

NEW AGE COMPUTER CLUB

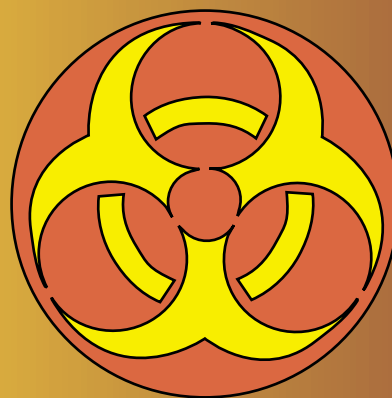
Bits-and-Bytes

Newsletter

Online

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NOVEMBER 2001 EDITION

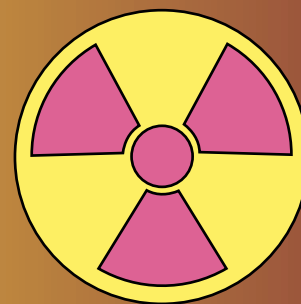


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New Age Computer Club Bits & Bytes Newsletter



NACC On The Internet :

Website: <http://www.angelfire.com/geek/bitbybit>

Newsletter (PDF) Online: <http://www.angelfire.com/geek/bitbybit/NewAge5.pdf>



It's A New Age

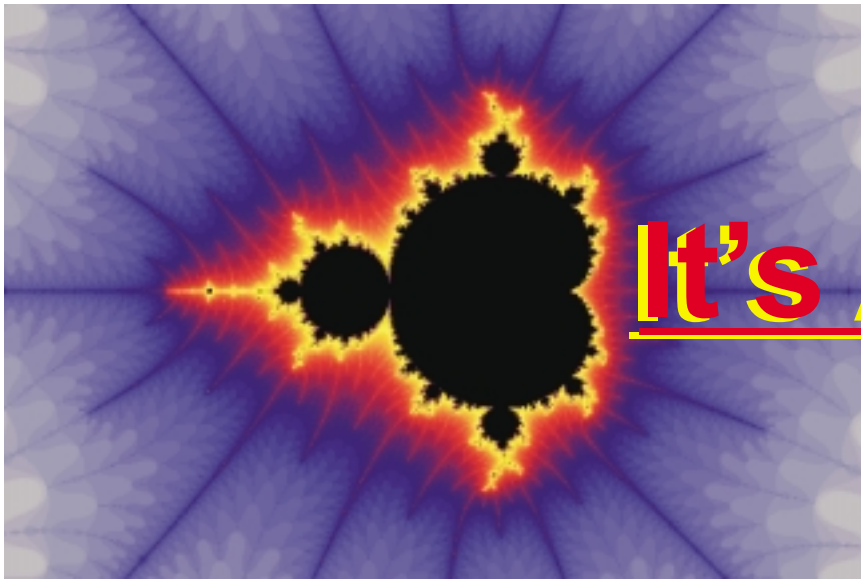
Why The New Age Computer Club (NACC) Is Free by Val Scarcia, Editor mrval@rcn.com

I have been editor of many newsletters, and I am glad to be affiliated with the NACC and its openness. Since we can offer everyone a FREE newsletter, we do not require dues. Dues originated with most clubs to pay for the costs of newsletters. However, with the advent of the Internet, this has all changed. We offer our members a FREE color newsletter monthly that is easily downloaded from our website in standard PDF (Portable Document Format). Many senior citizens on fixed incomes who are retired today are not looking for additional annual expenses such as dues. We have not created appointed officers and treasurers to collect and justify dues. We do not try to remind our members how much we are doing for them, since we are all equal.



The NACC has FREE access to many professional meeting places which include libraries, churches, schools, etc. All our members have individual talents. Many are professional college graduates who are certified in scientific areas and teaching. Many have taken post graduate college courses and hold advanced degrees as well. Some are hobbyists, many are successful businessmen, many are past successful officers of other clubs and groups. We do not believe the meeting place is the most important thing for our club. The most important ingredient is the content of the material, and how it is approached and explained. We are not trying to build grandiose temples or shrines around us. Good meetings begin anywhere.

In addition to our successful diner meetings, I have obtained the Whitehall Library for us starting on September 19, 2001, which also includes the first Wednesday of the month for the rest of this year. This area lends itself to demonstrations and input. Please send us articles of interest of your choice for publication in our color electronic NACC newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you.



It's A New Age

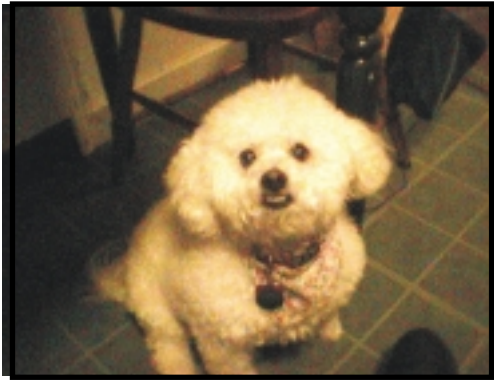
The New Age Computer Club has been a natural formation for those who have given many thousands of hours of their time to other nonprofit groups and clubs

in the area, and find themselves without a place to be. Some of these people were founders of groups they are not part of today. The changing technologies and constant change in our society is producing people who believe "newer" is always better, and change for the sake of change is always the answer. It is becoming a world without history, a country without tradition, and limited insight. As computer hardware and software change by the minute, as new cars roll-off the assembly lines with new models annually, a subconscious vision is created that everything should change. The people changing everything don't even understand why they are doing it. It has become a national mantra. People keep changing everything just for the sake of change. Constant change will eventually bring a collapse, and scattering of efforts. Never forget, a nuclear bomb also works on the principle of a high rate of change!

The New Age Computer Club is a small group of friends getting together socially to have fun, and share ideas. We are not in competition with anyone else or any of the other fine clubs in the area. We do not require any dues or membership fees. We do not have any officers in our club, and hope we never will. We are not going out of our way to solicit members, and everyone is welcome. Growing to any specific number of members is not our purpose. All of us are equal, and we look to run the group as democratically as possible. This club will create the individual free-space needed for creative expression. We want different members to chair our monthly informal meetings creating an equanimity among all of us. We feel in this Information Age we can easily supply our group's needs without any monetary charges. We have our webpage up at <http://www.angelfire.com/geek/bitbybit> which is FREE.

We look forward to listening to everyone's views and interests. We will float in "free-space" for awhile before we get a full grasp of each other. We will have on-the-fly monthly meetings, and every member will get notified via e-mail. If you have interest, make sure you are on our e-mail list. We will strive to keep our outlooks high and provide the intellectual stimulation that is necessary in understanding science and computing today. But most of all, we need to understand and be respectful of each other, and realize we are all the result of all the past efforts of many others, better known as tradition and history.

Bill Pryor,
bill@sos-prod.com



A View From The Top

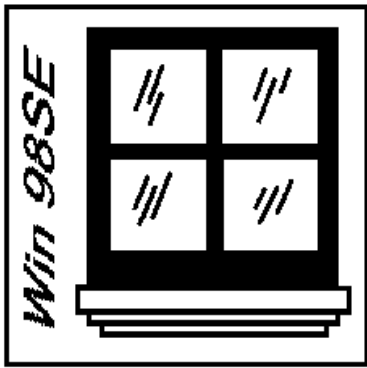
Hi for those of you who don't know me, my name is Babette. I'll be writing this column monthly to summarize what is going on.

Hey this NACC is cool. Sharing is the main ingredient. Joe brought a series of cams this month to the Hamilton Diner to show their many features. Paul Hertl was there asking many interesting cam questions. How do you like the neat column Professor John Scott is writing--this month it is PDAs and RAM! He shares a great history from the past rolled into the present! John has done Windows for many years, and had his own successful SIG group with the LVCG. John was also a Vice President for many years too! John has an amazing grasp of knowledge in many fields. He is respectful of everyone's input and has a treasure chest of knowledge for us all!

How about Val Scarcia's nice contributions! He was a ten year past Editor of the Bit by Bit too! How about Bill Pryor's uncanny prediction of the use of bio-warfare anthrax right after the Sept 11 terrorist attack, printed firsthand in the NACC Newsletter! Initially, many may have thought this was way out; now it's all over the news. Scary! How does this guy have the insight to see so many pertinent things before they happen?

The NACC continues the necessary continuity, tradition, and involvement that has been lost at other clubs. From all of us, thanks for your valuable contributions. Have a happy and a safe Thanksgiving holiday.

New Age Computer Club
NACC



Thru the Window Pain !! by John Scott

Update on Pentium 4 memory DVD Recorders PDAs

Update on Pentium 4 memory: PC World tested P4 systems with the expensive RDRAM, the less expensive DDR-RAM, and the cheapest SDRAM. The PC World bench tests showed the less expensive DDRRAM outperformed the expensive RDRAM by about 5% and the SDRAM by about 10%. PC World stated that the DDRRAM is only about 1/3 the price of RDRAM and the SDRAM about 1/4. FLASH: AMD claims P4 a giant step backwards. AMD slower chips perform better. Propose a new system for gauging performance.

I Checked Dell, Gateway and HP for nearly equivalent 256 Meg systems. RDRAM systems were respectively \$1758, 1434, 1705. The SDRAM systems were \$1358, 1259, 1485. The Gateway RDRAM system appears to be a ringer, I checked the price twice and got two slightly different numbers. If the price is correct, the Gateway RDRAM system is probably worth \$175 more as there are some other extras on this system. A RDRAM system is definitely not worth \$400 more. There weren't any DDRRAM systems available except for one from Via that was tested by PC World.

DVD Recorders: DVD recorders are here at \$549-799. However, there are 3 different formats and they aren't all compatible with each other or with computer and living room DVD players. We're still on hold.

Personal Data Assistants: Aka PDAs. These handheld computers have a lot of uses in day-to-day activities. The most common applications are appointment book, note pad, to-do list, and database. Most units start out at about 3" by 5" by 1/2" thick. The most popular units are made by PALM which uses its own PALM OS. Handspring makes a PALM clone that is popular because of its bus slot that accommodates a lot of add-ons and its lesser price. Other major PDAs use Windows CE OS. (Don't be fooled. These PDAs seem to be more powerful have more memory, but this is because Windows CE uses all that extra memory!!) There is also a Linux based PDA.

I checked a lot of companies and models. I checked reviews and user comments on line. There was little agreement on the best. The most vehement disagreement was about screen viewability. Try one out in the store as well as in low light and outside in daylight to see if it is acceptable. Color is probably a waste, but what the heck its only money.

II finally bought a PDA (The PALM M505) for a couple of definite uses. I have to make dozens of appointments on the spot a PDA lets me coordinate with my calendar at home. I also wanted to have a list of my library books with me in used bookstores and a list of plants as I take people around my garden. I wanted an easy way to get the data in and out of my desktop and laptop computers.

At first glance a computer with only 8 Meg of memory seems anemic, but loaded with applications and databases for just about everything, my PALM reads `free space 5.6M of 7.7M'. The largest applications are Acrobat Reader 402k, MobileDB 400k, and Moon Phase 190k. Typical applications are Chemtable 26k, and Calc 34k. My fern book list is 31k and PALM user-guide.pdf is 160k (13 pages).

The PALM is reminiscent of the old DOS and LVCG ICE days only better. There are several WEB sites offering FREEWARE and SHAREWARE applications. Typical SHAREWARE applications cost \$10-30. In one evening I downloaded a couple of dozen applications.

A PDA acts like a computer should. First, when you turn it on, its on and ready to gono 8 minute boot up. Second, when you open an applicationit's instant and exactly where you left it. Switch to another applicationit's instantly open to where you left it. There's no saving and closing files; there's no hunting for files.

The heart of the system is the PC Palm Desktop software and the USB sync cradle. The Desktop and other applications on the PC install the programs on the PALM and prepare the data files for transfer to the PALM. When you press the sync button on the USB cradle the files are transferred to the palm. All applications and data are synchronized and archived on the PC. When you open an application on the PALM all data files associated with that application are listed. Click on the file and you're up and running.

I haven't needed extra memory yet, but I chose the PALM because it uses the little postage stamp size Multimedia memory cards that I have in my JVC digital camcorder.

JDS 11/2001



Thinking The Unthinkable by Bill Pryor



Before the Sept 11 terrorist attacks, America had been living in Disney World or La La Land. Everything science and technology created was wonderful, fantastic, and one sided. It was as if objects in the sunshine never had shadows. The cause and effect thinking shoved down all students throats by the "experts" and media for decades always seemed to be correct. There was no opposition. There was no questioning. Nothing bad ever happened. It was almost whatever Harvard, Yale, Microsoft, the AMA, Coca-Cola, and the NY Times said, was always enough to quench our understanding of everything.

Now all of a sudden, the "experts" are now worried about the 103 nuclear bombs they have planted and left all over the USA--better known as your friendly nuclear power plants. It was never enough for these morons to never explain to themselves or the public that after a spent uranium fuel rod is used up, it turns into deadly plutonium waste with a half-life of 25,000 years. A half-life means in 25,000 years, half of this deadly waste present will subsequently disappear by decay; the other half will still be present! Radiation is cool, you can not see it, taste it, or smell it. It causes cancer and death. It is invisible; and without radiation detectors, you can not tell it is there. It is not enough that an accident can occur normally like at Three Mile Island (1979) or Chernobyl (1986). Or like in the China Syndrome movie with Jane Fonda and Michael Douglas, melt right through the earth.

Why all the fuss? Reactors have run for decades fine. On September 11, people from the Mideast ran a great scientific experiment in New York City where they used our own aircraft, Boeing 757s and 767s, loaded them with fully with jet fuel, and created a 450,000 lb flying bomb or human guided missile, and slammed them into the World Trade Center Towers and the Pentagon. Using "primitive-technology" hijacked 4 planes in an hour's time without anyone hardly noticing the impending act. Architects and engineers could not imagine the WTC buildings collapsing like they did. The verdict is: modern jet aircraft are also guided missiles. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has been hemming and hawing that the nuclear reactors can withstand impacts from flying jet aircraft, finally admitted that when many were built decades ago, the commercial jets then were much smaller back in the Boeing 707 days. They now officially say they can not withstand the impact from a wide body aircraft today. The other problem is if the less guarded control room is hit, it could impair the reactor too, since the mechanism functioning of the reactor could not be controlled. Another real problem is the waste spent fuel rods of plutonium are just sitting outside most of these reactors in thin steel containers; if these storage pools are hit, radiation would spew all over the place. This is why France and Canada now have guided missiles at their reactors to defend against terrorism. Many want anti-aircraft artillery at each reactor too. Restricting airspace around the reactors will do little, since military will have little time to get there. Nukes are immensely dangerous, especially in a terrorized world---103 massive nuclear bombs just waiting. I would never worry about the nuclear capability of our enemies. They are just using what we have invented here against us.

The use of bio-weapons like anthrax have have the nation scared. Using the U.S. Mail as a delivery system, terrorists are hitting the mass media NBC, CBS, NY Times, NY Post, Congress, the Supreme Court, the Pentagon, figures like Tom Brokaw, Dan Rather, etc. The terrorists are nefariously clever. They have watched us and studied us. They know if they can get to the media and panic them, their fears will radiate to the public, which they have. The country is terrorized, and should be. The anthrax, which I mentioned in last month's newsletter, especially the inhalation variety, is the most deadly, since it is weaponized, or milled to a very fine micron size. The 1-5 micron size will penetrate the lungs, and release deadly toxins. Often it takes 5 days or so to produce flu-like symptoms, and by that time when the symptoms appear it will be too late. The USSR in the 1960's had 50,000 scientist working on bio-

warfare anthrax. There are scientists who have patents on weaponizing and aerosolizing anthrax going back to the 1960s. The US, USSR, and Iraq have produced weaponized anthrax in the 1960s; this is nothing new, contrary to what the newspapers were saying in the beginning.

Two different operating systems have been officially launched this month upon the American public. Microsoft has introduced their new Windows XP operating system which is supposed to be the best and most stable one to date. Windows XP is a digital operating system running on conventional binary programming. Also this month, terrorists have launched a new anthrax operating system which is biological in nature. It is even more stable than Windows XP with deadly spores lasting up to 100 years with out crashing. Like Windows, anthrax comes in many new different versions and flavors.

Last month, I had written that after the Sept 11th tragedy, I expected anthrax to be our next major terrorist problem. My instincts and background provoked me to state this, and I did. It might have seemed "far-out" to conventional thinkers, but unfortunately, my prediction turned out to be right. Now all you hear in the news is anthrax, not the digital kind, but the biological kind! It is much more of a newsbreak than anything else, since it is so deadly, elusive, and since most government officials and scientists seem to have a very rudimentary and perfunctory understanding of it. This occurrence of anthrax is the first use on American soil of a bioterrorist weapon.

I hope computer cognoscenti do not get too unnerved that I am calling anthrax an operating system, because it is. We have much to learn and too much to undo.



Don't Send Dues
NACC Is FREE!

Just The Facts

Clarence Snyder, W3PYF@aol.com

But now is a time to look at the other side of the numbers coming out of New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

The sad but somewhat uplifting side that the mainstream media has not reported yet - the SURVIVAL rates and some positive news about the attacks.

THE BUILDINGS

The World Trade Center

The twin towers of the World Trade Center were places of employment for some 50,000 people. With the missing list of just over 5,000 people, that means 90% of the people targeted survived the attack. A 90% on a test is an "A".

The Pentagon

Some 23,000 people were the target of a third plane aimed at the Pentagon. The latest count shows that only 123 lost their lives. That is an amazing 99.5% survival rate.
in addition, the plane seems to have come in too low, too early to affect a large portion of the building. On top of that, the section that was hit was the first of five sections to undergo renovations that would help protect the Pentagon from terrorist attacks. It had recently completed straightening and blast proofing, saving untold lives. This attack was sad, but a statistical failure.

THE PLANES

American Airlines Flight 77

This Boeing 757 that was flown into the outside of the Pentagon could have carried up to 289 people, yet only 64 were aboard.
Luckily 78% of the seats were empty.

American Airlines Flight 11

This Boeing 767 could have had up to 351 people aboard, but only carried 92. Thankfully 74% of the seats were unfilled.

United Airlines Flight 175

Another Boeing 767 that could have sat 351 people only had 65 people on board. Fortunately it was 81% empty.

United Airlines Flight 93

This Boeing 757 was one of the most uplifting stories yet. The smallest flight to be hijacked with only 45 people aboard out of a possible 289 had 84% of its capacity unused.

Yet these people stood up to the attackers and thwarted a fourth attempted destruction of a national landmark, saving untold numbers of lives in the process.

IN SUMMARY

Out of potentially 74,280 + Americans directly targeted by these inept cowards, 93% survived or avoided the attacks.

That's a higher survival rate than heart attacks, breast cancer, kidney transplants and liver transplants - all common, survivable illnesses.

Pass this information on to those in fear and the media. Don't fear these terrorists. The odds are against them.

Author Unknown

Barbie
Clarence Snyder, W3PYF@aol.com

Ralph was driving home one evening and realized that it was his daughter's birthday and he hadn't bought her a present.

He drove to the mall and ran to the toy store and he asked the store manager "How much is that new Barbie in the window?"

The Manager replied, "Which one?"

We have Barbie goes to the gym for 19.95,

Barbie goes to the Ball for 19.95,

Barbie goes shopping for 19.95,

Barbie goes to the beach for 19.95,

Barbie goes to the nightclub for 19.95,

and Divorced Barbie for 375.00."

Why is the Divorced Barbie 375.00 when all the others are

19.95?!?" Ralph asked surprised.

Divorced Barbie comes with Ken's car,

Ken's house,

Ken's boat,

Ken's dog,

Ken's cat and Ken's furniture.

Berners-Lee, Founder of The WWW, Slams 'blatant' MS Browser Tactics On Eve of Windows XP Launch

by Val Scarcia, Editor

From The Register, UK, November 2001

Tim Berners-Lee, The father of the World Wide Web and director of the W3C standards organization, has attacked Microsoft over last week's blocking of people with non-MS browsers from using its MSN.com site.

In an email interview with CNET, Berners-Lee said: "Obviously this was a blatant attempt to use the leverage of some content to produce domination at the software layer."

He continued: "I have fought since the beginning of the Web for its openness: that anyone can read Web pages with any software running on any hardware.

This is what makes the Web itself. This is the environment into which so many people have invested so much energy and creativity. When I see any Website claim to be only readable using particular hardware or software, I cringe - they are pining for the bad old days when each piece of information needed a different program to access it."



Microsoft was widely criticized last week when users of other browsers including Opera, Mozilla and some versions of Netscape were unable to access the redesigned MSN.com site. They were given an error warning and advised to "upgrade" to Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Microsoft initially blamed other browsers for their failure to comply with W3C standards - which really got people's backs up. Within hours MSN started working again with the other browsers and Microsoft changed its explanation. It was now "an error" and the company "took immediate steps to correct that mistake".

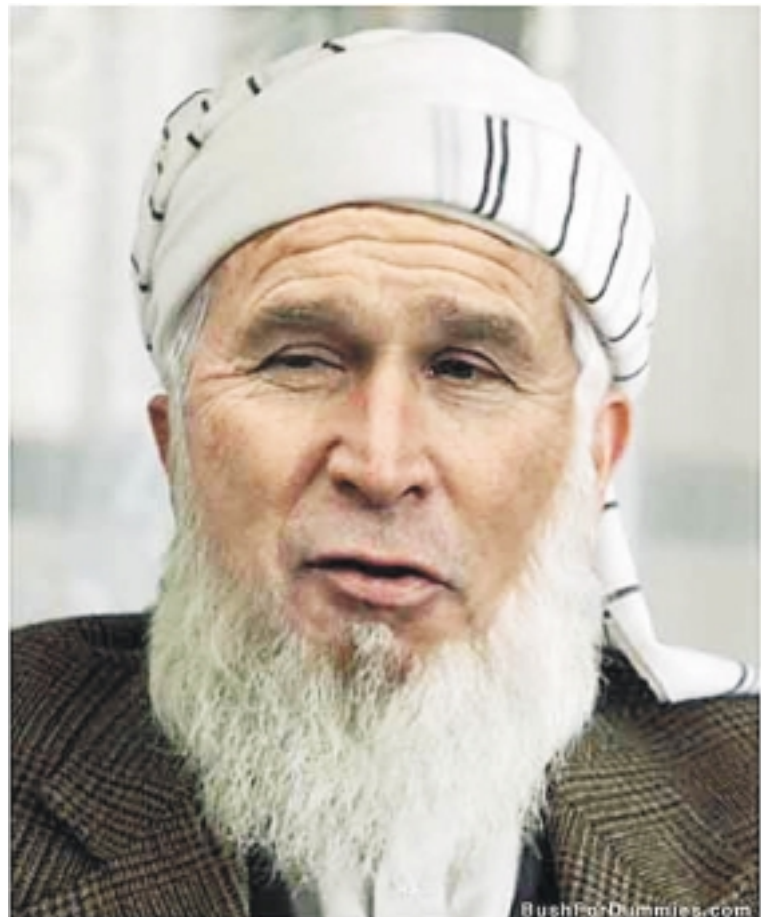
Berners-Lee is not impressed: "Control over a person's desktop and their browser is control over their whole Net-mediated perception of the world out there," he wrote. "It is very powerful."

Microsoft continues to usurp standard Internet software and inventions into their so called "new operating systems"; this month the new operating system is Windows XP. They love to obfuscate everything. Most malleable people at this time probably think Bill Gates and company is the Internet. EDITOR

If the Taliban Wins (From the Internet)

Val Scarcia and W. Kasapyr

Great
Photoshop-Type
Creations!



'57 Chevy
by Joanna Broder, bcjoanna@qwest.net

Sue, do you ...
REMEMBER....

When the worst thing you could do at school was smoke in the bathrooms, flunk a test or chew gum. And the banquets were in the cafeteria and we danced to a juke box later, and all the girls wore fluffy pastel gowns and the boys wore suits for the first time and we were allowed to stay out till 12 p.m.

When a '57 Chevy was everyone's dream car. . . to cruise, peel out, lay rubber and watch drag races, and people went steady and girls wore a class ring with an inch of wrapped dental floss or yarn coated with pastel frost nail polish so it would fit her finger.

And no one ever asked where the car keys were 'cause they were always in the car, in the ignition, and the doors were never locked. And you got in big trouble if you accidentally locked the doors at home, since no one ever had a key.

Remember lying on your back on the grass with your friends and saying things like "That cloud looks like a..."

And playing baseball with no adults to help kids with the rules of the game. Back then, baseball was not a psychological group learning experience-it was a game.

Remember when stuff from the store came without safety caps and hermetic seals 'cause no one had yet tried to poison a perfect stranger.

And...with all our progress...don't you just wish...just once...you could slip back in time and savor the slower pace...and share it with the children of the 80's and 90's

So send this on to someone who can still remember Nancy Drew, The Hardy Boys, Laurel & Hardy, Howdy Doody and The Peanut Gallery, The Lone Ranger, The Shadow Knows, Nellie Belle, Roy and Dale, Trigger and Buttermilk as well as the sound of a real mower on Saturday morning, and summers filled with bike rides, playing in cowboy land, baseball games, bowling and visits to the pool...and eating Kool-Aid powder with sugar.

When being sent to the principal's office was nothing compared to the fate that awaited a misbehaving student at home.

Basically, we were in fear for our lives, but it wasn't because of drive by shootings, drugs, gangs, etc.

Our parents and grandparents were a much bigger threat! But we all survived because their love was greater than the threat.

Didn't that feel good, just to go back and say, Yeah, I remember that!

And was it really that long ago?

...I do, John

----- End of Forwarded Message

Paul Harvey
by Clarence Snyder, W3PYF@aol.com

We tried so hard to make things better for our kids that we made them worse.

For my grandchildren, I'd like better. I'd really like for them to know about hand me down clothes and homemade ice cream and leftover meat loaf sandwiches. I really would.

I hope you learn humility by being humiliated, and that you learn honesty by being cheated. I hope you learn to make your own bed and mow the lawn and wash the car. And I really hope nobody gives you a brand new car when you are sixteen.

It will be good if at least one time you can see puppies born and your old dog put to sleep. I hope you get a black eye fighting for something you believe in, I hope you have to share a bedroom with your younger brother. And it's all right if you have to draw a line down the middle of the room, but when he wants to crawl under the covers with you because he's scared, I hope you let him.

When you want to see a movie and your little brother wants to tag along, I hope you'll let him. I hope you have to walk uphill to school with your friends and that you live in a town where you can do it safely. On rainy days when you have to catch a ride, I hope you don't ask your driver to drop you two blocks away so you won't be seen riding with someone as uncool as your Mom. If you want a slingshot, I hope your Dad teaches you how to make one instead of buying one.

I hope you learn to dig in the dirt and read books. When you learn to use computers, I hope you also learn to add and subtract in your head. I hope you get teased by your friends when you have your first crush on a girl, and when you talk back to your mother that you learn what ivory soap tastes like.

May you skin your knee climbing a mountain, burn your hand on a stove and stick your tongue on a frozen flagpole. I don't care if you try a beer once, but I hope you don't like it. And if a friend offers you dope or a joint, I hope you realize he is not your friend. I sure hope you make time to sit on a porch with your Grandpa and go fishing your Uncle.

May you feel sorrow at a funeral and joy during the holidays. I hope your mother punishes you when you throw a baseball through your neighbor's window and that she hugs you and kisses you at Christmas time when you give her a plaster mold of your hand.

These things I wish for you - tough times and disappointment, hard work and happiness. To me, it's the only way to appreciate life. Written with a pen. Sealed with a kiss. I'm here for you. And if I die before you do, I'll go to heaven and wait for you.

We secure our friends, not by accepting favors, but by doing them.

Paul Harvey



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Internet Virus Masquerades as Message for Anthrax Info
REPRINTED FROM: Agence France Presse
OCT 17, 2001 ARTICLE ID: 912

A computer virus masquerading as a message providing information about anthrax has been detected, but errors make it unlikely to cause widespread damage, experts said. The Internet security firm Symantec said the virus is being spread by an e_mail message than can overwrite some files and copy itself. "It was intended to send itself via MAPI (format) e_mail but fails due to bugs in the script," Symantec said. The message with the subject line "Antrax info," contains a message in Spanish and asks recipients to click on a picture attachment that activates the virus. "If you don't know what anthrax is or what the results of it are, please see the attached picture so that you can see the results that it has," the message says in Spanish.

Anti_Terror Hackers Seek Govt Blessing REPRINTED FROM: Newsbytes OCT 17, 2001
ARTICLE ID: 911

by Brian McWilliams

WASHINGTON, D.C. _ A vigilante hacking group is attempting to obtain government approval for its anti_terrorism efforts, Yihat's leader announced Tuesday. During an online meeting of the group's members, founder Kim Schmitz said Yihat is negotiating with one European and one Asian government to "legalize" the group's hacking activities in those nations. "Yihat members living or moving to those countries can join us and work on our mission under governmental supervision and fully legal," should the group obtain such approval, said Schmitz. In the meantime, Yihat members operate at their own legal risk, Schmitz noted during the meeting, which was conducted using Internet relay chat. Schmitz, who was not immediately available for comment, did not reveal the governments with which Yihat is negotiating. A spokesperson for the FBI said the agency does not condone illegal actives such as retaliatory hacking. According to its Web site, Yihat, which stands for Young Intelligent Hackers Against Terrorism, was founded after the Sept. 11 attacks on America with the mission of attacking the electronic networks of financial institutions used by terrorists. So far, the group's efforts to disrupt terrorist monetary resources appear to have missed the mark. Officials from the Internet service provider which hosts Arab National Bank told Newsbytes today that Yihat's claims to have penetrated a computer operated by the bank last week are false. According to officials at Al Faisaliah Internet Services and Technology, the Internet protocol address of the system allegedly compromised by the group is not registered to Arab National Bank of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The IP address belongs to another corporate customer which has not reported any security breaches, according to the ISP. On Oct. 11, a member of Yihat claimed he had successfully penetrated a server owned by Arab National Bank. As proof, the hacker, who uses the nickname Splices, provided three spreadsheet files which contained what appeared to be financial data, which he claimed to have gleaned from a

Tid Bits (continued)

server at the IP address 212.93.193.138. Splices did not immediately respond to requests for comment. In September, Yihat claimed to have obtained information on accounts held by Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda from Al Shamal Islamic Bank in Sudan. Last week the bank posted a notice at its site saying that three accounts connected to the terrorist leader have been closed since the mid_1990s. Yihat recently unveiled plans to open a training center for hackers. The group is requesting that organizations offer their networks as targets for the group's members to practice their hacking skills. In exchange, Yihat will provide the organizations with a free report on any security vulnerabilities found, according to a message announcing the Yihat training center. During the group's meeting, which was held using Internet relay chat, Schmitz also said Yihat would have t_shirts and caps bearing its name available soon. Yihat's site is at <http://www.kill.net>.

Hacker Cries Foul Over FBI Snooping REPRINTED FROM: The Observer OCT 21, 2001 ARTICLE ID: 915

by Burhan Wazir

The world's most infamous computer hacker _ out of jail and eking a living as an actor in a television drama _ has denounced America's proposed new Patriot Act. The legislation would allow FBI and police to monitor emails and internet activity in their efforts to counter terrorism. Kevin Mitnick, 38, imprisoned for breaking into the systems of leading US telephone companies, told The Observer that the legislation put forward in the wake of the 11 September attacks was 'ludicrous'. 'Terrorists have proved that they are interested in total genocide, not subtle little hacks of the US infrastructure, yet the government wants a blank search warrant to spy and snoop on everyone's communications,' he said. Mitnick also warned that hackers risked heavy exemplary jail sentences. 'Trust me, you do not want to be the next big winner of the scapegoat sweepstakes.' Mitnick claims he was himself a scapegoat. Charged with committing seven software felonies in 1995, he was held without bail _ sometimes in solitary confinement _ until his conviction in 1999. Altogether he served four_ and_a_half years before being freed in January last year.

Under the terms of his release, he is banned until January 2003 from using a computer, finding employment as a technical consultant or even writing about computer technology without permission from his probation officer. He was only recently given approval to carry a mobile phone, to keep in touch with family members, following the death of his father five months ago. Despite these restrictions, Mitnick has found work in an ABC spy drama, Alias. He plays a CIA computer expert. Mitnick, whose career won him a place in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's most notorious hacker, says he was a victim of circumstance. 'I am not innocent but I certainly didn't do most of what I was accused of.' He adds: 'A hacker doesn't deliberately destroy data or profit from his activities. I never made any money directly from hacking. I wasn't malicious. A lot of the unethical things I did were to cover my own ass when I was a fugitive.' Having testified before a Senate committee on the dangers of politically motivated hackings, Mitnick believes that government institutions and private corporations could easily counter the threat of cyberterrorism by strengthening their own security measures. 'Yes, a coordinated team of hackers could take down the communications systems, the power system, perhaps the financial markets,' he says. 'But all of those systems would be back online pretty quickly _ you can't really knock them out for an extended period.' However, he warns: 'You could use those outages as a decoy though, to draw attention away from what you are really planning. '

Sending Information On A Light Beam

by Bill Pryor

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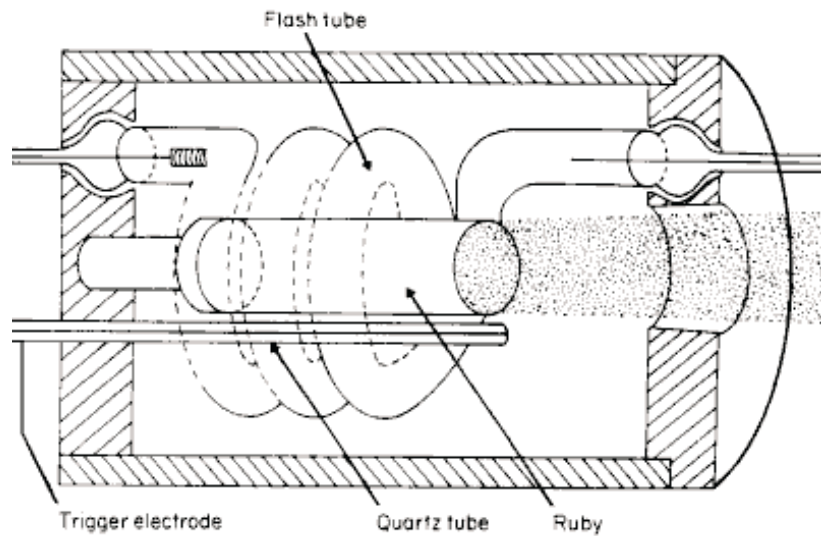
The First Laser

Sending Information On A Light Beam

October 29, 2001

by Bill Pryor

Those of you who attended my Meeting last month saw a wonderful demonstration on laser light. It is this type of light that we use in communications today, since it is coherent (in phase or in step with each other), monochromatic (the same wavelength), and directional. What all this basically means is that each wave is completely reproducible and identical to the next. It is like a wave train of soldiers marching exactly in the same direction with each wave (soldier) identical to the other in every respect. Each wave (soldier) is the clone of the other. This reproducibility and purity is necessary to relate the light sequencing to symbols. To transmit binary or digital it is necessary to use laser light, since it possesses transmittable properties. Ordinary light from a light bulb has too many different wavelengths, different frequencies, and is not coherent, and can not be used in the digital communication process using fiber-optics. Fiber-optics is laser light traveling through a glass filament that is like the width of a tiny hair.



To send information using lasers and optic-fibers we first must use a code of numbers that's understood by a computer. The code uses ordinary numbers to mean a letter in the alphabet, a color in a picture, a note of music, or whatever you want. For instance, 1 might be 'a', 2 might be 'b', 3 might be 'c' and so on. We then need to convert these properties and symbols into something that can be understood by a computer. For this we use the Binary Number System, since this is the language of computers. Binary has only two symbols, 0 and 1. Unlike our decimal system that uses ten symbols. Binary only uses two symbols--it is either on or off, however, this on or off switching can represent almost everything in existence symbolically through programming.

The pulsing (turning on and off) of laser light up to millions of times a second creates light pulses which are translated into binary symbols the computer can receive and understand. So when you are on the Internet, listening to music from your CD, on the telephone, or checking out your groceries off a barcode scanner, remember a laser light is sending coherent reproducible pulses to the computer that is being converted to the computers' universal language, binary.

Light carries information in much the same way that electronic systems carry information. First, the sound of your voice is translated into a digital signal. Then this signal is coded into laser light pulses. A single pair of optical fibers, the width of human hairs, can carry hundreds of thousands of two-way conversations. The pulsing is so fast, you can not obviously see it; the light will most times look constant to the naked eye.

So if you want to ride information on a light beam, remember the amazing pulsing light of a laser.

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Bill Pryor



Numbers As A Language

Bill Pryor, Unplugged

I remember when I was in school numbers were always taught as an entity in itself. It is strange to me why it was never called a language like French or Spanish. There is no doubt numbers are extremely useful, and are used extensively in the technologies all around us. However, I think an important fact has been lost, that numbers are really a language. Students go through courses at universities, and the teachers always seem to skip this basic assumption. The basic assumption that numbers are a language, and nothing more, is never discussed. Teachers like students to believe that there is an inherent truth to the language of mathematics that is not possessed by any other language. Statements are made like "in order to understand what is really going on, you have to follow and understand the mathematical derivatives completely," and you know, I believe this is utter nonsense. Words and numbers are symbols of expression which are defined as "language." To me, if you can describe something mathematically, you should also be able to describe it in words also. In many instances like quantum mechanics and relativity, numbers confuse the basic understandings of these disciplines, especially the way they are taught in colleges today. I believe words are just as powerful as mathematics, but under utilized. Of course I realize in a "scientific age," numbers are the language of expression. But quantifying the reality all around us has become a religious obsession where the world is losing its beauty and meaning. Never forget Latin used to be the only language of scholars too. Now everyone speaks binary.

We hope you have enjoyed our Newsletter

