North Texas PC News

Prez Sez

If you missed the March meeting, kick yourself. You missed a superb five-hour marathon presentation of Windows Tips and Tricks by Treasurer and Board member Chuck Stark. I'm sure he did this only to blow the other SIGs out of the water.

Chuck took my sorely distressed Windows XP machine, which had multiple symptoms of illness, and did a full reinstall with amazing results. Previously, this machine took MINUTES to boot or to load applications. It frequently told me I didn't have enough virtual memory to run an application, forcing me to reboot several times a day. Not so now.

Recognize that Chuck's a professional – he does this kind of thing for a living. But he's also the Co-SIG leader of Windows Tips &Tricks. He LOVES to do "Live, No Net" sessions. Ya gotta sick machine, contact Chuck Stark or Gil Brand, both @ Ntpcug.org and let them know. You'll get on the schedule, likely sooner than later.

Your Board spent the great majority of our March meeting brainstorming over the low current membership in NTPCUG. As I recall, we currently stand at 186 members, but our membership income for 2011 (new and renewal) is down 21% from last year at this time. Steps are underway to contact former members and remind them about the advantages of membership. If you have an idea on how to increase membership, contact me at chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org. In addition, if you are willing to contact lapsed members by phone, let me know and I will give you up to ten names and numbers.

Further in this regard, we are undertaking actions to get additional interesting speakers for our meetings. These will most likely be in the big room (LL25) at KOG, so may result in other LL25 SIGs being moved to other rooms. Be sure to check the monthly schedule to see where your favorite SIG is meeting that month.

Could our meetings be of use to your neighbor, friend or relative? Bring them along. Remember that non-members are permitted three visitor passes before we require them to join the Group. Actually, the Info Desk folk may strong arm visitors before the three free visits are up, but you get my point.

Also ask the person(s) next to you at a SIG meeting whether they got AND READ the newsletter. Let's encourage each other to maximize our return for our membership. Remember, NTPCUG is the place to "Share what you know, Learn what you don't".

Summary of Special Events

by Doug Gorrie

Looking for a Summary of Special Events at NTPCUG? Here goes!

Two "special" presentations in April

9:30 – 11:00 AM --- Windows Phone 7 Up-Close and Personal

In April, Join Microsoft Senior Evangelist Chris Koenig for an up-close look at the Windows Phone 7 experience, including phone functionality and user experiences based on smart design. Learn about key phone features, customization, applications and connected experiences. See how the Windows Phone has evolved into a unique, new user experience designed for a Life in Motion.

Chris Koenig is a Senior Developer Evangelist with Microsoft, based in Dallas, TX. Prior to joining Microsoft in March of 2007, Chris worked as a Senior Architect for The Capital Group in San Antonio, and as an Architect for the global solution provider Avanade. As an Architect and consultant, Chris worked with a variety of clients from many vertical markets, ISVs and other solution providers on enterprise-class Windows and web-based applications. Today, Chris focuses on building, growing, and enhancing the developer communities in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana while specializing in Windows Phone 7 and Silverlight development.

http://chriskoenig.net | @chriskoenig | chris.koenig@microsoft.com

10:00 – 11:00 AM --- Introduction to TechNet

This month, we are making room for a special presentation by **Chuck Stark** and **Doug Gorrie** on how you can get the most out of your TechNet subscription. This is the first of a few such sessions, each being at a different time across multiple 3rd Saturdays so we can reach everyone interested. We will also be working on a handout and other material that will summarize the items covered in these sessions.

Overall, we'll talk about activating the TechNet account that you purchased as an NTPCUG volunteer, how to keep it active and usable, and what you can do once you have logged-in to TechNet. Included will be some general rules that TechNet users should be aware of.

If you acquired a TechNet subscription as a volunteer with NTPCUG or TCVC (Texas Center for the Visually Challenged), be expecting an e-mail prior to the 3rd Saturday meeting, asking about your ability to login to your TechNet account now, and containing instructions on how to login and download software. Then, during this session or a subsequent one, please be prepared to indicate how successful you have been in accessing your account.

QUIZ: When Does "3rd Saturday" Meet in June?

If you answered June 18th, ***WRONG!***

Periodically, our worlds collide. Such is the case in June, when King of Glory Lutheran Church (KOG) has an event that conflicts with our normal "3rd Saturday" meeting.

Given that we are a "friendly" group (and KOG is our landlord for our meetings !), we have graciously moved our 3rd Saturday meeting in June to the 4th Saturday, June 25th. So start making notes NOW that in June, we will NOT meet on June 18th as expected, but instead, we WILL meet on June 25th. Of course, between now and then, more reminders will follow.

Raffle Starts in April

In April, we have the first of out two 20111 PC raffles for our members. As usual, NTPCUG and the Texas Center for the Visually Challenged (TCVC) have worked together to provide an outstanding machine, lovingly assembled and configured by our illustrious SIG Leader and Treasurer, Chuck Stark.

Be sure to get your raffle tickets at the April 16th and May 21st meetings. As always, the proceeds are split between our User Group and TCVC. Computer parts previously donated to TCVC form the basis for this great machine.

For this raffle, we have a Sony Vaio PVC-V300G "All –In-One", professionally installed, updated, tuned and defumed. ("Defumed" must be a technical term that only experts like Chuck are familiar with.). So if you are short on desk space or just need an unobtrusive PC in the family room, here is your chance.

The Specs …

Hardware . . . .
- Sony Vaio PCV-V300G All-In-One ! (see attached pics)
- Intel Pentium 4 2.8 GHz, 1 Gb Ram (2x512 max)
- 200 Gb SATA HDD, 15" Screen (diagonal)
- Onboard: Realtek100Mb NIC, Conexant Modem,
- SoundMax audio, DVD+-RW, Sony Memory Stick Slot,
- Dual USB 2.0 ports, PCMCIA Slot
- Linksys Wireless B PCMCIA Card

Software:
- Windows XP Pro with Service Pack 3 and all updates
- MS Security Essentials 2.0, MalwareBytes
- Adobe Reader X, Flash & Shockwave,
- CutePDF Writer, Tree Size, MyDefrag,
- iTunes / Quicktime, VLC Media Player,
- Java, Belarc, 7-zip . . .!

As usual, tickets will be $3 each, or four for $10. Tickets can be purchased at the Information Booth at the April and May "3rd Saturday" meetings, and the drawing will be during the noontime business meeting on May 21st.

Yearly Dinner for NTPCUG Volunteers

At least once each year, we try to bring our various dedicated NTPCUG and TCVC volunteers together for a Thank You dinner, some camaraderie, and an opportunity to provide updates and get your input on how to make your efforts and our User Group more successful.

Soon, each volunteer will receive an e-mail advising of our next dinner on May 18th. That's the Wednesday between our 2nd Saturday and 3rd Saturday meetings that month. If you are, or have been, a regular volunteer, SIG Leader, Board member, or a participant in the efforts of the Texas Center for the Visually Challenged (TCVC), be looking for that e-mail by no later than April 24th.

Change is Inevitable

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

I recently got something in an email I thought I would share with you. It came under the title Change is Inevitable. The article wasn't attributed so I don't know who originally wrote it. Anyway, it reads as follows:

1. The Post Office is in deep trouble and there is probably no way to sustain it long term. But then again, you can already receive and pay bills on-line and save a stamp [which I do routinely. -- CAF] For everything else there's email, FedEx and UPS. [In major cities, there are couriers for same-day delivery. -- CAF]

2. Bank Checks – see #1. For everything else there is a debit card.

3. Newspapers have been a part of my life for over 50 years. Our children [and I -- CAF] no longer subscribe to other than a Sunday edition. if that. We and millions of others get our news on-line.

4. Books – My wife has always been an avid reader of books. But now you can get any of a number of ereaders where you can get books for a slightly lower price than paperback books. Plus, once you start flicking your fingers on the screen and get excited about the plot, you forget you are holding a gadget rather than a book.

[Before he retired, my father, now 89 and hale and hearty, used to sell Electrolux vacuums and later, World Book encyclopedias. Today we get our appliances either in big-box stores or, prefferably over the 'net from such sources as Amazon. And when was the last time you saw a genuwine paper encyclopedia. What once cost $400+ in 1950's dollars, today we get annual software encyclopedias or get our research from such sources as Wikipedia or a simple Google search. -- CAF]

5. Land line telephones – My sister, brother-in-law and many other youngers have dropped their land line in favor of cell phones. The biggest benefit is that you no longer get unsolicited sales calls every evening.

6. Music – Per the article, "Greed and corruption in the industry" is resulting in a lack of new music. Forty percent of the music purchased today is "catalog items" from older established artists. You can download a song or an entire album and not even leave home,

7. Television – Network revenues are down dramatically. A lot of people have already switched to watching TV and movies streamed through their computers.

8. The "Things that you own" – "Cloud" computing means your music, pictures, movies and documents aren't stored on your computer, but on the "virtual" internet (also known as the cloud.) So, if they are stored on the internet, do you really own them?

9. Privacy – Security cameras, the camera build into your computer and cell phone and the "profile" you create every time your purchase something or surf the web lets total strangers know your preferences, where you live, and where you are at any given moment. Our privacy is vanishing [Unless you're a total Luddite. -- CAF]

The article makes some good points. For every change-resistant geezer like me, there are a dozen young people without a landline, a newspaper subscription or a checkbook. All these changes are advancing at a high rate of speed and it's important that we all recognize these changes (so we can be prepared to adapt) as they are taking place in front of us.

Not all the changes are necessarily positive. As the president once said "It is not strange to mistake change for progress." This was not our current President but it was Millard Fillmore, the 13th President of the United States (1850 to 1853). So clearly this is not a new phenomenon.

To my thinking, you can either embrace change and adapt to it or stand by to get run over by a freight train.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) ...

Sessions with presentations, discussion, and exchanges of information

2nd Saturday

These meetings occur at the Microsoft facility at 7000 State Hwy 161, Building 1. See map at http://www.ntpcug.org/LocationMapsMicrosoft.html.

.NET Developers – 9:00 am

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

Ongoing Series – Learning C# 2010

This month, our topic will be Working with Arrays and Collections, by Tuc Goodwin.

The book we are using is Teach Yourself Visual C# 2010 in 24 hours by Scott Dorman, ISBN: 0672331012, SAMS Publishing.

Here is what we are doing the next five months:

David Stark   5/14/2011
Handling Errors using Exceptions

Shawn Weisfeld 6/11/2011
Understanding Generics

Tuc Goodwin   7/9/2011
Understanding Query Expression

David Stark   8/13/2011
Using Files and Streams

10:15 am

Windows Phone 7 Development – by Justin Weinberg

SharePoint – 11:30 am

Ram Yadav
ram_yadav@hotmail.com

Topic: Sharepoint 2010

3rd Saturday

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

Alphabetically

Building Web Sites — 8:00 am

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

presented by Alan Lummus

In April, we'll focus on the latest version of WordPress, explore its intricacies, and take your questions. If time allows, Alan will continue his installation of the ECWID shopping cart plugin for WordPress.

Finally, mark your calendars and reserve Saturday May 28th and Saturday June 4th, from 9-5 both days. Alan will reprise his popular 16 hour workshop in which you'll work along side as he develops a fresh idea into a money making website. Alan will start with nothing more than his experience and take an idea from start to finish during the workshop. You can work on your own project as Alan works on his, asking any questions as they come up. Alan will even host your site for you free for 1 year, provided you get at least at least a basic site up and running by the end of the 8th day!

The workshop will cover coming up with an idea, researching its commercial viability on the web, picking and registering a good domain name, choosing and contracting a hosting service, creating a turnkey website for a new project based upon the WordPress template system including a shopping cart, and legal, business, finance and tax considerations for your new business. Last year the workshop focused on building websites monetized by promoting affiliate programs for other merchant's sites. This year will focus on selling your own physical or downloadable

product.

By compressing a year and a half of monthly one hour SIG meetings into a period spanning only 8 days, you can much more readily grasp the nuts and bolts of building websites that bring in a steady income. Registration is open to any member or friend of NTPCUG, and to their friends and family. Seating is limited and registration is required. $10 in advance if registering by May 1st, $15 if registered by May 20th, and $25 at the door if room is available. Any fees not spent on refreshments will be donated to NTPCUG and other 501(c)(3) organizations. Reserve your spaces today at http://www.bkmts.com/SIGsWorkshop-2011.htm.

Digital Photography — 10:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org
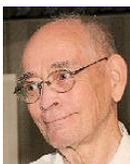
Our April meeting will continue where we left off last month with learning from others. We all have something to contribute from beginner's interests trhough new advanced techniques and products. I will continue with valuable techniques I have learned from professional friends and also through professional semminars. What we learn from experienced people in the photography business is wonderful as the more proficient our menotrs are-the more they love to share information with others.

Our goals remain with taking better pcitures and having morenfun doing so. if our goals include making more money, we will include appropriate tips as we go along.

Remember, we are here for sharing and helping with everyone from beginning through professionals. All are welcome to listen, learn, particpate and enjoy.

What methods for learning would you recommend for our members?

Bring your camera and peripherals if you like.

Members and guests are welcome to be a presenter. Are there any volunteers?

Digital Photo Editing Software — 11:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org

Since we have learned to take better images, should we do something with them to make them into better presentations?

Great images may be hiding in a photo. If there is sufficient detail in the file, we may be able 'special' parts and process these into our storybooks. I usually take larger and more detailed images than initially required just because there may be something extra to use. This is especially true while capturing candid photos.

Proper cropping is great to make our subjects and objects fit into the mood for a sale or documenting our friends and relatives events.

We will demonstrate some photo editing on our own and also some work done by Ed Pierce's PhotoVision series.

Learn more and share with your fellow SIG members.

Come, bring your friends, and enjoy.

Internet — 11:00 am

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

New Features in RoboForm 7

Many of you know that RoboForm is the program that I use to manage passwords. In this session, we'll talk about how people manage their passwords, the basic reasons for using Roboform for private information, and demonstrate all the new features that were added in Verison 7.

Investors - 1:30 pm

Gil Brand
gbrand@ntpcug.org

We will have an open Q&A session. Bring your questions and we'll try to answer them.

IT Professional — 9:30 am - 11:00 am

Larry Copeland, Co-SIG leader
Lacopeland2000@yahoo.com
Mark Phelps, Co-SIG leader
eytukan@gmail.com

No meeting this month to make time for a special presentation on Windows Phone 7 by

Chris Koenig of Microsoft. *See page 2 for details - **begins at 9:30**.*

Making Money on the Internet — 9:00 am

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

presented by Alan Lummus

For April, we'll continue our examination of a wide variety of ways to make money on the Internet, including creating your own websites that promote your own and other people's products or services. We'll also continue the development of an installation Alan started previously of the ECWID shopping cart on a marketing website built on the WordPress template*.*

Microsoft Access SIG — 11:00 am

Larry Linson
larry.linson2@ntpcug.org

Jim Wehe
jimwehe@gmail.com

On Saturday, April 16, 2011, we will continue exploring calculations in **Access**. We'll look over the enhanced overview document (see below) that **Larry** passed out in March, and the accompanying database. We will be discussing using calculations in Queries, Reports, and Forms.

In March, 2011, **SIG Member Chrystin Pleasants** brought some examples of Excel spreadsheets and we had a working session to determine **Microsoft Access "equivalents"** to accomplishing the purpose of the **Microsoft Excel** functionality. This went a little slowly as we had done little to prepare and understand the requirements.

SIG Co-Leader Larry Linson passed out a document-in-progress, *Brief Overview of Calculations in Access*, for which there is a corresponding database. We had no time to look at this, so we will look at it in April. Larry will likely add some additional features and functions to the document and database for that presentation.

Coming attractions: We solicit your suggestions for topics.

In May, SIG Co-Leader **Jim Wehe** will be presenting some additional information on using Access 2010, and other related topics.

In June, everyone's schedule permitting, we'll resume working with **Chrystin's** sample data on converting *Excel* spreadsheet information to **Microsoft Access**.

*Calculations in **Microsoft Access**: From the March base of "how do I this **Microsoft Access** when I need to move from **Microsoft Excel**", we can proceed on a number of different paths.

***VBA**: When, where, and how to use it

We need to know what topics you'd like to hear, see, and learn – they can be related to these, or entirely new. Come to the meetings and let's discuss them. Write some suggestions, add your contact information so we can explore details if what you want isn't clear to us, and give them to **Jim** or **Larry**.

A continuing call for presenters: We want you to show us an ***Microsoft Access*** database you created and use, a tutorial on an Access-related topic, other Access- or Office-related material, or to contact a friend of yours who'd be a good guest speaker. If you need help constructing the presentation, see **Jim** or **Larry** – we're not from the government, but we're here to help.

Valuable Prizes: We will have a drawing for a genuine, brand-new **Microsoft Arc Mouse**. We will also draw for the Arc Mouse intended for giveway at the January meeting.

Microsoft Certification SIG - 1:30 pm

Tom Perkins
tomperki@gmail.com

Our tooic this month is "Introduction to Entity Framework". Come join us.
Questions or comments?
Contact Tom Perkins (tomperki@gmail.com) or Chris Morgan (chris.morgan@ntpcug.org)

Microsoft Excel – 8:00 am

Frank Tubbs, SIG leader
ftubbs@sbcglobal.net

Topic and speaker to be announced.

Microsoft Expression Web — 10:00 am

Chris Morgan
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org

No meeting this month to make time for a special presentation on Windows Phone 7 by Chris Koenig of Microsoft. *See page 2 for details - begins at 9:30.*

Mobile Computing — 10:00 am

This month, a special presentation by **Chuck Stark** and **Doug Gorrie** on how you can use and get the most out of your Tech-Net subscription. *See page 2 for details.*

Powershell – 9:00 am

Larry Weiss
lfw@airmail.net

Gil Brand
gbrand@ntpcug.org

The PowerShell class using examples from the book "Learn Windows Power-Shell in a Month of Lunches" by Don Jones continues, followed by a Q&A session. (https://sites.google.com/site/powershellsig)

Windows Inside Out — 12:30 pm

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

XP Virtual Machine in W7

In this session, we'll demonstrate how to set up and use Windows 7 as a host for a Windows XP virtual machine. We'll also discuss why you would want to do that, and how to create shortcuts to individual XP programs.

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

Gil Brand
gb1@ntpcug.org

Chuck Stark
chuck.stark@ntpcug.org

Log-Me-In Demo, & Live, "No Net" with dead USB drive

Wireless Communications — 11:00 am

Birl Smith
birl.smith@ntpcug.org

Topic to be announced at the meeting.

Word — 9:00 - 11:00 am

Sharon Dorsey
Sharon.Dorsey@ntpcug.org

Topic: Formatting – The Paragraph Group.

Hennig and Linson Re-Awarded as Microsoft MVPs

Larry Linson and **Teresa Hennig** were recently informed that they have been re-awarded the Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) designation for their contributions to the Microsoft Access database software user community.

Larry is a long-time member of NTPCUG, co-leader of the Microsoft Access SIG, and NTPCUG Membership chairman. He was first selected as an Access MVP in 2003.

Teresa is a member of NTPCUG, leader of the Seattle Access Group and the Pacific Northwest Access Developers Group, INETA Community Champion for 2010, and writes the News from the Northwest column here in the North Texas PC News each month. She was first selected as an Access MVP in 2006.

For more information about the Microsoft MVP program, visit http://mvp.support.microsoft.com.

News from the Northwest

By Teresa Hennig

No column this month, look for it next month.

Internet is the Future for Devices

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

An article by this title appeared in the March 16 issue of the Dallas News.

If you attended our recent presentation by Victor Godinez, you heard a fascinating, wide ranging talk on the topic of technology, now and in the future. As it turns out, Victor also wrote an article in which he stated that "The era of gadgets that don't connect to the Internet is coming to an end.

"The Internet is simply too useful, and integrating that connectivity into devices is less expensive than ever for hardware makers.

"Officials from Dallas-based AT&T and other companies discussed how developers can create applications and content for the growing portfolio of non-phone devices with Internet connections.

"The initial surge of non-phone mobile devices will likely be led by tablets such as the iPad."

"While almost every tablet includes Wi-Fi technology, many buyers are opting for models that also include built-in 3G and 4G cellular network connections."

"Ed Schmit, director of product development at AT&T, said that many of the new mobile devices such as tablets are being used by customers to watch online videos."

"Telecom equipment maker Ericsson predicts there will be 50 billion wirelessly connected devices by 2020.

"That includes everything from tablets and smart phones to cars that automatically report diagnostic issues to the manufacturer or medical monitors that send data about a patient at home to her doctor at the hospital without the patient having to lift a finger."

Imagine a refrigerator or pantry that automatically keeps track of your food inventory and either sends a request to your local grocery store for delivery or pick-up of replacements by printing out a shopping list for later use. Imagine being able to call your home oven on the way home and tell it to turn on so dinner is nearly ready by the time you get home. Of course oven timers alone can accomplish this task, but what if you leave the office earlier or later than anticipated? Turn on lights so you don't arrive to a dark home; adjust the blinds and HVAC remotely. Again, there are devices currently available to accomplish these tasks but only in a "smart home" can all these individual functions be integrated into a consistent whole.

As I have said before, these are truly heady times. They are progressing rapidly and at a constantly increasing pace.

NTPCUG Member Websites

by Doug Gorrie

Are you an NTPCUG member? Do you have a website that you would like to share with other members? Here is your opportunity to publicize your hobby, personal interests or perhaps a business.

NTPCUG now permits each member to post their name along with <u>one</u> website at www.NTPCUG.org and in our newsletter. Member links to be posted are subject to Board approval, and cannot contain inappropriate content or promote illegal activities – all the usual conditions that responsible persons expect. Send us your links now!

Here are our current member sites:

Member	Website
Howard Lee Harkness	www.choicetraveltx.com
Bill Parker	www.Partec.net
Bob Hawkins	www.fairviewmicrowave.com
Doug Gorrie	www.JanetGorrieInteriors.com

If you wish to post as shown above, just e-mail *webmaster@ntpcug.org* with your name, member number and the URL of your desired website. We'll post your name and URL on our website and in the newsletter for as long as your membership remains current.

This Month in Our History

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

Now I don't mean to be nasty, but this is tax month. Due to a federal holiday, tax filings and payments are due on the 18th this year. I do tax filings for folks through the AARP Tax Aide program. This program is open to anyone, but obviously we focus on the low income and elderly population.

'Nuff of the "rendering unto Caesar" stuff.

Let's take a look at the April '86 and '91 issues of PC News.

At the April '86 meeting, Michael Labanowsti, Major Account Representative for Microsoft, presented the then-current version of Microsoft Word. At the time, this word processor was second only to IBM's Displaywrite. Copies of Word were given to members who attended this meeting.

In the big room, MDBS Inc. presented a discussion and demonstration of its new artificial intelligence product for the PC, named GURU. The discussion included a natural language interface with the computer.

Fred Williams had a 4-page article titled Introduction to Modems. Modem? What's a modem? I have DSL or cable for which I thank the good Lord. Ain't seen a dialup modem in years.

There was an article on HG StoryBook, an application that created presentations for your use to various audiences. There wasn't such a thing as PowerPoint at that time.

Disk of the Month featured QModem version 1.13 and Norton Utilities 3.1.

A widely distributed article titled Taking Advantage of Your Hard Disk presented some wisdom on the organization of a hard drive.

In the '91 edition of PC News, Borland presented an app called ObjectVision, a multi-program development. As advertised, you could take spreadsheets and data bases and drawing programs to quickly create fully functional Windows applications.

Following that was a presentation by Ashton-Tate on Applause II, a business app that let one create charting, drawing and presentation functionality, all in one application.

The Prez Sez column by President Jim Hoisington reported that we then had 1,579 members. With your help, we might reach this again, although we might have to find a new venue for our monthly meetings.

In Variety Store, Reagan Andrews wrote of the demise of a publication we all enjoyed at the time. If you were a member in the early '90s, you may remember the great monthly free publication Computer Currents. Well, it ended production in March of 1991. Kind of sad. It had a lot of interesting articles and ads in it.

Fully fourteen SIGs were reported on in the April '91 issue. Many of them have fallen by the wayside, either because the software they studied was discontinued or there simply was no longer sufficient interest.

The ever-energetic Jim Hoisington had number 50 in his column On Complexity. In this installment he noted that large software companies like Microsoft, Lotus and Borland were buying up smaller firms. The small developers found it difficult to raise the necessary capital for research and development of new products. As a result, we have fewer software companies than was true in the early '90s.

If you were a PC user back then, you may remember how many applications had problems "playing well with others". That's pretty rare today. So we, the end users have benefited by this consolidation. At the same time, the standards used by Microsoft have eliminated many of these difficulties.

Thanks for reading. If you wish to see the full historic newsletter issues, log on to our website, WWW.NTPCUG.ORG or SP.NTPCUG.ORG and look for News.

Adventures in New Technology

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

Back when Windows was yet a babe in arms, I whole-heartedly resisted mouse-driven apps, feeling they were merely video games. Wellsir, my wife and daughter went shopping and came home and said, "Guess what? We got you a mouse!" Sho 'nuff, a little one-inch furry stand up mouse which I have kept on top of my main machine for now at least 20 years, maybe 30 now.

When cell phones began to pervade the country, I whole-heartedly resisted having one, feeling that, if I was in the office, call me there – if I was home, call me there. If I'm out of both places, I really don't need to hear from you. Wellsir, about three years ago, for Christmas, my good wife gave me a TracFone. I got used to it and thoroughly enjoyed the ability to communicate mobily.

So, last week, I'm going into Dallas with a friend and he has this really cool phone. It is not only a phone but a GPS unit. Turn it sideways and there's a horizontal display. Turn it back and it's a vertical display.

Yup, the next day I went to the AT&T Phone Store on 75 between Beltline and Arapaho and tried to get an iPhone 3GS to which I wanted my old cell number transferred from TracFone. THREE DAYS later, TracFone had not yet managed to release my number. I got sorely irritated and finally said, "Let's just get a new number." One hour later I had my new communications device.

OK, my wife and kids chide me as the guy who didn't want a cell phone and has now leap-frogged all of them. I LOVE this phone!

On the downside, the documentation sucks eggs. In fact, it's kinda non-existent. Also on this side, EVERYTHING from Apple is proprietary. A car charger is $24.95. I ordered one from the net for $3.30 (thanks Amazon.)

On the positive side, it carries my calendar, has GPS as well as MapQuest maps, works pretty well everywhere, has the common features like camera, weather, Bluetooth, etc.

I bought my phone and several accessories as noted above from a truly helpful sales manager named Mickale Gilbert. He embodies the true spirit of customer service so long ago lost by too many salesfolk and has been most accommodating to my nearly (no, really), daily revisits to get accustomed to this new phone and learn its features. The phone was $39.99 and the monthly service depends on what you order and whether you are an employee or retiree of a company that has a discount agreement with AT&T.

I am told there is an Apple store at, among other places, NorthPark mall that will be glad to show you how to use your new Apple device. I haven't looked into that yet but plan to.

So, I apparently have arrived in the later 21st century and like the experience.

Go see Mickale or Luis. You'll be pleased.

"How shall I torture you today? Put you on the rack? Boil you in oil? Make you call a technical support line?"

Nintendork.com - LogOff Warning

You have been on-line for 1 year.
Do you wish to Log Off and get a Life?

Yes   NO

Remind me next year

Malware, Viruses, Trojans Defined

by Ira Wilsker, APCUG

In the past week, I was called upon four more times to clean malware off of infected computers. One user had a major name-brand antivirus program installed, running, and up-dated and could not understand how the mal-ware had penetrated his antivirus software and contaminated his computer. He had purchased the antivirus software last fall from a big box electronics store based on the recommenda-tions of a salesperson. He had been told that this particular brand of security software was the best as it was their top seller, and that an-tivirus software was all that he really needed. Based on that recommendation he plopped his hard earned money on the counter, went home, installed it, updated it, and blissfully surfed the internet, opened email attachments, downloaded software and music, and had just a jolly good time online until his computer gradu-ally slowed to a crawl, and friends informed him that they were receiving spam emails from him. This user was perplexed, as his antivirus software was running, and indicated that it was updating several times a day. He just could not understand how 90 different malware programs had infected his computer. His problem started when he purchased inadequate security soft-ware; while the product he bought was excellent at protecting his computer from viruses, and some Trojans and spyware, it did not offer the all-inclusive protection of the comprehensive security suite offered by that publisher (and others as well) that would have only cost him a few dollars more.

There is a common misconception in user circles that viruses are the primary computing threat, as users have heard about viruses for several years. Today, viruses are present, but are a relatively minor threat in terms of preva-lence. I did a quick analysis of the most com-mon new threats recently listed by TrendMicro, and found that viruses made up only 4% of the new significant threats to our computing secu-rity. On the other end of the spectrum, Trojans made up 42% of the commonly seen new threats, worms were at 14%, backdoors at 14%, web based threats were at 6%, java script malware was at 6%, 4% were hacking utilities, 2% adware, and about 8% other threats.

It is obvious that protective software that protects the computer primarily from viruses is failing to protect the user from the majority of contemporary threats; it is precisely this fact that led to this user's infected computer, despite his premium quality antivirus software. A lot of users have a misconception about the common threats in circulation, believing that they are generically all viruses, but, as I saw in this case, this blissful ignorance may lead to a computing nightmare.

While not necessary to use a computer, it would likely be beneficial for computer users to be aware of the different threat groups that can impact our computing. According to Wikipedia, "A computer virus is a computer program that can copy itself and infect a computer." Many viruses attach themselves to legitimate programs or data files on the infected computer. The fact that a computer virus can copy itself to infect other computers is what makes it different from other types of mal-ware, for which viruses are commonly confused. Viruses can be spread through digital media (USB drives, CD or DVD discs, and floppy discs) or through network connections that the virus can use to copy itself to other attached computers.

Once a virus has infected a computer, it may perform a variety of tasks as programmed by its author. Viruses may damage the data on a hard drive or degrade the performance of the computer. Some of the viruses are stealthy, and their effect may not be noticeable by the user as the viruses do their damage in the background. Some viruses are functionally benign, other than they reproduce themselves countless times on the infected hard drive, until they consume all of the free space on the hard drive.

Computer worms are a malicious computer program that wriggles through computer networks

sending copies of itself to other computers attached to the network. Most worms are free standing programs, and are commonly programmed to spread themselves through the network without any action by the user. Most worms have an explicit nefarious function such as deleting files on the infected computer, or encrypting critical files, only releasing them after an extortion payment is made to the cybercriminal. Some worms open a backdoor into the computer that will enable the creator of the worm to take remote control of the computer, converting the computer into a "zombie" under his control, which can be used to generate revenue for the originator of the worm by sending spam mail from the infected computer, with the spam fees collected going to the author of the worm. Some worms are used to create a zombie network of computers, also called a "botnet", where the compromised computers can be used to launch directed cyber-attacks on other computers or networks, in an act of cyber terrorism.

For those who are aware of the epic "Helen of Troy" of Greek mythology, the term "Trojan Horse" means an object looks like it serves one purpose, but really has an unobvious, usually nefarious, purpose. Cisco, the networking company, describes a Trojan as, "a harmful piece of software that looks legitimate. Users are typically tricked into loading and executing it on their systems". In cyber speak, a Trojan Horse, typically shortened to the simple moniker "Trojan" is a program that appears to have a useful function, but after being installed by the user, the Trojan may be used to perform other undesirable functions.

Some Trojans are money makers for their authors because they place paid (and usually unwanted) pop up advertisements (Adware) on the infected computer, redirect web searches, or shift online purchases to a seller not of the buyer's choice without his knowledge. Some Trojans are keyloggers, which are commonly used for identity theft, or to give unauthorized users access to a computer system. Trojans are often spread through intentionally downloaded software, surreptitiously bundled with another often legitimate program, from email attachments, and purloined websites with executable contact (ActiveX is sometimes used for this). Some Trojans can be installed on the target computer by way of code written in Java, or a Java script, that when executed, implants the harmful content on the victim computer.

One of the more recent and costly types of malware to attack our computers is generically referred to as "Rogue Antivirus Software", which is usually implanted on the victim's computer by a Trojan. There are thousands of these rogue programs in current circulation, infecting millions of computers at any given time. Rogue antivirus is sometimes installed by the user using "social engineering" tactics, which tricks the user into clicking on something that installs the rogue software.

Some of the common lures to ensnare the user into loading rogue software on the computer are offers for free screen savers, toolbars, utilities to play specific video formats (often attached to an email), sham online security scanners, contaminated PDF files, insecure web browsers, and other vectors. The common thread of this rogue software is an authentic looking popup that informs the user that his computer is (falsely) infected with hundreds of viruses and Trojans, and for a fee it will clean the computer. These popups which will not permanently close will typically hijack the computer, destroy the installed legitimate security software, prevent access to online services that can kill it, prevent cleaning utilities from executing, and otherwise take control of the computer until the user pays a fee, typically $30 to $70. This fee is to be paid by credit card or other online payment service to a website that looks legitimate, but is really a complete scam. Not just will the rogue software not clean the computer of the pseudo infections after the fee is paid, but now a cybercriminal, often in Russia, has the user's credit card information. It is not uncommon for that same credit card information to be promptly sold on illicit websites, and to have substantial unauthorized charges appear on the compromised credit card account.

While there are many other cyber threats out there, those listed above are among the most commonly encountered by users. The traditional antivirus software will protect from some of the threats listed, but not all of them; this enhanced security capability is in the purview of the comprehensive

security suite, or a combination of different types of individual security utilities, and not the free standing antivirus program. This is explicitly why I currently recommend a high quality integrated security suite, rather than an antivirus program. There are several good commercial security suites available, as well as a few free security suites. Just be aware that antivirus software by itself is inadequate to protect against today's contemporary cyber security threats.

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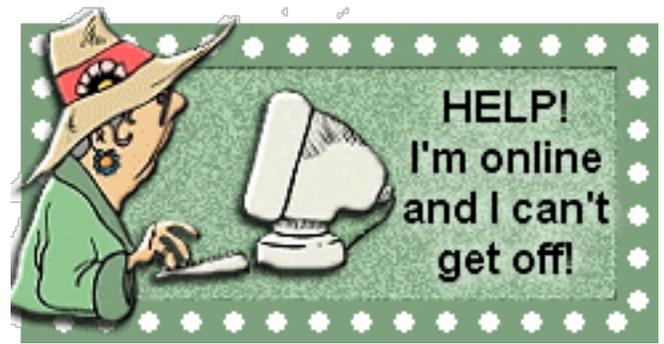
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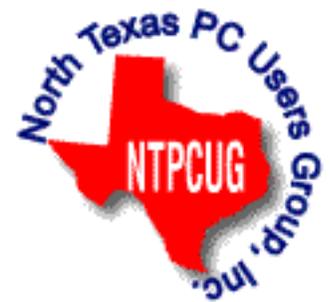
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Monthly NTPCUG Meeting Flyer – Can You Help Distribute?

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 April flyer?
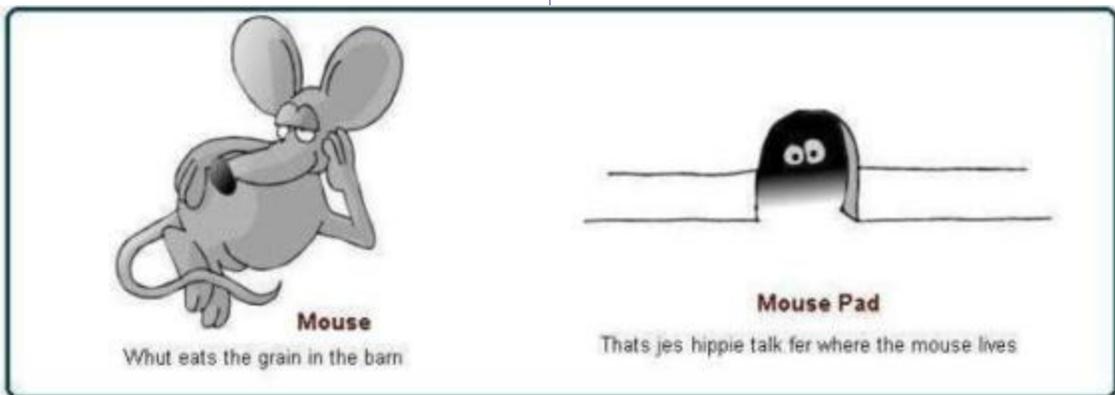
Volunteering

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:

Information Desk — Charles Rem
crem@ntpcug.org

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

This is an ongoing need. YOU can hlep, and it's not difficult. Training provided, so you really have No excuse not to assist - right?

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
doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org
davef81@gmail.com

Prepare, contribute to and distribute the monthly newsletter. Edit articles for better wording, formatting.

Mouse
Whut eats the grain in the barn

Mouse Pad
Thats jes hippie talk fer where the mouse lives

Calendar

April	May	June
9 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft	**14** 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft	**11** 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft
16 8:00 am—2:30 pm **3rd Saturday** at King of Glory	**21** 8:00 am—2:30 pm **3rd Saturday** at King of Glory	**25** 8:00 am—2:30 pm **3rd Saturday** at King of Glory **NOTE:** *This is actually the 4th Saturday in June. See page 2 for details.*