



www.ntpcug.org

# North Texas PC News

2<sup>ND</sup> SATURDAY  
Microsoft Las Colinas  
7000 Highway 161  
Irving, Texas

3<sup>RD</sup> SATURDAY  
King of Glory Lutheran Church  
6411 Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway  
Dallas, Texas

May 2008

VOLUME 27 • NUMBER 5

## Computer Raffle — Last Chance is May 17

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 2-3 months. The current raffle began on 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in April, and you have only until 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May to sign up. The raffle winner will be announced at the Noon Business Meeting on **May 17th**.

Gil Brand advises that he has enough volunteers available to sell raffle tickets at the May meeting (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.

Thanks to TCPI (<http://www.handicapability.org/computers.html>) for making the computer available for the raffle. Specifications for the laptop currently being raffled are provided below.

### Hardware *(upgrade in progress)*

Dell Inspiron 1100 notebook  
Celeron 2 Gigahertz CPU  
1.25 Gigabytes (GB) of RAM  
28 GB Hard Drive  
DVD-ROM / CD-RW  
2 USB, network & modem PORTS  
PS/2 mouse

### Software

WinXP-Home (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  
Foxit PDF Reader  
WinDirStat hard disk usage monitor  
CCleaner Registry Cleaner  
Belarc System Profiler

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A couple of years ago, Tom Perkins started an NTPCUG Microsoft Certification Study group to help people prepare for exams on Visual Studio .NET. At that time, the version of Visual Studio (VS) was 2003. The underlying technology was the .NET framework version 1.1 (the .NET framework was first introduced by Microsoft in 2002). Since then, a number of us have taken and passed some of the exams, and one of us, Leroy Levin, actually passed all four exams and became a MCSD – Microsoft Certified Solution Developer.



It used to be that people would embark on a career in life, studying first in some school, then work as an apprentice somewhere, and eventually become a master of their trade. Those at the top of their trade/profession were the older and more experienced among the group. What a satisfying experience it was to amass a lifetime of learning and experience to reach the pinnacle and enjoy the fruits of one's long journey.

Fast forward to the modern age; in particular, the computer age. I started out with PCs when they first came out in the early 80s. (Okay, there was the Apple II and various CPM machines before that. But, I'll consider the IBM PC as the beginning of the PC age.) I look back at what I learned about PCs then and what you need to know today, and am overwhelmed with the fact that what I learned then has too little to do with what I need to know today. The experts in the field are often the youngest now, not the oldest!

So, what does this have to do with the certification study group, you ask. The original idea was to cover the four basic exams for VS2003 and become MCSD certified. Now, that exam is being phased out. Actually, it was superseded in 2005 with the introduction of Visual Studio 2005 (.NET framework 2.0) and a whole new set of exams. But wait, it is 2008

and we now have yet another whole shift in the certification exam process for Visual Studio 2008 and the .NET framework version 3.5.

What was one exam path in 2003 became three paths in 2005 (windows desktop programming, web site programming, and enterprise programming). And now, Microsoft has divided the .NET universe into six separate areas! Yep. You can now choose one of six areas to specialize in and become a MCTS – Microsoft Certified Technology Specialist. It requires passing a base exam, plus an exam in one of the six areas. (Google "MCTS" for more details.)

The lifecycle for what you need to know in this area is short and new areas just pop up all the time. But I have this naïve hope that Microsoft has settled on what they want to do, finally, so it is safe to jump in and learn this new stuff.

What Tom plans on doing at this point is to just skip the whole VS2005 path and move into the just-released VS2008 material. Since there is one base exam you have to pass no matter which of the six specialization areas you want to go with, that is where we will begin. The book is already out and we are ready to begin.

The group will meet at Nerdbooks in Richardson on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays in the afternoon, usually from about 2pm to 5pm. If you're interested in studying with us, please let Tom know: [tomperki@gmail.com](mailto:tomperki@gmail.com). Everyone who wants to move in this direction is welcome. Come to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday NTPCUG meeting this week (May 10<sup>th</sup>) at the Microsoft office location to learn more, and stay tuned for more announcements on when we will begin.



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# Special Interest Groups (SIGs) ...

Sessions with presentations, discussion, and exchanges of information

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## 2nd Saturday

Read a comprehensive report on **Second Saturday Events for May**, by Tuc Goodwin, page 14.

**9:00 – 10:00 - Intro and Overview of .NET Framework 3.5, including AJAX, LINQ, WPF, WCF, Microsoft CardSpace – Tom Perkins**

**10:10: - 11:10 – SQL Server 2008 – Terry Witt**

**11:20 – 12:20 – What’s So Great about Visual Studio 2008? – Dave Stark**

**Microsoft Certification SIG — 2:00 pm  
Saturday at Nerdbooks**

*Tom Perkins  
tomperki@gmail.com*

Meets at Nerdbooks, 1681 Firman Dr, in Richardson.



## 3rd Saturday

*Alphabetically*

**Adobe Photoshop — 12:30 pm**

*presented by Hillary Morgan Ferrer*

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

In May we will talk about tips on giving your photographs some of that “old school” flair. See how we create a border. Learn a few ways for black and white conversions.

**Building Web Sites — 8:00 am**

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

In this SIG we explore all the elements of website creation beginning with why you want to create a website in the first place and ending with a fully realized web project. We wander through the process of deciding upon your MWR (most wanted response), the research needed to find out exactly how to attract visitors who are most likely to give you your MWR, and how to ensure you provide an experience for each of your visitors that is most likely to result in the highest conversion rate possible of visitors into those who provide your MWR. Each website’s MWR may be a bit different: some MWRs are simply to get visitors to pick up the telephone and call an elected official, others may be simply to inform the general public, while others may be to buy a particular product. While every website may have a different MWR, there are basic principles that apply and we’ll explore them all. All questions and levels of experience welcome.

In May, we’ll continue pulling page design elements together as we further refine our design and implementation of a site-wide page template and menu that will be easy to maintain as the site grows. We’ll also explore the use of various tools available for helping to create just the look and feel you want for your site.

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## Digital Photography — 10:00 am

*Spike Smith, NCE  
harold.smith@ntpcug.org*

What features are most important for you: 1) starter camera, 2) dSLR camera, or 3) high-end camera? We will separate the must-have features from the plain old nice!

**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*

Which is more important – 1) your time, or 2) image perfection? When we select one or the other we place ourselves in the quandary – Can't we have both?

We welcome beginners through advanced photographers in our seminars.

## Excel— 8:00 am

*Frank Tubbs  
ftubbs@sbcglobal.net*

Get your number fix early (8:00 AM) with no calculated risk involved.

In April I covered basic filtering of a list and some on Advanced Filtering showing multiple OR conditions. For May we will do a quick review of those basics and then expand to Advanced Filtering using Multiple AND conditions. If time permits I'll show how we can set criteria using formulas. It can get deep but we are flexible and can break it off at any point to cover details at a pace that is useful to the audience. Our goal is to provide meaningful information you can use as soon as we present it. Excel questions off the monthly topic are always welcome. If a burning Excel issue has gotten the best of your situation, bring it to us and we can side-track just for you.

### 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*

The new Family History SIG founded by **Jim Wehe** is successfully underway. The March and April sessions were well-attended, with refreshments provided by Daisy Wehe.

In May, Cheryl Smith, a Plano Genealogy Librarian, will present a talk titled "Did You Think to Look Here for Your Ancestors?" She will suggest many local and internet information sources, especially items available at the Plano Library, 2501 Coit Road, just north of Park Blvd.



Jim Wehe's Grandfather Whitaker's laptop which he used while traveling by train in the 1880's.



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On March 22, Steve Pick and Jim Wehe attended a demonstration of Legacy beta version 7 at the Library.

On March 29, Cheryl found some lost ancestor information for both Jim and Daisy's families.

In April, Jim demonstrated several features of Personal Ancestral File (PAF).

### **Internet — 10:00 am**

*Glynn Brooks  
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org*

Malware threats have increased from 333,000 in 2005 to 6,400,000 today. Come and see the latest comparisons of anti-malware products and which ones I recommend.

### **IT Professional — 9:00 am**

*Doug Gorrie  
doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org*

This month David Wood, computer security expert, will make a presentation on personal computer security.

### **Making Money on the Internet — 9:00 am**

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

We explore a wide range of issues relating to making money on the Internet. Topics include, but are not limited to: designing websites to sell a particular product or service, designing websites to promote a "brick and mortar" business, choosing the best online payment options for your website, picking a shopping cart, deciding if you're going to use marketing channels such as eBay for selling, how you can use a website to increase donations to your non-profit, etc. If it related to deriving cash flow from the Internet, it's fair game. Novices to experienced webmasters are welcome.

In May, we'll delve into the code for various implementations of PayPal and compare and contrast it with those possible with your own merchant accounts. We'll also take any and all questions that relate to profiting from a relationship with the Internet, so bring them on!

### **Microsoft Access SIG — 11:00 am**

*Larry Linson  
larry.linson2@ntpcug.org*

In May, 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>. This presentation was originally scheduled for April, but we did a "schedule swap" with the program intended for May.

In April **Larry** covered the topic "**Sources and Resources: Assistance for Users of Access**". Starting from the Sources and Resources list on our own SharePoint site, we visited a few of the recommended sites (mostly MVPs) and then checked out a couple of areas of the Microsoft website, Office Online and the Knowledge Base. We had a "minor giveaway", T-shirts and Microsoft logo pens. We had no real celebration, even though a 15th anniversary for an NTPCUG SIG is a **Big Deal**, but we did note our long history.

**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 "shortchange" 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 these topics, 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

**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. Thanks to **Microsoft**, and especially to **Chris Koenig**, South Central District Developer Evange-

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list, and sponsor of the South Central Developer Guidance Council, of which Larry is a member.

*In April*, we drew for some T-shirts and a Microsoft-  
logo pen, fresh from the hallowed halls in Redmond. The Second Quarter shipment already ordered from **CodeZone** had arrived, but Larry didn't retrieve it from safekeeping with his neighbor until after the meeting.

*In May*, therefore, we'll have more for our door prize drawing, both major (must be a member to win) and minor (open to everyone) items.

*Elsewhere on Our Access SIG SharePoint Site*, in addition to our meeting announcement you will also find a list of links to some very valuable resource sites, announcements, and other information pertinent to Access and our SIG.

### 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 and a Microsoft Access MVP. 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

#### Office 2007 Compatibility Download (April 2008)

If you're running previous versions of office and are frustrated because you can't open docX files, just download (and install) the Office 2007 compatibility pack and most of your related woes will go away. And, if you're getting complaints about sending 2007 files to legacy system users you might suggest they try this download. I've been using it for months and haven't noticed any issues. And although I'll gladly accept appreciation for the links, I accept NO responsibility for any problems that you my chose to attribute. [www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=941B3470-3AE9-4AEE-8F43-C6BB74CD1466&displaylang=en](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=941B3470-3AE9-4AEE-8F43-C6BB74CD1466&displaylang=en)

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 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>

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**Spice up 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](http://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.aspx> for a comprehensive display topics. You may also find what you are looking for by using <http://groups.google.com> or try [www.google.com/microsoft.html](http://www.google.com/microsoft.html) for Microsoft related pages or by setting multiple search criteria at [www.google.com/advanced\\_search?hl=en](http://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/ApplyIssueChecker.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/](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](http://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 or her a membership. If your membership is expiring soon, renew. Join or renew online at <http://www.ntpcug.org/join.html>.

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).

## Microsoft Certification — 2:15 pm at Nerdbooks

*Tom Perkins*  
[tomperki@gmail.com](mailto:tomperki@gmail.com)

Tom will be out of today for the May 17th meeting. Join us at Nerdbooks, 1681 Firman Dr, in Richardson in June.

## Microsoft Expression Web — 10:00 am

Chris Morgan  
SIG Leader  
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org

This month we will finally launch into ASP.NET with Expression Web. Normally reserved for programmers, this powerful tool can help make your web site more interactive.

## Mobile Computing — 10:00 am

Larry Copeland  
larry.copeland@ntpcug.org

This month we will discuss the topic of traveling with your mobile device including: GPS software; batteries; Weatherbug Mobile; Fizz Traveler and eWallet.

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

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

Well, it is *that* time of year - Spring. So, how about a little spring cleaning for your computer. We'll show you how to do some of the obvious - and not so obvious - cleanups and tune-ups on your computer to get it (back) in shape.

## Windows Inside Out — 12:30 pm

Glynn Brooks  
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

*Windows Vista Service Pack 1 – Released 2/26/08:* Windows Vista Service Pack 1 contains changes focused on addressing specific reliability and per-

formance 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. See <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/windowsvista/bb738089.aspx>

Windows XP SP3 - what's in it for you? We'll talk about the new features and why this is an important upgrade.

## Wireless Communications — 11:00 am

Birl Smith  
birl.smith@ntpcug.org  
birlhtml@swbell.net

In May we will be talking about the conversion to Digital TV. Are you ready for the change?

## Word & WordPerfect — 10:00 - 12:00 noon

Diane Bentley  
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

### Comparison of Word and WordPerfect

We are combining the Word and WordPerfect SIGs this month to present a comparison of Word and WordPerfect features, we'll look at specific features attendees have requested, as well as the basic, logical differences between the two applications.

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

Diane Bentley  
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

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# Ending of Programming SIG

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To: **NTPCUG**

From: **Dave MacKenzie, Programming SIG Leader.**

I believe it's time to end the Programming SIG. [Most recently this was known as the Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) SIG which met from 9:00 to 10:00 on the third Saturday.]

I've learned a lot during the time I led the SIG. I realized this SIG is much like a lot of scientific endeavors. After Newton, there was a model of the universe. While studying the model, some anomalies were found. The model was used to predict the distant planets. Other anomalies were found that could not be explained with the model. Einstein modified the model to match the environment.

In the early days of programming, a certain business environment existed and programs were written to support this business model. As programming grew and large integrated systems were developed, a new business model developed, dictated by the application programs. The way companies ran their businesses had to change to match the new model. The old way of programming was allocated to the large program development companies — businesses no

longer needed the old programmers; they needed people that knew the new business model and used it to support the business.

The development SIGs (second Saturday) support programmers that work with businesses that need specialized application programs. My SIG worked at an introductory level and there is no need for small changes to the large business model.

With regret, we will no longer have a third Saturday VBA SIG.

With our new SIGs, we continue to strive to meet the needs and interests of our members. The Group exists to "Share what you know, learn what you don't."

[Ed] NTPCUG's Board and membership very much appreciate Dave having initiated the VBA SIG. As Dave summarizes, our User Group exists to "share what you know", and Dave certainly stepped forward to do that. We hope that others will take similar initiatives for topics they are interested in presenting, or consider helping out in existing SIGs. Thanks Dave for your contributions.

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## Volunteering

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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.

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# This Month in Our History

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by Chuck Fiedler  
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

Yup, it's time to review the happenings reported in the May 1988 and 1993 issues of *PC News*, 15 and 20 years ago.

In 1988, the late **Reagan Andrews** was president. His *Prez Sez* column was titled "Icon Wars." It seems Apple had brought suit against Microsoft for using "those funny little figures on PC screens..." Apple wanted us all to believe that they had invented icons and that they were an integral part of the "look and feel" of the Lisa/Macintosh.

Reagan takes us back to the May, 1986 Computer Council of Dallas meeting at which Xerox Palo Alto Research Center showed film clips of mice and **icons** being used by PCs, long before the development of the Lisa/Macintosh.

In the category of "did you know", Reagan stated: "So who wrote most of the early Apple Macintosh software that put the Mac in the game? Microsoft. Microsoft Works and Excel (both originally written for the Mac before the PC versions came out last year) made the Mac a success in circles much wider than those narrow arcs inhabited by devout Mac hackers."

He went on to comment on the importance of software standards which Microsoft established. He commented on the importance of standards to programmers, making wide-scale distribution possible only where standards exist. He concluded by saying: "I remember paying roughly \$7,000 for our first PC, a little software and a printer in 1983 dollars... The standards established by the IBM-PC bus and MS/PC-DOS make an equivalent system available for \$1,000 now."

It is easy to shoot at Microsoft for their "monopoly" over PC systems but, were it not for the standards established and maintained by Microsoft, we would certainly not have the inexpensive hardware and software we have today.

According to **Alan Lintel's** column, there was much legal activity in 1988 between Apple and Microsoft. Apple paid, Microsoft paid and the lawyers made LOTS of money. Apple got a patent covering drop-down menus and a mouse design. Seems they failed to mention the fact that another firm had developed the mouse and subsequently buggered up the patent process. All of this got quite complex

and somehow today we all see drop-down menus and use mice to maneuver around the screen.

Member **Jim Hoisington** had another in his series of columns titled *On Complexity*. Speaking of complexity, he said, "Have you ever tried to install a bus mouse in your computer? The documentation for the jumper setting reads like a bizarre PROLOG program written in reverse logic." I recall all those mouse options and the problems found in installing them. Today we plug in the USB mouse or other device and *Voila*, it works!

Jim went on to note the voluminous documentation that came with software and peripherals in 1988 concluding that, "... the price of PC hardware and software will have to rise to provide the kind of support required by the increase in complexity of the products." Well, the manufacturers couldn't raise prices so what did they do – put the documentation as part of the help file. For phone assistance, speak to Mujibar.

Under the heading *A Floppy Tale*, **Dave McKeen** said, "I recently bought a Toshiba 3½ inch, 720k floppy drive for \$119 from a warehouse that sells software and other stuff." He went on to recount the "joys" of mounting this drive in his PC-AT. Seems the drive was threaded for metric and what he had received were English #4-40 screws. Getting a physical install was the relatively easy part of the process. Next came device drivers, changes to CONFIG.SYS, etc., etc. Boy, weren't those the "good old days"?

There were nearly four pages from the DOM Squad highlighting new shareware disks one of which, **Magic Menus™**, was a "DOS shell and extremely well written and easy to use menu system." "Power users will enjoy the 'Boot Options', which let you effectively maintain ten different sets of AUTOEXEC and CONFIG files." Yup, I sure wanna have **those** options.

In 1993, the president was a guy named **Doug Gorrie**. In his *Prez Sez* column, he wrote that 441 new members were added in March, thanks mainly to Microsoft subsidizing User Group memberships that month. He later stated some words applicable today as well: "All our... members are encouraged to get involved... Membership is more enjoyable if

you participate..." Have YOU decided to get involved?

BBS Sysop **Fred Williams** wrote in *NTPCUG On-Line* about the chore of upgrading beyond our then-current 2400 baud modems. He said, "The more sophisticated modems require a level of knowledge at least an order of magnitude above that required to fully utilize the older 'plain vanilla' modems." Gee, Fred, why don't we just go to the 'Net and get... Oh yeah, the 'Net sorta didn't exist in 1993.

Speaking of all that, I have frequent reason to test 56K dial-up modems on the machines we currently ship to the blind under the TCPI project (Texas Center for the Physically Impaired), of which NTPCUG is a sponsor. BTW, yes, they also have internal network ports, but we include modems for those for whom that level of service might not be available. In case you have forgotten, dial-up, even at 56K *HURTS!* And I started out on a machine with a 300 baud modem.

Again, **Reagan Andrews** had his *The Variety Store* column. He stated that, "If you want to add a CD-ROM player, a sound board, on-line faxing capability, a scanner, etc., etc., etc., you plunge head-first into Microsoft's device-driver swamp." Ah, yes, the good old days!

Reagan spoke of the subject of disk price reductions noting, "If you haven't noticed... we're back in

the middle of another round of bitter fighting and price reductions in the hard disk industry. The impact looks to be about 5% - 10% per week on 200M+ drives. At this rate, vendors may pay users to take drives below 100M off their hands." So what did I recently see but a 1 TB drive for (I can't believe it, I had to go check) \$199! We all paid a LOT more than that for much smaller drives in the past. And, whereas it was predicted that we would pay the price in getting much more failure-prone drives, that doesn't seem to have been the case. Hardware quality today is generally outstanding.

The DOM Squad had 3½ pages of new disk listings including Disk 813, PKZIP 2.04g, a long-standing standard in dealing with compressed files. Shareware fee was noted as \$47. Where noted, the programs wanted to have at least Windows 3.1, no longer any reference to operating in DOS.

The 1993 issue contained a quarter-page ad worthy of repeating today. It read, "You are invited to submit your articles for next month's newsletter... Please help out."

Remember, our motto is "Share what you know, learn what you don't." I would bet that your search activities and your knowledge/interests are different from other members. If you want to forward your thoughts for inclusion in a future *PC News* issue, send your ideas to [newsletter@ntpcug.org](mailto:newsletter@ntpcug.org) and we will even "smith" them into publishable form.

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

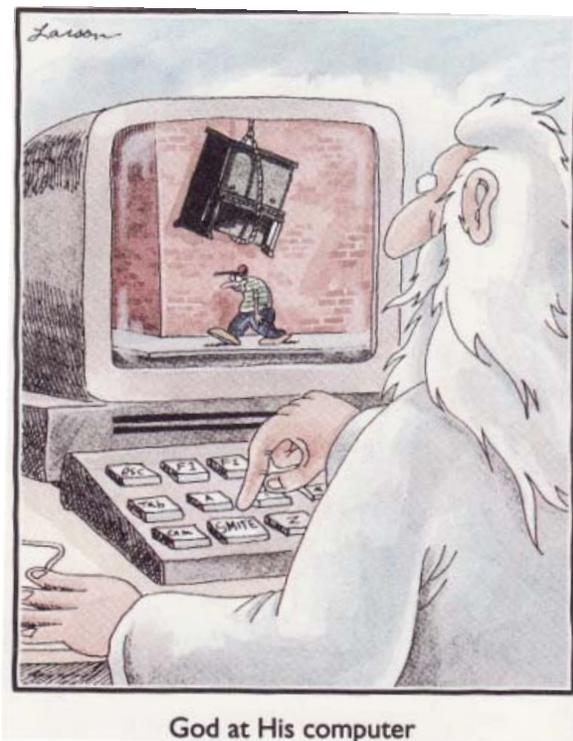
## Have an Idea for a New SIG?

If you have an interest in a specific topic, most likely others will too.

If you have a potential SIG topic in mind and would like to be the SIG leader, send a six-month outline of meeting topics to Glynn Brooks.

A specific explanation will make it easier to ascertain a need, as well as target an audience, for a SIG.

Contact Glynn Brooks:  
[glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org](mailto:glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org)  
or any Board Member



God at His computer

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## New Member Signup Incentive – The Contest Continues

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We are now entering our 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

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## Monthly NTPCUG Meeting Flyer – Can You Help Distribute?

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Each month we send members a flyer listing the upcoming second and third Saturday SIG meeting information. We work to fit it all on one page so it can be easily printed and posted in offices and public areas. It can also be sent by email to family members, friends, colleagues, etc.

With your help we hope to generate increased interest in User Group activities, thereby helping us grow. We rely on members, SIG leaders, Board members and volunteers to share this information with others. We also need you to consider new options beyond the obvious – bulletin boards, etc.

We ask you, our members, to think of places where you can post the monthly flyer and to e-mail it to anyone you know who may be interested.

We try mightily to get this out before the weekend preceding the second Saturday of each month so you have time to “do your thing”.

With your help we can grow our Group and reach others who can “*Share what you know, learn what you don’t.*”

***Where have you  
sent the May flyer?***

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# Vista / XP Downgrade Plan

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By Larry Weiss & Doug Gorrie

Microsoft recently announced that WinXP will not be sold after June 30th 2008. This move was originally slated to occur on January 31<sup>st</sup>, but caused such consternation by users that it was postponed.

But even now, users are expressing continued concern. Infoworld magazine has even initiated a petition so users can express their desire for Microsoft to continue XP sales, and reports over 192,000 "signatures" received as of May 5<sup>th</sup>.

See [http://weblog.infoworld.com/save-xp/archives/2008/04/sign\\_the\\_save\\_x.html](http://weblog.infoworld.com/save-xp/archives/2008/04/sign_the_save_x.html) for details, and to "sign" if you wish.

Despite Microsoft's recent decision, there is still a way to acquire XP after June 30th, by purchasing certain versions of Vista and then exercising your rights to "downgrade" to WinXP Professional. Microsoft grants downgrade rights with any purchase of OEM Windows Vista **Business** or OEM Vista **Ultimate** Editions. (Purchasers of Vista Home Basic or Vista Home Premium Editions do not have these "downgrade rights".)

Dell, Lenovo and reportedly HP are among those offering to assist with the downgrade when new PCs are ordered. Lenovo's site notes that the downgrade program will last until January 31, 2009. Dell makes their downgrade offer available beginning June 18<sup>th</sup>, but does not specify an end date for the program.

So if you are looking to acquire a PC in the near term, you may not be **required** to migrate to Vista, and can in fact have licensed access to **both** Vista and to XP. But check with your vendor to determine whether they are participating in this program.

More information can be found at <http://www.internetnews.com/bus-news/article.php/>

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## WANTED:

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More good tips, articles, product reviews and special web sites for our next newsletter. Please think about what you would like to see that hasn't been included yet, and send it to us now, at:

[newsletter@ntpcug.org](mailto:newsletter@ntpcug.org)

*Let us know if you win a drawing, and we'll put it into next month's newsletter. **Your input counts.***

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## Membership

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Individual — \$36 per year

Family — \$60 per year



**Gil Brand**

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Same point ....  
from a different perspective?

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**Elva Roy**



# Second Saturday Events for May

by Tuc Goodwin  
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

This Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup> is a special meeting. This is another chance to see the *Visual Studio 2008 and SQL Server 2008*.

The schedule is as follows:

**9:00 – 10:00 - Intro and Overview of .NET Framework 3.5, including AJAX, LINQ, WPF, WCF, Microsoft CardSpace – Tom Perkins**

**10:10: - 11:10 – SQL Server 2008 – Terry Witt**

**11:20 – 12:20 – What's So Great about Visual Studio 2008? – Dave Stark**

There are a bunch of giveaways this month. In addition to this month's *ASP.NET Pro Magazine*, there are:

- ◆ **Five (5) Heroes Happen Here Launch Kits (which include):**
  - 1 Windows Server 2008 (64 bit and 32 bit)
  - 1 Visual Studio 2008 Standard Edition

- 1 SQL Server 2008 CTP5
- 1 NFR voucher for SQL Server 2008 when it's Generally Available
- ◆ Microsoft Learning Solutions 40% off Exam Vouchers
- ◆ 1 SQL Server 2008 Technical Readiness Kit
- ◆ 1 .Net Framework 3.5 Developer Resource Kit
- ◆ Coupon for 40% off TechNet Plus Subscriptions for all attendees

So set your calendars, your alarm clocks, and get there early for a good seat. Remember to tell your friends that it is at the **Microsoft** building in Irving.

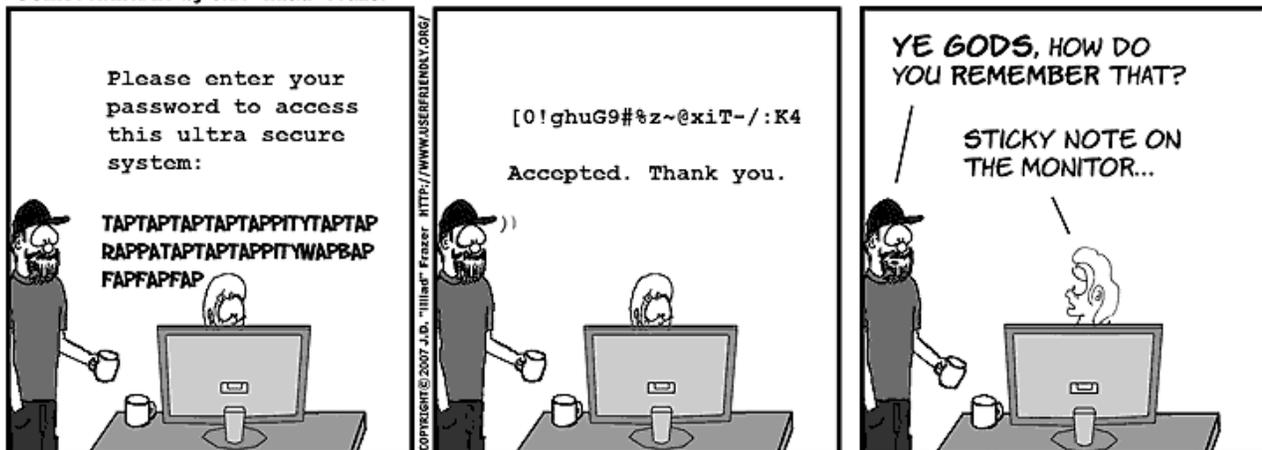
We'll be getting back on a regular schedule in **June** with more .NET, Design Patterns, and SharePoint Server!!

**I look forward to seeing everyone there!**

**Excelsior!!!**

**Tuc**

USER FRIENDLY by J.D. "Illiad" Frazer



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# Are you familiar with the APCUG?

By Doug Gorrie

NTPCUG has been a member of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG) as long as I can remember, and my membership goes back to the late 80's. As noted in their quarterly newsletter, APCUG is an International, platform-independent, volunteer-run nonprofit organization devoted to helping user groups offer better services to their members. User Group membership extends as far away as Australia.

As a member of APCUG, our members have access to the quarterly newsletter. The purpose of this article is to make you aware of the newsletter link, at <http://reports.apcug.org/2008q2/2008q2.pdf>.

The APCUG newsletter often has interesting articles submitted by members. For instance, the 2Q2008 issue covers Windows Home Server (page 15), Scam Alerts (page 6), tips on adding colored tabs in FireFox (page 25) and (heaven forbid) Moving from Windows to a Mac (page 23).

Previous newsletters can be found at <http://reports.apcug.org/>. And for a list of online newsletters and interesting articles available, go to <http://www.apcug.net/editorial/index.htm>.

Happy Reading !!

Thank you!

from your 2008

## Board of Directors and Officers

President: Chris Morgan  
[chris.morgan@ntpcug.org](mailto:chris.morgan@ntpcug.org)

President-Elect: Chuck Fiedler  
[chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org](mailto:chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org)

Directors: Doug Gorrie  
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Elva Roy  
[elva.roy@ntpcug.org](mailto:elva.roy@ntpcug.org)

Treasurer: Chuck Stark  
[chuck.stark@ntpcug.org](mailto:chuck.stark@ntpcug.org)

## Calendar

### May

**10** 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday**  
at Microsoft  
2:00 pm **Certification SIG** at  
Nerdbooks

**17** 8:00 am—2:00 pm **3rd Saturday**  
at King of Glory  
2:15 pm **Certification SIG**  
will not meet this month

### June

**14** 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday**  
at Microsoft  
2:00 pm **Certification SIG** at  
Nerdbooks

**21** 8:00 am—2:00 pm **3rd Saturday**  
at King of Glory  
2:15 pm **Certification SIG** at  
Nerdbooks

### July

**12** 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday**  
at Microsoft  
2:00 pm **Certification SIG** at  
Nerdbooks

**19** 8:00 am—2:00 pm **3rd Saturday**  
at King of Glory  
2:15 pm **Certification SIG** at  
Nerdbooks

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Dallas, TX 75370-0055

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