North Texas PC News

2ND SATURDAY
Microsoft Las Colinas
7000 Highway 161
Irving, Texas

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

January 2009
VOLUME 28 • NUMBER 1

2009 Elections for Board of Directors and User Group Bylaws

We hope everyone had a great Holiday Season. Now, sadly, it's back to work. For old and new members, a brief summary. Each year, at the 3rd Saturday meeting in January, we hold our elections for that year's Board of Directors and president-elect. (The 2008 president-elect becomes the 2009 President based on being voted in the previous year.) We make every effort to complete and announce the elections at the Business Meeting held at Noon that same day.

Prior to the elections, ballots are sent out by e-mail to all members of record, accompanied by instructions on the methods available to cast your vote. We make every effort to be flexible, allowing for return of ballots by e-mail, fax, postal mail, or just bring it with you to the January 17th meeting. See the ballot instructions for details.

The ballot and instructions should have been received by each member by the time you receive this newsletter. If you have not received your ballot by Saturday, January 10th, please go to our web site (www.ntpcug.org) and download the ballot and instructions directly. If you have problems/issues, please e-mail postmaster@ntpcug.org and we will make every effort to resolve your issue.

As you prepare your ballot, please note that we do require you to include your member number on the ballot. While we try to keep the voting informal, we do need to ensure in some way that votes are cast only by valid User Group members. While the member number isn't a completely "tight" control against bogus votes, each member number is validated against membership records as it arrives. And if we have questions, we do know how to contact you if we have a need to verify your vote. So please work with us on this issue.

This year, the ballot also requests that you vote FOR or AGAINST proposed changes to our Bylaws. Our web site has a copy of the proposed bylaws as well as explanations of the changes and rationale for making them. Many of the suggested changes are as a result of difficulties encountered during the 2008 elections, and our hope is to prevent such problems in the future.

Many of the changes are intended to ensure that all members interested in running for a Board position are placed on the ballot, and that the membership has an opportunity to vote for anyone interested in running. In essence, the intent is to ensure that the "power" rests in the hands of the members rather than just the current Board. We'll let you be the judge of whether that effort was successful.

In This Issue ...

Prez Sez

by Chris Morgan

This is the last Prez Sez before the new President, Chuck Fiedler, takes office. Looking back over the last two years, there have been some important changes with the group. I'm pleased with the many changes, but still see lots more to do.

We moved to a new meeting location and have settled in pretty nicely. The uncertainties at North Lake became a bother to a lot of folks. For instance, we never knew for sure what rooms we would have on a given Saturday. Sometimes we got big rooms and sometimes small ones. The hike between rooms was often long as well.

At King of Glory Church, (KOG), we have the run of the basement and can plan our meeting space as we see fit. And, having the larger room #25 is nice when we need the space. Thanks to Gil Brand, especially, for getting this new location for us.

My main goal in taking on the job of President was to help get the group back to a congenial frame of mind. This, I believe, has happened and people are getting along amicably now. It has been my feeling that with a volunteer group like ours, it just doesn't make sense to have such problems. This experience should be fun and rewarding to leaders and attendees alike.

As a group, we have a lot to offer the community. It used to be that a big attraction was the vendor tables and the great variety of bargains to be had when we met at the Infomart. But alas, we had to give that up, along with the revenue it brought in. We also used to get a regular supply of vendors eager to be in front of our group to show us their new products. As with many user groups around the country, vendors aren't as excited about this as they once were. Then there is the Internet. We all have found the web a great place to keep up to date on all things computer.

So, where does all this leave us as a group? Everyone has their own reasons for spending their Saturday hours at our meetings. For some it is a social time. For some it is the preferred way to stay up to date. For others, it is a place to ask questions or hear a great presentation in person.

The board has worked on various ways to publicize the group. We came up with the idea of the monthly flyer to provide something all the members could distribute to their friends and associates. It is a great tool faithfully put together each month by Charles Fiedler. Yet our attendance has held steady at around 80 people each 3rd Saturday.

Other avenues for promotion were tried with mixed success. And enough members of the board felt uneasy about spending money on paid advertising that we didn't pursue that for long.

One bright spot has been the support from Microsoft. They have generously given us valuable books, software, hardware, and other goodies for meeting prizes. I'm grateful to Chris Koenig at Microsoft for his support in that program. I hope you feel likewise.

So what's in store for the coming year? For one, I have some personal interests I will continue to pursue and will share what I learn along the way. As a professional programmer, I am coming up to speed with the craft of website development. I want to be in a position to create data driven, interactive web sites. This will continue to be the source of presentations at the Expression Web SIG.

I'm also excited about the new idea from Tom Perkins on the direction of his Certification SIG. We will be having workshops on website creation. These will be hands-on sessions (bring your laptop) on Saturday afternoons where you can develop skills at website creation using CSS and ASP.NET technologies. If this sounds interesting to you, come join us.

Another initiative that was completed recently was the move of our SharePoint site to version 3.0, thanks to Tuc Goodwin, Ram Yadev, and Doug Gorrie. We can now start to do some interesting things with it to benefit members.

So, what would you like to see at NTPCUG in the coming year? Would you like to try out a new SIG idea? Send a note to newsletter@ntpcug.org or bod@ntpcug.org. We'd like to hear from you.

2nd Saturday

Alphabetically

Design Patterns – 10:00 am

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

The Design Patterns SIG started in March of 2008. This is a series sig, that is to say it will run as a set series of presentations and then it will end. It is the follow up to the Object Oriented Analysis and Design SIG that finished in February of 2008.

They are using the Head First Design Patterns book (ISBN: 0596007124) which can be obtained from Nerdbooks from this url.

For more information about the purpose and use of design patterns, Wikipedia has a short description. The Microsoft Architecture site is here and a starting point for their use with Microsoft Technologies is here.

Date	Chapter	Topic
January 10, 2009	Chapter 10 – The State of Things	State Pattern
February 14, 2009	Chapter 11 – Controlling Object Access	Proxy Pattern
March 14, 2009	Chapter 12 – Patterns of Patterns	Compound Patterns
April 11, 2009	Chapter13 – Patterns in the Real World	Better Living with Patterns
May 9, 2009	Chapter 14 – Appendix	Leftover Patterns

The site for the Design Patterns Study Group is: http://www.dotnetarchitecture.net/default.aspx

The main SharePoint site for the Design Patterns SIG is:
http://sptest.ntpcug.org/2ndSat/ DesignPattern/default.aspx

Microsoft Certification SIG — 2:00 pm Saturday at Nerdbooks

Tom Perkins
tomperki@gmail.com

No January 10th meeting (Tom will be out of town).

Questions or comments?

Contact Tom Perkins (tomperki@gmail.com) or Chris Morgan (chris.morgan@ntpcug.org)

SharePoint – 11:30 am

Ram Yadav
ram_yadav@hotmail.com

At most Sharepoint meetings, we discuss the features and current implementation of NTPCUG's Sharepoint site at http://sp.ntpcug.org, and we work to make improvements to this site during the meeting. Come join us as we undertake this continuing task.

.NET Developers – 9:00 am

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

We will continue our learning in building our ASP. NET 2.0 knowledge as well as enhancing our experiences with the .NET 3.0/3.5 Framework enhancements. I expect this to be an exciting series of topic. Of course if you want to show off your stuff, please let me know and I'll get you on the schedule.

Building upon the Beginning Visual Basic and Advanced Visual Basic SIG, this SIG now concentrates on any (and all) .NET topics. In the past we have had presentations on ADO.NET, using Code Snippets within the Visual Studio IDE, calling Web Services and introductions to ASP.NET.

Also we will be trying something radically different. The opportunity for our members to give quick 15 minute presentations called "Lessons Learned". This is a chance for everyone to sign up and share their experiences with the audience about a technique or a tool that has helped them solve a particular problem or issue. We want to make this a regular type of presentation so we've schedule the first three.

The main SharePoint site for the .NET Developer's SIG is: http://sp.ntpcug.org/VBNETSIG/ default.aspx

Date	Topic	Speaker
January 10, 2009	**Lessons Learned**	**TBD**
February 14, 2009	**Beginning ASP.NET – Part 3**	**Tuc Goodwin**
March 14, 2009	**Beginning ASP.NET – Part 4**	**Tuc Goodwin**
April 11, 2009	**LINQ**	**Tuc Goodwin**
May 9, 2009	**Lessons Learned**	**TBD**
June 13, 2009	**Building the Web Layer using ASP.NET AJAX**	**Tuc Goodwin**
July 11, 2009	**Building the Data and Business Layers using .NET 3.5 (Part 1)**	**Tuc Goodwin**
August 8, 2009	**Building the Data and Business Layers using .NET 3.5 (Part 2)**	**Tuc Goodwin**
September 12, 2009	**ASP.NET Deployment**	**TBD**
October 10, 2009	**Lessons Learned**	**TBD**

3rd Saturday

All meetings at King of Glory Lutheran Church, 6411 LBJ Fwy in Dallas (between Preston & Hillcrest, north side of LBJ).

Alphabetically

Adobe Photoshop — 12:30 pm

presented by Hillary Morgan Ferrer

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

No more meetings for now.

Building Web Sites — 8:00 am

presented by Alan Lummus

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

Alan will report on the Internet's holiday shopping season and what it portends for the way websites are built and promoted in the coming year. From there, we'll plan our agendas for the next several months.

Bring all your questions and comments to contribute and take part of charting our SIG's direction in 2009.

Digital Photography — 10:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org

Our first meeting of the new year should bring up some new and interesting items, new techniques, also new problems. Do you have anything to share with our SIG members?

If you have any suggestions for adding new products or tools for our meetings, now is a good time to present them. Please include volunteering to demonstrate and explain new items of interest that we may enjoy.

Digital Photo Editing Software — 11:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org

There are several new high-priced editing packages available. How high in price shall we go?

I prefer learning all the basics we can and then we can master almost all products. Maybe even able to perform more than we will ever use and do it quickly with our own workflow design.

Tom Sweet will discuss photo printers during our first half hour.

Excel— 8:00 am

Frank Tubbs
ftubbs@sbcglobal.net

In December I started to review keyboard shortcuts and showed answered questions on using Windows XP Voice in Excel. XP voice is very basic and a user really needs either Windows Vista or an expanded program to get truly useful functionality. We then followed with a general discussion about some Windows features utilized by Microsoft Office programs.

For January I plan to continue the shortcuts discussion. If a user upgrades to Microsoft Office 2007 these keys will be very useful. The new Ribbon is confusing to those used to the older menu structure. The shortcut keys still work and allow you to skip the

confusion. Learning them is a great forward step in productivity.

Family History — 12:30 pm

Jim Wehe
jimwehe@gmail.com

In 2008 we explored a number of available computer programs that allow one to record genealogy information such as names, dates, locations, events, family stories, and link to photo files of families, graduation, work, and retirement activities.

In January we will encourage attendees to share one or two family stories that help them remember special events. The January/February, 2009 issue of the AAA Magazine contains stories of Texas residents describing memories of their first car which you may find interesting.

You may also have interest in the Thursday, January 15, meeting of the Richardson Historical and Genealogical Society at 7pm in the Richardson Library. Weldon Fincher will discuss "Land and Maps".

Internet — 10:00 am

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

Learn how technology can help you discover new, free music on the Internet. I'll show you who the major players are in the Internet music field and demo the software and web sites that will stream the music you want to hear.

IT Professional — 9:00 am

Larry Copeland
larry.copeland@ntpcug.org

Doug Gorrie
doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org

The IT PRO and MOBILE sigs will have a combined meeting featuring Clinton Fitch, Windows Mobile MVP, who will discuss new smartphones and demonstrate the new REDFLY device which turns a smartphone into a terminal and allows use with a big screen and keyboard. This should be something very interesting for any mobile user!

Making Money on the Internet — 9:00 am

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

Is it still possible to make money on the Internet in these recessionary times? Come and hear Alan describe his experiences over the 2008 holiday shopping season and his opinion as to what it means for making money in 2009. Then, we'll chart the SIG's direction for the next several months based on what you would like to learn. As time allows, we'll look at

Bill Parker

Google Adwords and the free keyword research tools available there.

Microsoft Access SIG — 11:00 am

Larry Linson
larry.linson2@ntpcug.org

Jim Wehe
jimwehe@gmail.com

In December, we looked at applications that tracked recipes, Christmas cards received and sent, and a file of personal books (history events and places, biographiesm and novels). Larry was out of town visiting his daughter's family in Maryland. Kathy Lee Brown won drawing for a copy of Vista.

In January, Larry will again be out of town. Jim Wehe will show another of his single table applications which uses daily to locate current events.

Future meetings will include drawings for many MS products which Larry has obtained. These arrvied on December 22 and will offered over the next several months as Larry directs.

Microsoft Certification SIG - 2:00 pm

We decided to try something new. CertSIG will use the 2nd Saturday meetings at Nerdbooks (starting in February) to strictly review and discuss exam questions for the 70-536 Exam. On third Saturdays, we will look at some .NET Visual Studio topics of interest in more detail in a series of 'hands-on" workshops.

Members are encouraged to bring their laptops loaded with Visual Studio 2008 or 2005, or at least come prepared to follow along and join in the discussion. We will present a demo problem in a step-by-step manner, inviting discussion and understanding as each step is presented.

Chris Morgan (Expression Web SIG) and Terry Witt (Microsoft Developers SIG) have presented excellent demos of the Visual Studio Membership Provider. The Third Saturday session will re-examine the Membership Provider in a "get your hands dirty" approach, hoping to turn over some rocks and discover the nuts and bolts of how this feature can be implemented on one's own web site.

Upon completion of the first workshop, attendees should be able to:

- •	Create a basic ASP.NET web site.
- •	Create a database to store provider and security information.
- •	Set up 3 roles for the web site users (Administrator, PowerUser, and RegularUser).
- •	Set up several users with different roles.
- •	Create site map for the web site.
- •	Create a master page.
- •	Create some sample pages for testing.

- Allow access to certain pages only for certain users, while allowing the Administrator to access all pages.
- Allow role-based navigation.

Although not billed as the NTPCUG version of Meryl Streep's Momma Mia sing-along, each of the above objectives will be presented in a manner that they can be performed on an individual's computer, preferably with groups of people working on the same computer (a' la the shared code experience of Agile Programming). A handout will be provided.

Some of the other workshop topics being considered are Master Pages, AJAX, and Test-Driven Development. We might even convince Chris Morgan to frame his CSS presentation into a workshop format in the future. And, we welcome any ideas about topics you'd like to see presented as a workshop.

Come on out and join us for what is from time to time an edifying experience, but is always a great discussion and a lot of fun.

Questions or comments?

Contact Tom Perkins (tomperki@gmail.com) or Chris Morgan (chris.morgan@ntpcug.org)

Microsoft Expression Web — 10:00 am
Chris Morgan
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org

More on the topic of CSS and a tutorial laying out a web page using the <div> element. This is one of the most perplexing aspects of using CSS, so don't miss it. There is more information on the NTPCUG SharePoint site.

Mobile Computing — 10:00 am
Larry Copeland
larry.copeland@ntpcug.org

The IT PRO and MOBILE sigs will have a combined meeting featuring Clinton Fitch, Windows Mobile MVP, who will discuss new smartphones and demonstrate the new REDFLY device which turns a smartphone into a terminal and allows use with a big screen and keyboard. This should be something very interesting for any mobile user!

Windows Inside Out — 12:30 pm
Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

When you want your PC to run faster it's important to measure the performance before and after you make changes. The measuring part used to be an expensive proposition, but recently I've found some free software tools that will give you a good perspective on what causes performance problems. Come to the meeting and I'll demonstrate the tools and show you all the download sites.

Windows Tips & Tricks — 8:00 - 9:00 am
Gil Brand — gb1@ntpcug.org
Chuck Stark — chuck.stark@ntpcug.org

This month there is no planned demo. We will have a Q&A session and discussion of any breaking news in the PC realm.

Wireless Communications — 11:00 am
Birl Smith
birl.smith@ntpcug.org
birlhtml@swbell.net

Word — 9:00 - 11:00 am
Diane Bentley
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

"Word 2007 - Where is ANYTHING?"

The key to working in Word 2007 is finding the features. We're starting with the elaborate top area of the screen to find out how to accomplish some of those previously simple tasks, such as, saving a document. The Ribbon is a new concept for Word. Most features are accessed through the Ribbon. We'll begin uncovering features this meeting and continue the trek through March.

WordPerfect — 11:00am - 12:00 pm
Diane Bentley
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

Corporate Documents

This meeting we'll add some corporate documents to our collection of basic document types. We'll adjust margins, add a footer and page numbering, as well as formatting.

An Interesting but Expensive Venture

By Chuck Fiedler

In December, I reported the supposed death of one laptop and the need for a replacement.

Expanding on this story, my two-year-old Dell Inspiron unexpectedly went through a series of failures without explanation. First, it booted through the Dell startup screen to the Windows startup screen, then died. <Hard power off> Next, it booted to the Dell startup screen and died. <Hard power off> Next, at power up time, it did nothing.

I suspected the hard drive had died and was prepared to buy a new one and replace it.

It was suggested that I take the machine to the Dell authorized service station in Plano, which I did. They did several diagnostic tests and told me the motherboard was dead, and replacement would cost $450 plus labor. They also did a separate check on the hard drive and everything was there, so I decided a new machine was cheaper than $450+ and left.

On the upside, there was no charge for the diagnostics.

Subsequently, I received an online offer from Dell for a new Vostro laptop, and decided to buy it. That's the one with Vista Home Basic I wrote about in December.

The Vostro arrived with 512K of memory. Since I had 2G in the original Inspiron, I decided to salvage *something* from the Inspiron for the Vostro. I then put the 512K from the new Vostro into the Inspiron so that I could offload the whole works, since it didn't work anyway.

I fired up the Vostro with the replaced memory, but nothing happened. On a whim, I fired up the Inspiron with the new memory from the Vostro and everything worked fine.

I decided to check the memory modules individually and found that one of the 1GB sticks had gone bad, causing a complete system failure.

So now I have an Inspiron with Windows XP that works fine and a Vostro with Vista Home Basic that works fine -- all for a misdiagnosed memory module which can be bought for $20.

I'm not sure what the moral of this story is, but I have been told that service folks are often inclined to blame system faults on the motherboard. This whole experience reminds me of something else I have been told – to look for simple cures first.

Terry Witt,
former Visual Basic .NET SIG Leader

Monthly NTPCUG Meeting Flyer – Can You Help Distribute?

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 January flyer?**

Jeff Frauenheim

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.

Thanks to **Spike Smith** for volunteering to serve as Secretary at the Board Meetings.

Please consider volunteering for one of these important jobs:

Program Director

Identify and arrange program topics for our vendor presentations.

Volunteer Coordinator

Coordinate permanent and temporary volunteer participation.

Discount Coordinator

Communicate with vendors offering discounts on our products.

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.

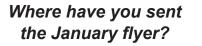### Newsletter — Doug Gorrie, Chuck Fiedler, David Franke, and Diane Bentley

doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org
dave f81@gmail.com
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

Prepare, contribute to and distribute the monthly newsletter.

Information Desk — Charles Rem

crem@ntpcug.org

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

So Now, What Do I Do With The Old?

By Chuck Fiedler

Did you get a new computer, LCD monitor, computer speakers, printer, PDA, cell phone, or other electronic device for Christmas? Do you want to avoid filling up a landfill with the old stuff?

Maybe you have children or even grandchildren to whom your old stuff could be migrated, but there's still the question of what to do with those castoffs.

For computers (desktop and laptop), monitors, keyboards, mice, and speakers, you can donate them to our Texas Center for the Physically Impaired (TCPI) project and even get a tax write off. Whenever possible, these computers are updated and loaded with legal copies of Windows XP and other software, then shipped to the blind throughout the country. What can't be used for this purpose is sent to a licensed recycler.

Now maybe you're worried about the data on your old machine's hard drive. Don't be. The TCPI agreement with Microsoft requires that hard drives be completely wiped before anything else is done. So nobody will ever see what you had stored on the drive.

Printers, scanners, fax machines and other electronics can also be given to TCPI and these will be sent to a licensed recycler who breaks down everything to its basic components and recycles them into new materials. Again, you'll get a tax receipt for your donation.

Old cell phones can be brought to our third Saturday meeting and delivered to me at the registration desk. I will arrange for them to be sent to a program that provides refurbished cell phones to our service members overseas.

Then there's the question of old software. Hopefully you have seen the CD recycling box at our third Saturday meetings at the registration desk. All unwanted CDs and DVDs that are collected there are sent to a licensed recycler who separates the various materials and sends them off to be made into new products.

Why not make 2009 the year when you can make a difference in how old electronics are used, not simply cast into the local landfill.

"Don't recycle – reuse.

2nd Saturday Meeting at Microsoft — Tom Perkins, Certification SIG

This Month in Our History

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

Hey kids, welcome and look at Uncle Chuck's new time machine that Santa brought! With this little sucker, we can go back 25 years and review the happenings reported in January 1984, and we'll come back through 1989, reviewing the issues of *PC News* at each stop.

The January 1984 issue was eleven pages long, one page of which was the membership renewal form. Back in those days, all memberships were based on the calendar year, and January was the time to tear off the back page of your newsletter and submit it with your payment of $36 for a "professional" membership; $24 for a regular membership or $12 for a student membership.

The January issue had a two-page article by **Carrington Dixon** on *Word Proof*, an IBM spelling checker and thesaurus program. Menu driven, it was reported to be very easy to use and came with its own full screen editor, as well as enough facilities to qualify as a rudimentary word processor. It required at least 96K of memory and one disk drive and sold for $60.

There were two half-page paid ads plus about a half page of Swap Shop offerings. Apparently those offerings weren't exactly being snapped up, as the items referenced back in November and December were still offered for sale.

The DOM Squad (**D**isk **O**f the **M**onth) highlighted a disk of over twelve programs designed to work with Pascal. It was noted that "All will compile on a 128K machine with two regular (160K) disk drives." WOW!

Tom Prickett in the *Programming Topics* column wrote an extended article titled *Lotus 1-2-3 to the Limit*. In two and one-half pages, Tom wrote about the limitations in that version of Lotus and noted that it had 2048 rows and 256 columns theoretically available, but that filling more than ten percent of the cells resulted in a memory overflow using 544K of memory.

The January 1989 issue was a full 24 pages. It noted that the auditorium program would feature Philippe Kahn, founder of Borland, speaking on the topic "PC Computing in the 90s and Beyond". The teaser said that Kahn "…will present his views of the future of software for personal computers in the 90s and the 21st century as the power of PCs and supercomputers come closer. Judging by his presentation at COMDEX, this should be a fascinating talk. A MUST-SEE EVENT!"

In Prez Sez, newly-installed president J**im Hoisington** thanked outgoing president **Reagan Andrews** for his service and noted that Reagan would begin a new Microsoft Word SIG. (No donuts mentioned).

January was still the month for renewal of all memberships, and Jim noted that membership cards would be printed with the membership number in bar code to permit using a laptop to scan cards at the main meeting.

Reagan Andrews had his annual column reporting on the previous fall's COMDEX. He said, "Show officials estimated that 110,000 people had wandered through the eight show sights by 5:00 p.m., Friday… That's roughly 20,000 more than COMDEX/Fall 87's estimated 90,000 attendees…

"1988 was the 'Year of the LAN – and UNIX – and OS/2 – and DOS – and Optical Scanners – and FAX boards – and, and, and, no central theme that caught anybody's attention.

"Deal of COMDEX/Fall 88 was the Po Hai 12 MHz, 0 wait-state, 80286 combination… they were selling 80286 mother-boards, cases and power supplies, already crated for shipment for approximately $300. No DRAM included in this price…"

COMDEX/Fall 88 seems to have been the first showing of 1GB+ drives, both in 5¼" and 3.5" configurations. Imprimis (CDC under another name), Micropolis and Maxtor were noted as offering these "huge capacity" drives.

Tom Krieg had his final installment of *The Family Tree of Personal Computers*. As you will recall, in December he left off with a discussion of the effects of television on the development of the PC. This month he focused on "Solid State Electronics History".

The first several paragraphs detailed the invention by Walter Brattain, William Shockley and John Bardeen of Bell labs, and development of the transistor, (for "*Trans*ition re*sistor*"). The next development was the integrated chip invented by Jack Kilby of Texas Instruments. This was followed shortly by the "planer process" integrated circuit which didn't need wires, thus permitting the printing of a circuit design

onto a silicon surface.

Next came the invention of the hand-held calculator by Texas Instruments. In 1968 Frank Noyce and Gordon Moore left Fairchild Semi-Conductor to found Intel. Developments continued fairly rapidly thereafter until, in 1975, the first personal computers hit the market. One was a do-it-yourself unit called the Altair advertised in *Popular Electronics*. Soon after came offerings of microcomputers from Apple, RadioShack and IBM.

In 1986, Texas Instruments invented the gallium arsenide IC on a silicon substrate.

In 1987, Intel introduced the 80286 microprocessor, which could process data much faster than the previous 8086 processor. Even then, Intel was coordinating with programmers on the capability of the soon-to-be-released 80386 processor.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

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.

PC Bit-z & Byte-z

By Elva Roy

First in a series

Do you always want to be found when someone is trying to phone you?

Personally, I <u>do</u> want to be found every time, but until recently, I had to give different phone numbers to different people, depending on "why" they might be trying to reach me. I gave my day job manager, customers, and staff the phone number printed on my "day job" business card—that is my daytime office number and my BlackBerry number. Then, for personal calls, and my little weekend side business, I gave out my home number and/or my personal cell phone number.

But now, I use a free Google service (still in Beta, claims Google, but it works great for me). It's called Grand Central (www.grandcentral.com), and I use one common number which rings every device I tell it to ring. The number is in my normal area code, and was assigned to me by Google without any charge or commitment. So now I give out <u>one</u> number to everybody, and it <u>simultaneously</u> rings my office, BlackBerry, personal cell, and home numbers.

As soon as I answer any ringing device, all the others stop ringing. The automated attendant tells me "An unidentified caller. Press 1 to accept, Press 4 to record the call", etc. I nearly always press "1" to accept, but if I did want to record the call, I could simply press "4" and the automated attendant would announce to both parties "Call Recording On," and the call would be digitally recorded and saved in my Grand Central account. I could then replay both sides of the conversation over and over if I wished.

If I don't answer any of the ringing devices (maybe I'm at the movies and turned them all off), the caller hears my outgoing Grand Central recorded message and is able to leave a message in my Grand Central voice mail box. Grand Central recognizes the caller's number, logs the number and name of caller (if known), time of the call, and then sends me an e-mail to advise that I have a new voice message.

One negative is that Caller I.D. shows every call as coming from the Grand Central number, which means that I have no idea who the caller is before answering; that is, every call shows that it's coming from the same number (my Grand Central number). However, if I login to my Grand Central account online, I can see a call log which tells me the number each call was made from (after the fact) and listen to any voice mail messages.

Grand Central is unbelievably rich in features. I can't think of a thing they've missed except for the inconvenience of not being able to identify the caller before answering a call. It includes call recording, call screening, message recording and playback through the web (accessible from anywhere you have internet connectivity, including your mobile phone). You can Click2Call from your PC address book, and a WebCall Button lets prospective customers browsing the web call you without you're ever having to reveal your phone number. It sends e-mail notifications to your mail client's mailbox when someone leaves you a voice message, and has personalized outgoing greetings in your own voice. You can even listen in to hear *why* someone is calling before taking the call, block callers, and more.

I can even switch phones in the middle of a call. For instance, if you are at home but need to get in the car and drive somewhere, just switch to your cell phone number. You can do that without ever hanging up.

Check it out. Thank you, Google, for making my life a little bit simpler! And did I say it's *FREE*.

Calendar

January

10 9:00 am—Noon   **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft
2:15 pm   *Certification SIG* not meeting January 10th

17 8:00 am—2:00 pm   **3rd Saturday** at King of Glory
2:00 pm   *Certification SIG* at King of Glory

February

14 9:00 am—Noon   **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft
2:15 pm   *Certification SIG* at Nerdbooks

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

March

14 9:00 am—Noon   **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft
2:15 pm   *Certification SIG* at Nerdbooks

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

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