: MVP Cory Smith

This month we are fortunate to have a really keen topic for the 9:00 AM hour. Cory Smith, an MVP, will be presenting a topic called "**Developing for Windows Vista using Visual Studio**". When I asked Cory about what he was going to say, he told me:

There's more to Windows Vista than Glass and Sidebar. Learn what Vista has to offer you as the developer, what you can take advantage of to enhance your customers user experience and how you leverage many of these new features using the tools you have today.

Note that this presentation purposefully avoids delving deep into WPF, WCF and WF, partially for time constraints and partially because those subjects are being discussed in more detail by many other presenters. This presentation is more about the features in Windows Vista, how you can leverage them and how you can interact with them using interoperability; as many of the new features in Vista are not .NET native (such as Aero/DWM, Windows Experience Index information, etc.). Some examples show how to "skin" the .NET 2.0 TreeView control to look and feel like the Vista Explorer / Windows Mail applications and modify the behavior of a WinForms menu to show and hide similar to Windows Vista counterparts.

Demonstrations include leveraging Aero and the Desktop Window Manager ("Glass") utilizing P/Invoke, using COM Interop to access Windows Experience Index information, changing the look and behavior of the TreeView control, and the ability to modify the behavior of the menu bar.

You can get see Cory's bio at his MVP profile: https://mvp.support.microsoft.com/profile/Cory.Smith

This is going to be a stellar presentation that you won't want to miss, so don't forget to tell your friends!!!

Join the NTPCUG

Not a member, well then it's time to join! Anyone joining or renewing on Saturday, I'll give not one, but **two** extra tickets for the drawings. So let's see if you join, you'd get one ticket for attending, two tickets for renewing, and if you brought two guests then you'd get another two tickets, and if they joined, then they would get tickets, and …. A guy could go crazy thinking about this… fortunately, as everyone already knows, I'm already insane, so that is not an issue with me…

DON'T FORGET TO BRING A FRIEND!!! WE WANT OUR USER GROUP TO GROW!!!

Lessons from the Real World…

Now if you have any "Lessons from the Real World" that you would want to share with your other User Group members, be sure to send them to me at tgoodwin@ntpcug.org, and I'll add them to the next reminder email.

Recommendations from the Real World

Ben Deuerling sent me this recommendation:

There is a free hard drive defragmentation utility that you may want to try. It's JK Defrag 3.3, and can be downloaded at : http://www.kessels.com/Downloads/. This uses Window's API to move files, and does not need large free space to work. Ben advised that he has been using it for about three months on one machine with hard drive encryption running.

Thanks Ben!!!

New Blog: EndUserSharePoint.com

There is a new blog I discovered targeting power users for SharePoint. This blog does not discuss administration, configuration, or development for a SharePoint administrator. It is targeted toward the end user. There are free Tips, Trick, and Trap documents that you can download. He also has other free web parts if you are looking for something like that. Point your browser to www.endusersharepoint.com and you can get hooked up.

New User Group: DFW SharePoint Developers

There is a new user group targeting just SharePoint Development. (Yes, I know I sent this announcement once before, but I'm just being thorough…J)

DFW SharePoint Developers Group

First Meeting Information:

Date: **April 17, 2008**

Time: **6:00 pm**

Speaker: **Miguel Wood**

Location: **TekFocus**

DFW SharePoint Developers Group is a brand new group. Everyone is welcome to attend.

To register, visit http://www.tekfocus.com/Course.aspx?id=DFWSDG

Now if you have any "Recommendations from the Real World" that you want to share… well, you know what to do…

As promised, here's the schedule for this month's meeting:

April Meeting: April 12th

09:00 – 10:00 - .NET Developer Topics – Cory Smith - Developing for Windows Vista using Visual Studio

10:00 – 11:30 –Design Patterns – Joel Fleming - Keeping your Objects in the know – The Observer Pattern

11:30 – 12:30 – SharePoint – Ram Yadav - We will continue discussing "Discussion Board" , and how we can apply that on ntpcug.org website.

I look forward to seeing everyone there!

Excelsior!!!

Tuc

Dallas TechFest 2008 — Coming to Addison on May 3rd

Chris Koenig, Microsoft South Central District Developer Evangelist, has made us aware of the upcoming Dallas TechFest event. This is a *big* event for programmers, and best described by sending you to their link at

http://dallastechfest.com/Home/tabid/36/Default.aspx. Lots of current, hot topics, from Ruby and Java to .NET and Python.

But don't wait too long to register, as attendance is limited to 500 people.

Besides the educational benefits, there is the usual bevy of giveaways, including:

- a Mac Mini with a copy of Vista Ultimate
- an XBOX 360 Elite
- an iPod Touch
- a Halo 3 Legendary Edition

There are also opportunities to work the event as a volunteer. Just contact Chris at Chris.Koenig@microsoft.com and tell him you would like to help.

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"You've been on hold for an hour. Would you like to speak to a phone rage specialist?"

Calendar

April	May	June
12 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft	**10** 9:00 am—fNoon **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft	**14** 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft
2:00 pm *Certification SIG* at Nerdbooks	2:00 pm *Certification SIG* at Nerdbooks	2:00 pm *Certification SIG* at Nerdbooks
19 8:00 am—2:00 pm **3rd Saturday** at King of Glory	**17** 8:00 am—2:00 pm **3rd Saturday** at King of Glory	**21** 8:00 am—2:00 pm **3rd Saturday** at King of Glory
2:15 pm *Certification SIG* at Nerdbooks	2:15 pm *Certification SIG* at Nerdbooks	2:15 pm *Certification SIG* at Nerdbooks

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