



DACS.doc

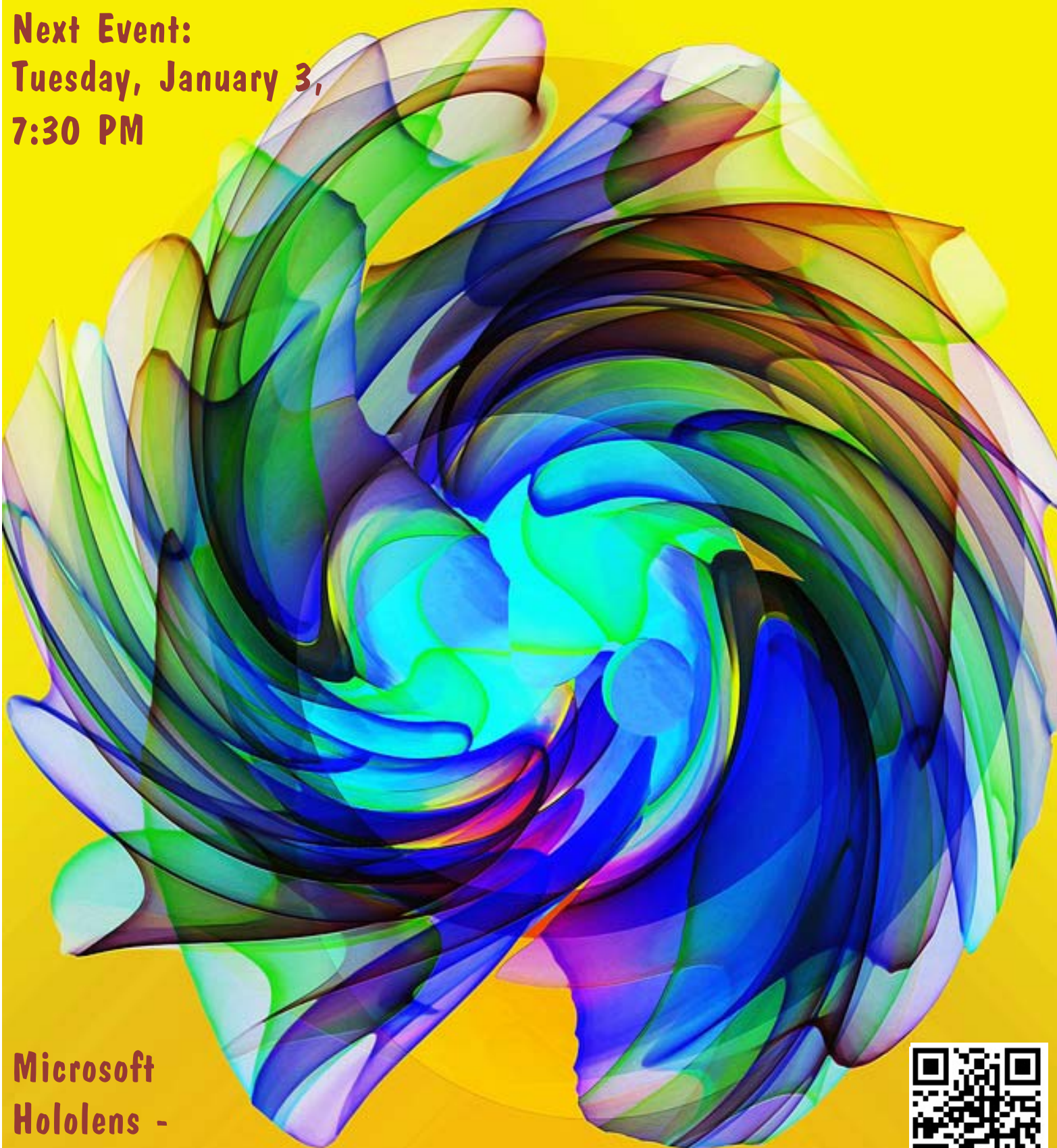
A Computer & Technology Newsletter

January 2017

Volume 28, Issue 1

\$2.00

Next Event:
Tuesday, January 3,
7:30 PM



Microsoft
Hololens -
A first peek into the future of Virtual Reality



Directors' Notes

Danbury Area Computer Society (DACS) Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, December 7, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:13pm by the DACS President, Dave Green.

In attendance were board members Richard Corzo, Bert Goff (Secretary & Treasurer), and Dave Green (President). Dick Gingras, Jim Scheef, and Andy Woodruff were not present. The minutes were taken by Richard Teasdale.

(Names in italics denote responsibilities for actions.)

- The Minutes of the 11/2/2016 Board Meeting were accepted.

Reports

- The Treasurer's report for November was discussed. Bert reported that dues receipts have rebounded sharply from October's number, and that several payments for December have already come in. Expenses continue to be less than last year.
- Membership committee: Jim sent a report showing 85 paid-up members (including 1 new), and 14 in-grace, for a total of 99.
- Press Coverage:
 - o Dave reported that press releases for the December general meeting were sent out and that press releases for the January meeting will be sent on or about December 22.

- Website:
 - o Richard reported that an unused plugin was reported as being compromised and was uninstalled. Also, the DACS website is being blocked by WCSU's campus network.

Old Business

- Programs:
 - o Jay Ferron will speak at the January general meeting about Hololens. Jim will write the Preview, and Angel Cortez will write the Review.
 - o It was agreed that Wearable Devices would be a good topic for a general meeting, if a speaker can be found. Dave will speak to the manager of Best Buy about this.
- Renovation of the Resource Center (RC): deferred.
- Slack: Richard summarized experience to-date with Slack, and possibilities for further rollout were discussed. Richard agreed to contact Dave Mawdsley to discuss extending Slack to the Linux workshop's members.
- *Richard Teasdale* will in January continue Jim's work on a survey of the membership to determine the level of interest in a NAS workshop, using the SurveyMonkey account created by Jim.
- Bucky Milam plaque: *Allan Ostergren* will publish a photo of the plaque in the January newsletter.

New Business

- Snacks for general meetings:
 - o *Dave* (drinks) and *Bert* (snacks) will make the arrangements in January.
- Printing of January newsletter: The board decided that since the printer will be closed during the week between Christmas and New Year's, the best course of action will be to delay publication of the newsletter. Bert will ask Jim to notify the DACS membership of the delay, near the end of the month. *Richard Teasdale* will coordinate with *Allan Ostergren*.
- Bert will clarify with Jim his continued membership on the board of directors.
- Since membership of the board is now an even number (6), possible additions to the board were discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13pm.

—*Richard Teasdale*

Membership Information

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DACS, its officers and directors assume no liability for damages arising out of the publication or non-publication of any article, advertisement, or other item in this newsletter.

The editors welcome submissions from DACS members. Contact Richard Teasdale (*dacseditor@dacs.org*). Advertisers, contact Charles Bovaird at (203) 792-7881 (*aam@mags.net*)

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Apple User Group

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RESOURCE CENTER: (203) 748-4330 • **WEB SITE:** <http://www.dacs.org>

HelpLine

Our former telephone HelpLine has been replaced by our web-based DACS Community Forum at <http://forum.dacs.org>. We have topic-specific forums where DACS members can post questions. Questions may be answered by Workshop leaders or other DACS members. If none of the categories fit your question, just post it to the Ask DACS forum.

Topic

Linux

Desktop publishing and website design

Mac and iPhone/iPad/iPod touch

Online/small business

Single board computers

Smartphones & Tablets

Social media

Video capture/processing

Windows

Forum

Linux Workshop

Web Site Design Workshop

Apple Workshop

Online Business

Single Board Computers

Mobile Devices Workshop

Social Media

Video

Windows Workshop

Annual Meeting Minutes Tuesday, December 6, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:38pm. Dave Green, President of DACS, chaired the meeting.

Election of Directors

DACS has two alternating slates of directors, who each serve for two years.

The terms of the four-member slate of directors (Richard Corzo, Dick Gingras, Cathy Quaranta, and Andy Woodruff) expired in December 2016.

Candidates for election to a new slate of directors were Richard Corzo, Dick Gingras, and Andy Woodruff. (Biographical information about each candidate was published in the December edition of DACS.doc.)

No candidates were nominated by the meeting.

Several members proposed a motion that the slate be voted on by a single vote. The motion was seconded by Cathy Quaranta.

There was no discussion.

A voice vote of the membership was taken, and the three candidates were elected unanimously.

There being no other business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm

—Richard Teasdale



Uncle DACS Wants YOU!

We rely on volunteers for all our activities. Current positions include:

Vice President: Help the president and eventually become new president.

Social Media: Help DACS post interesting technical content

Painters: Help with the renovation of our resource center.

Workshop Leaders: Organize a group, or join an existing one.

December Meeting Review

Cord-cutting

By Richard Teasdale



WATCHERS and home phone users fed up with the high fees charged by wired service providers got a comprehensive review of their options for cutting or "shaving" the cord, at the December General Meeting of DACS. Bill Saturno, the evening's speaker and a former DACS board member, is an expert on the subject.

Bill has been a cord-cutter since the year 2000. He put the possibilities for cord-cutting into perspective by comparing the online options available in 1999 to those of today. The growth in speed of internet access has been the key change that has made cord-cutting a realistic option today. Whereas online speeds back then were typically 28 kilobits per second, today they are measured in megabits per second. In his own case of a 2-person household, he is able to get all the services he needs over a 3 megabit per second internet connection, which is cheaper than the fastest connections now available. (This saving may not work in families of 4 or 5 people, where several users may be downloading media-rich content simultaneously.)

Faster internet speeds have made many alternative services viable. It should be noted here that "cord-cutting" is a slightly misleading term, since most options rely on the use of a broadband wired internet connection. However, some wireless internet options are starting to appear.

The obvious advantage of cord-cutting is the saving of money: the average cable bill today is \$100/month or more. Bill pointed out a further advantage: the opportunity to save personal time by watching TV programs when you choose, instead of when the broadcaster decides to show them. This is called time-shifted programming.

As an alternative to cutting the cord entirely, service consumers have opportunities to lower their costs by "cord shaving", i.e. by buying less expensive bundles of services and obtaining a few desired services by other means. New options appear regularly.

Cord cutting typically involves lifestyle changes (i.e. some loss of convenience) for those who are accustomed to watching TV live. If you are the type of person who likes to watch live TV and perhaps discuss it the next day with friends and co-workers, cord cutting may not work for you. For others, there could be a trade-off between

saving money and adjusting to the necessary lifestyle changes.

Another issue facing prospective cord cutters is the fact that access to local TV stations may be limited. However, some alternate service providers are starting to provide local TV.

Bill's approach to the topic was very systematic, as he recommended a three-step process that provides a roadmap for aspiring cord-cutters to follow.

First: Define your viewing habits, i.e. identify which shows are important to you and when you want to see them, e.g. news, sports, documentaries, movies, soap operas, etc. Do you want to see them live, or is a day or two later okay?

Second: Find out where your favorite shows are offered; i.e. on which service plans. What packages or combinations of packages provide those channels? Bill presented a list of non-cable services that are available to the prospective cord-cutter. (The list may be seen via his website - see below.) He illustrated some of these options with details of Sling TV's offering and those of some other vendors, e.g. Apple TV, Roku and Vudu.

Third: What hardware options can deliver your service selections to you? Bill ran down a long list of possibilities (again, see his website). Included was an option that many people no longer consider: an antenna. Although not workable in some areas, an antenna can be an economical and high quality solution for local TV reception. Bill mentioned the Leaf Antenna as an example. A website, www.antennaweb.org, provides information about antenna orientations which will provide the best reception.

Standalone options exist for displaying programming from your computer device to a TV screen, e.g. Apple TV, Chromecast, etc.— but in many cases, this function is now built in, e.g. Smart TVs, Blu-Ray DVD players, etc.

After the break, Bill answered a number of questions from the audience. A number of points emerged.

Alternative sources of programming typically involve no contracts and, in many cases, the service can be put on hold, at no charge, when the customer is not going to use it for a while.

DVDs can be borrowed for free from local libraries. In addition, some libraries, e.g.

Danbury Library, have Roku devices and iPads available for borrowing. YouTube also has a lot of media content available for free.

Netflix has a physical DVD option (for an extra charge).

Finding particular content you want - Tivo, Roku, and (soon) Apple TV have search features for locating specific content. The website, www.canistream.it, provides information about which services carry specific TV programs and movies.

Cord-shavers can try to negotiate a lower price from the cable company. Sometimes service providers would prefer to accept lower revenue over losing you as a customer.

The FCC has recently changed the rules regarding set-top boxes, to require cable providers to allow them from third-party suppliers. These will probably result in some savings for cable customers, but Bill estimated it will be two years before they appear on the market. This and other technological changes are leading towards cable companies becoming just internet providers, a trend which they are fighting.

Bill's alternative to landline phone service is to be a 100% cellular phone user. He explained how he was formerly a user of conventional phone service because it used to be immune to power outages. This is no longer the case.

Many internet-based alternatives to conventional phones are now available, e.g. Google Hangouts provides free domestic calls. Other examples are Ooma and Ting (recommended by Bill).

Home security systems, traditionally based on landline phone service, now commonly use a cellphone line for either the primary or backup connection. However, a member of the audience cautioned against the use of cellphone-based systems (including medical alert systems) if the cellular service is not of high quality.

Finally, Bill mentioned that he would be happy to give advice to people looking to cut the cord.

Bill Saturno's presentation slides may be seen by going to www.promodog.com and clicking on Cord Cutting.



January Meeting Preview

Jay Ferron on Microsoft HoloLens

By Jim Scheef

Date: Tuesday, January 3rd, 7:30 p.m.
Location: Danbury Hospital Auditorium
Presenter: Bill Saturno

HOLOLENS IS A VIRTUAL reality (VR) headset made by Microsoft and currently available only to developers. Ace presenter, Jay Ferron will discuss and demonstrate the actual device, live and in person, at our meeting. This will be an insider look at the future.

Wikipedia says: "Microsoft HoloLens, known under development as Project Baraboo, is a pair of mixed reality smartglasses developed and manufactured by Microsoft. HoloLens gained popularity for being one of the first computers running the Windows Holographic platform under the Windows 10 operating system. The HoloLens can trace its lineage to Kinect, an add-on for Microsoft's Xbox gaming console that was introduced in 2010." Wikipedia article.

So, parsing all that, would imply eyewear with a computer running a version of Windows 10 that can detect motion. HoloLens will, we are told, allow a "mixed reality" that combines augmented reality and virtual reality. Wow! Microsoft sees this as more than a game platform. HoloLens gives new meaning to an architectural "walk-thru".

Wired: "Microsoft HoloLens is the first fully self-contained, holographic computer,

enabling you to interact with high definition holograms in your world." Wired article.

In his talk and demo, Jay will show us a possible future where your digital world is blended with your real world. Jay will talk about Virtual Reality and how Microsoft has changed the equation with blend Holograms. Jay will explain the technology and then demonstrate how this works - live! A few lucky people will get a chance to try themselves.

More HoloLens resources:

- Microsoft HoloLens @ Microsoft Build 2015 (YouTube)
- Official HoloLens website (more videos)

Jay Ferron is no stranger to DACS, having presented many times, most recently in August, 2015 (Windows 10) and February, 2014 (Windows 8.1). Over the years, Jay has also presented on Microsoft Office, and Windows Home Server.

Jay has an alphabet soup of certifications, including MCITP, MCSE, MCT,

MVP and is a Principal at Interactive Security Training. Jay's work includes E-commerce, VPNs, security audit, workflow process, training, windows and Linux enterprise designs. He specializes in operating systems, deployment, virtualization, security and high performance computing. Jay is on the global board of GITCA and is a past president of both ISACA-CT and APCUG.

You can check out Jay's blog where he points out free offers from Microsoft.



Capital Campaign to Renovate the Resource Center

Happy New Year!

We are lucky to have this community of people who are interested and skilled at computers and technology. Only a few cities in the United States have an award-winning computer society as active as DACS! Thank-you to the many people who freely give their time to present at our General Meetings, teach at our SIG Meetings, serve on our Board, and help organize events. We are an all-volunteer organization.

We are launching a capital campaign to renovate our Resource Center, where we hold SIG meetings and other events. We are fortunate that the city of Danbury has for 20 years provided this space for us at no cost in a city-owned building. However, the space needs renovations, including rug replacement, paint, moldings, and new chairs. We cannot afford new rug, but we already have a promised gift of lightly used rug from Meadow Ridge, a retirement community to Redding. We have also lined up skilled volunteers to install the rug, paint, and do other renovations. All we need is some money for materials.

Our goal is \$1,500. Please consider a gift to DACS! We are a 501(c)(3) organization, and your contribution is tax-deductible.

You can make an online donation at our website www.dacs.org or mail a check to:
DACs, Inc.
c/o Bert Goff, Treasurer
65 Legion Rd.
New Milford, CT 06776



Workshops

Workshop NOTES: January 2017

Apple. Focuses on all aspects of the Mac and iPhone operating systems.

Contact: Richard Corzo (applesig@dacs.org).
Meets 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m. at DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: Jan 10

Jobs. Networking and jobs search

Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 (aam@mags.net). Go to DACS Community Forum (<http://forum.dacs.org>) for job listings.

Linux. Helps in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. Also of interest to Apple owners using OS X.

Contact: Dave Mawdsley, linuxsig@dacs.org
Meets 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: Jan 18

PC Maintenance. Review of PC hardware and OpSys maintenance and use.

Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 (aam@mags.net).
Go to DACS Community Forum (<http://forum.dacs.org>).

Online Business Workshop. Informal member gathering sharing ideas on creating an online source of income.

Contact: Steve Harkness (onlinebizsig@dacs.org)
Meets second Monday in Brookfield, or by Webinar.
Next Meeting: Check dacs.org.

Single Board Computers Workshop. Explores small cheap computers like Raspberry Pi, Arduino, Netduino, Beaglebone, and more. Meets 3rd Thursday at the DACS Resource Center.

Contact: Jim Scheef (860-355-0034)
Next Meeting: Jan 19

Video Production. The Video Workshop explores all aspects of video capture and production, including both inexpensive and professional choices for cameras and editing software.

Meets on the 4th Thursday of certain months, typically at 7:00 pm at the Resource Center. Check the Calendar for details.

Contact: Andy Woodruff (awoodruff@dacs.org)
Next meeting: Check dacs.org

Web Development/Design This workshop is on temporary hiatus. Would you like to take on the role of workshop leader? It's a great way to share information, learn new techniques, promote your business, and interact with like-minded people. Extensive web knowledge is not required, but a willingness to open a topic for discussion and enjoy the contributions and feedback from the attendees. Contact Annette for more information. Next meeting: Tentative start up again in April 2017.

Contact: Annette Van Ommeren (avanommeren@dacs.org)
Next meeting: Check dacs.org

Workshops News & Events

Apple. As a follow-on to the December general meeting on cord cutting, we talked about the tvOS 10.1 update for the 4th generation Apple TV that introduces the new "TV" app. This app allows you to search for movies and TV shows across all supporting apps such as Netflix, Hulu, iTunes, and many television/cable network apps. It can also keep track of what episodes you have watched so that you can continue through a season of TV shows. The TV app is also available on an iPad or iPhone once you have updated to iOS 10.2.

We also talked about the new Withings Body Wi-Fi connected scale that I bought recently. It measures not only weight, but also BMI (body mass index) with some accuracy, and (like other similar scales) body fat % with perhaps less accuracy. The scale has its own Withings Health Mate app that tracks your stats over time, and feeds into the iPhone's Health app. The scale can also sync with more than 100 other web-based fitness services such as MyFitnessPal.

Speaking of the Internet of Things (IoT), another member mentioned he had bought the Ring video doorbell which is also Wi-Fi

connected. It allows you to see who is ringing your doorbell even when you are not at home.

Lastly we tried out the Swift Playgrounds iPad app that teaches kids (or even adults) how to write some simple Swift programs in a very entertaining way. Swift is the language developers use to create iOS apps and Mac applications. Swift Playgrounds allows you to manipulate a character through a virtual world that you can see on your iPad.


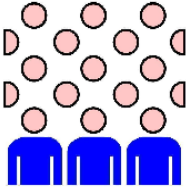
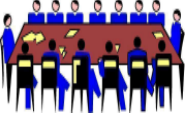






—Richard Corzo



Explore the
Possibilities -
Join or start
a DACS
workshop

January 2017

Danbury Area Computer Society

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15	16	17  Web Development and Design Annette van Ommeren 7:00 - 9:00 PM avanommeren@dacs.org On Hiatus	18  Linux 7:30 PM Dave Mawdsley linuxsig@dacs.org	19  Single Board Computers Workshop Returns in January Jim Scheef 860-355-0034	20	21  DACS.DOC Deadline																																																																																				
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Toon Topics

Bucky Milam Honored for Quarter Century of Fine Tooning

By Allan Ostergren

RECENTLY, DACS celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary as a computer and technology association. This year we are hosting another grand milestone—a quarter century of cartoon art



by DACS member, Bucky Milam. With a firm background in music and the fine arts, a few hints or suggestions from the editor, and a sometimes naughty curiosity for techie culture, Bucky has explored the byways and winding trails of the digital revolution.

And always by his side was Bucky's wife, Sharon, who passed along all the clutter of emails from this editor, and scanned and processed each finished cartoon for publication.

But time is not kind with Bucky Milam. Ill-health and imprecision have eroded his ability to render the fine lines and details for his art, so he has made the hard decision to lay down his pen.

Born January 24, 1938, in Beaumont, Texas to Mason Thomas and Eloise (Rush) Milam, Bucky attended the Beaumont Public Schools and graduated from Beaumont High School. He received a B.A. degree from North Texas University and a Master's Degree in Painting

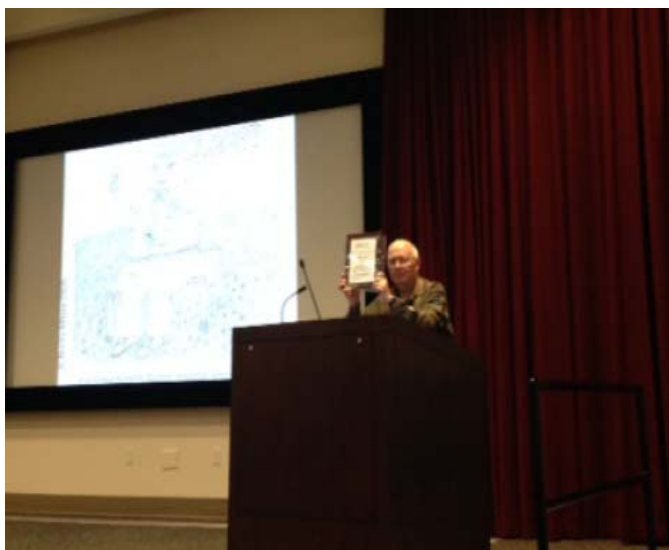
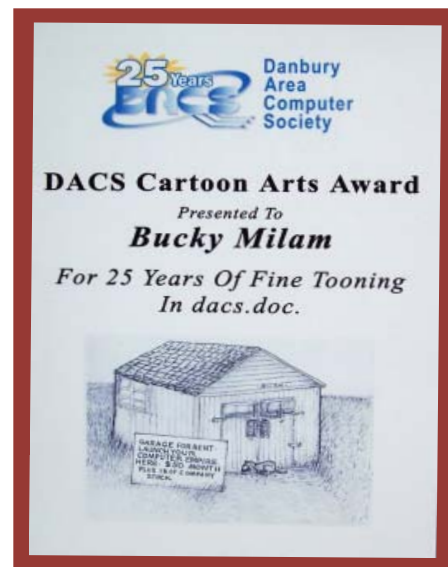
from the Chicago Art Institute. Much of his earlier musical experience was from his mother, a school teacher at Beaumont's Dick Dowling Junior High School who in 1942 founded The Melody Maids, an all-girl singing group as an initiative to help support the war effort. The group gained wide acclaim and went on to tour the world until 1972.

Although Bucky is most known for his trumpet playing, his real passion was cartooning and painting. He has works displayed in the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, the Dallas Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Chicago Institute of Art and the London Museum of Fine Arts. As an artist/illustrator, Bucky has had cartoons published in magazines and has designed record jackets for major recording artists. His monthly cartoons in the DACS newsletter have been shared with APCUG user groups worldwide and published on our Web page.

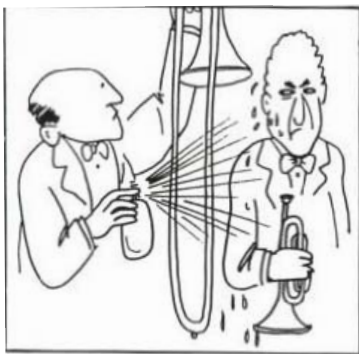
As a musician, Bucky Milam is at home with the classics as well as the cool and casual. A trumpet virtuoso, he has performed widely in clubs throughout the region and is a recognized composer of jazz and classical music for brass. Musically, Bucky has performed with groups such as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Dorsey Band, Henry Mancini, the Chicago Symphony, the Buddy Rich Band, and the

Glenn Miller Band. Locally, he has performed with Alan Raph and the Danbury Brass Band, the Sonny Carroll Orchestra, the Clark Eno Big Band and with his dear friend, pianist Ethel Kauffman in Music from the Heart.

With an avid curiosity for popular culture and entertainment, Bucky comes to computing as an accidental tourist, in collaboration with this newsletter's editor who adds an active imagination, but little skill in drawing. Our shared perspective is one of the visual media and the images they project of our civilization and culture, punctuated by the absurd. Anyone who remembers the bizarre animal kingdom portrayed by the popular cartoonist, Gary Larson, might find some common ground. Larson reportedly retired as a billionaire from his art; Bucky and I are proud to settle with the priceless memories of a grand collaboration.



At left, Allan Ostergren announces the Cartoon Award as a selection of Bucky's cartoons were displayed on the projector screen. At right, the award is presented to Bucky at his home in Danbury.

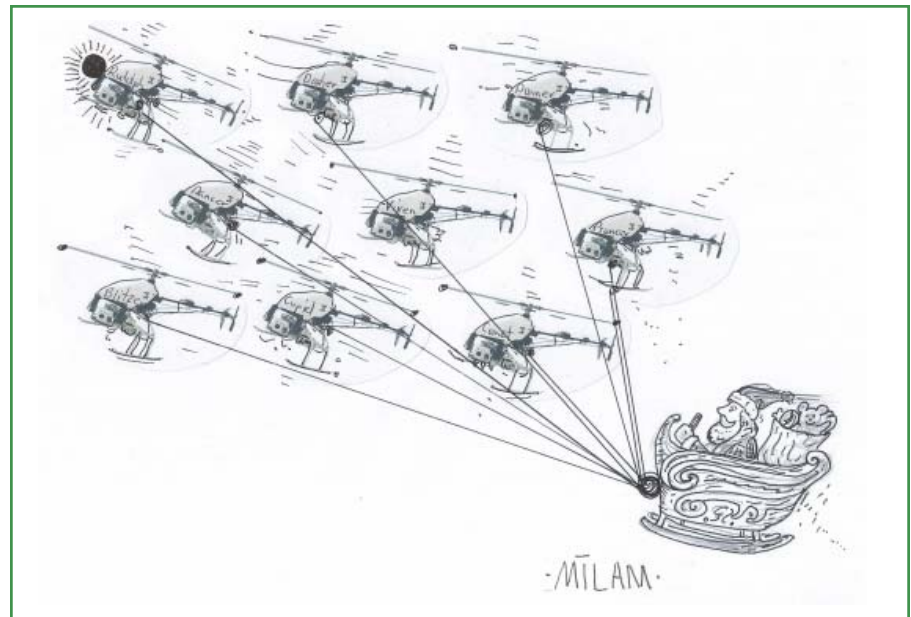
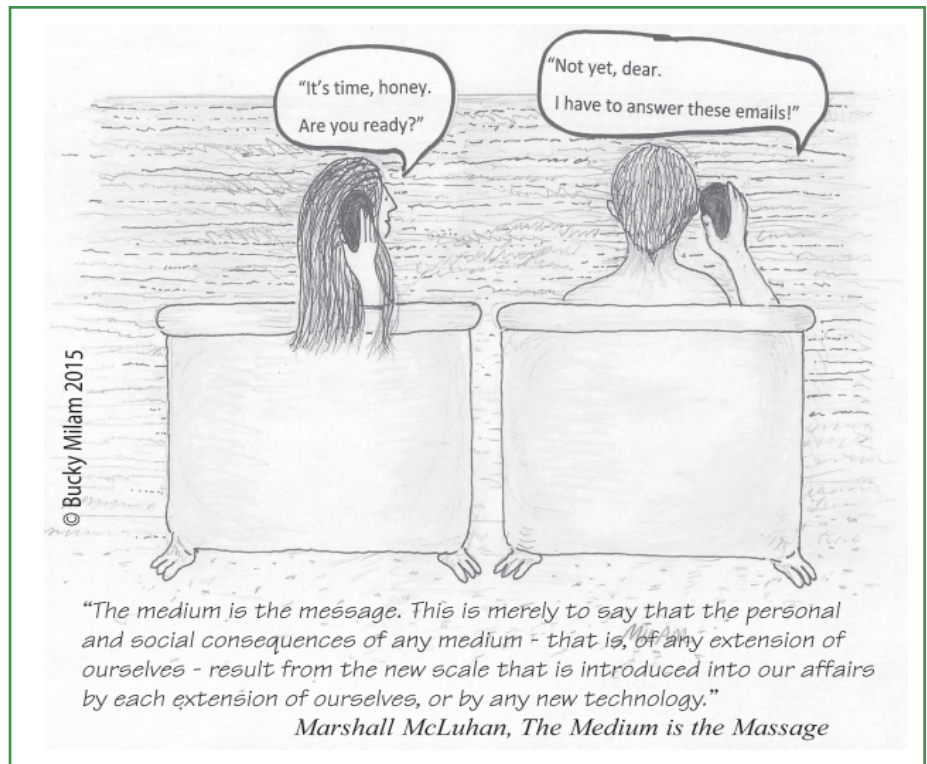


"Le" TROMBONE

Illustration on musical themes, in collaboration with Danbury Brass Band director, Alan Raph.



An album cover created by Bucky for a recording of the Dizzy Gillespie Band.



Office Tools

What's New in Microsoft Office 2016

By Nancy DeMarte

LAST SEPTEMBER, Microsoft kept to its usual three-year schedule of issuing a new edition of Office when it released Office 2016. The questions always are, What is different in this edition? Is it worth upgrading? Here are a few of the features you will find in this new Office. Maybe they will answer these questions for you.

The basic commands and toolbars (ribbons) have not changed much from the last few versions. But Microsoft does often streamline and refine processes, and 2016 is no exception. The new version makes more use of One Drive, the Microsoft cloud, in order to make sharing Office files easier. Click the Share button on the top right of the ribbon to open the Share sidebar. If your file is not saved to OneDrive, you will be instructed to save it there. Then type an email address or choose one from your address book in the "Invite people" box and choose either "Send as attachment"

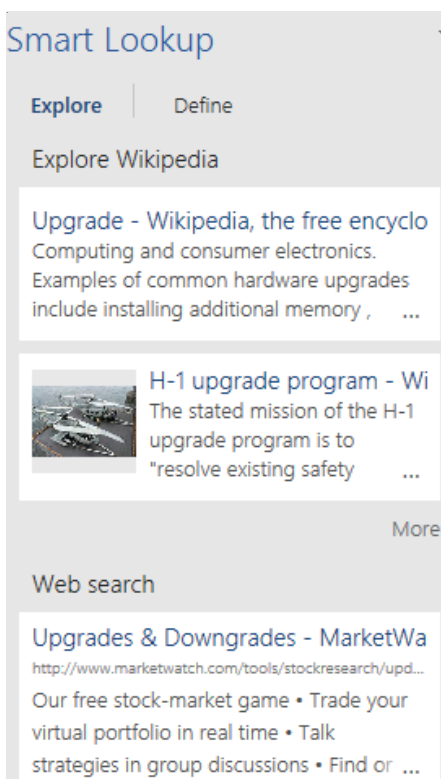


or "Get a sharing link." This process is generally the same as in Office 2010 and 2013 except it is much easier to access.

Searching is easier in Office 2016, too, with the new "Tell me what you want to

do" box above the ribbon in all the Office programs. When you click in the box, you get suggestions for things you might want to do, based on the program you are using and what you're doing with it, or you can type in a new search topic. I think this feature needs a bit more work, but once improved, can be very useful.

Another feature that has been improved in Office 2016 is called Insights, an expanded version of Smart Lookup. Right click a word or phrase in your document or presentation and choose Smart Lookup from



the dropdown menu to open a sidebar which includes the definition, pronunciation (written and audio), explanations and examples from Wikipedia, and relevant results of a Bing web search. This feature is much more extensive than the earlier Smart Lookup. In the example, I right-clicked the word Upgrade and got these results. (This is only part of the list.) This feature is found in Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Excel 2016.

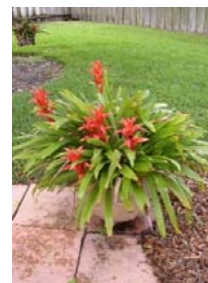
Individual Office programs also got a few upgrades, too. Excel got several new chart types, with intriguing names like Waterfall and Sunburst. The new Forecasting feature predicts trends based on the current data and displays them in a Trend chart.

Office 2016 also offers a few brand new features. Anyone who uses a touch-enabled laptop or device with Office 2016 or Office mobile apps installed can use the new Ink Notation feature in Word, Excel,

and PowerPoint. Click or touch the new Draw tab in the ribbon; choose a color and pen size and draw on the screen. Make a mistake? Use the eraser. You can highlight words using the Ink toolbar, too. PowerPoint also allows you to convert your ink drawings into shapes.

PowerPoint and Word 2016 have a fascinating new feature, introduced in Office 2013, that allows you to remove the background of a photo. (See example.)

To remove the background, insert a photo into Word or PowerPoint, select it, and click the Picture Tools Format tab. On

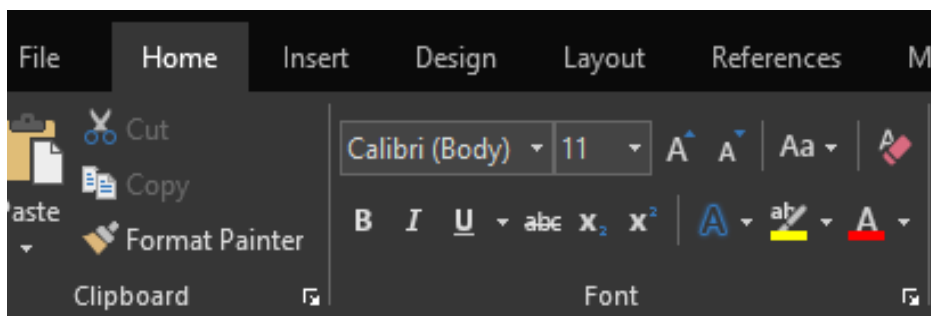


the left end of the Format ribbon, click Remove Background. If needed, you can adjust the size of the area inside the picture or mark areas to keep or discard. Then click "Keep Changes" to view a copy of the photo with the background removed, leaving the original safe in your Pictures folder.

Another new feature in 2016 is the Black theme: a black background with white text, which is considered easier to read by some people with vision difficulties. Office 2013 featured the Colored theme, where each Office app had its own background color: green for Excel, blue for Word, orange for PowerPoint, and so on. This is still the default color theme. The other choices are Dark Gray and White. To change the background color, open any Office 2016 program, click File - Account, click the arrow next to Office theme and make your choice. This will change the background for all Office programs.

Every year, it seems Microsoft offers new temptations for Office users to move to one of the subscription versions of Office, called Office 365. Office 2016 contains some new features which are only available to Office 365 subscription users. For example, PowerPoint has two of these features: Morph and Designer. Morph is a special kind of tran-





sition, where a shape or group of text can be set to move across the screen. Designer offers design ideas for photos which appear in slides, such as arrangement on the page or coloration. It can be found on the right end of the Design tab in PowerPoint. It does not work yet with all photos; a photo must be 200x200 or higher resolution.

Only Office 365 users of Word or PowerPoint 2016 can collaborate on projects in real time. Multiple editors can

edit a file and watch each other's editing changes as they happen through the new Collaborative Editing feature. This is a popular feature with the Business version.

A recent trend in Office improvements is that they often occur periodically through regular monthly updates if you have a subscription version. I noticed that my Office 365 Home subscription introduced some of the features of Office 2016 before my applications began

being labeled Office 2016.

If you are thinking of trying Office 2016, you might wonder if it will open all those documents and spreadsheets you created in earlier Office versions. If you have files created with Office 2007, 2010, or 2013, you will find them completely compatible with 2016. If you have files created with earlier versions, you can get a free Compatibility Pack at the Microsoft website, which will make older Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files compatible with Office 2016. Searching for "Compatibility Pack for MS Office 2016" will lead you to the download page in a hurry.

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Secure Computing

Using Foreign Characters in Passwords

By Martin Arbagi

IMAGINE A SITE that requires a password to enter-but that password can be only one character long! You would have fewer than a hundred possible passwords: the upper and lower-case versions of each letter in the English alphabet, ten numbers, and various punctuation marks.

But now imagine that you had hundreds of other characters available. Of course, any recently-built computer could still break the password, but it be a trifle more difficult to do so.

My credit union's password can contain a maximum of 10 characters. That always disturbed me. My insurance company's Web site can use passwords as long as thirty-four characters. One day, in an idle moment, I went to the credit union's site and tried to type a foreign character.

What is a foreign character? It can be an accented "e," such as the French word, *élite*, an accented "n", as in the Spanish *cañon* (our "canyon"), an accented "o," as in the German *Österreich* (Austria), or any other accented characters. As a test, I tried typing an accented character as an answer to one of the security questions most sites use in addition to a password. A common security question is: "What was your mother's maiden name?" I used my late mother-in-law's maiden name, Suárez.

It worked! The Web site accepted the accented "a" in the answer to the security question.

Of course, the next step was to include accented characters and other symbols not usually found on the typical American keyboard (such as £, for the British pound) in my main password.

The next question is: How to access these characters? Various word-processing programs use different methods. Unfortunately, you can't use word processors to type passwords on Web sites. You could open Microsoft Word or Open Office Writer, type in the accented character, then cut-and-paste it into the Web site, but this is awkward and cumbersome.

The solution is to use the Alt key, coupled with the numbers on your numeric keypad, at the right-hand side of your keyboard. (The numbers across the top won't work.) You get é by typing ALT and 130. The euro symbol (€) is Alt 128. Alt 172 yields ¼. The Japanese yen symbol (¥) is ALT 165. Æ (as in Mount Ætna, the volcano in Sicily) is Alt 146.

A few final notes:

- All this is for PCs running Windows, not Apple or Linux machines.
- Don't confuse the Alt with the Ctrl key.
- If you don't get what you want with the keystroke sequences given in the main article above, try typing a zero (0) before the numbers. For example, if you can't get the cents symbol (¢) by typing Alt 155, try typing Alt 0155.

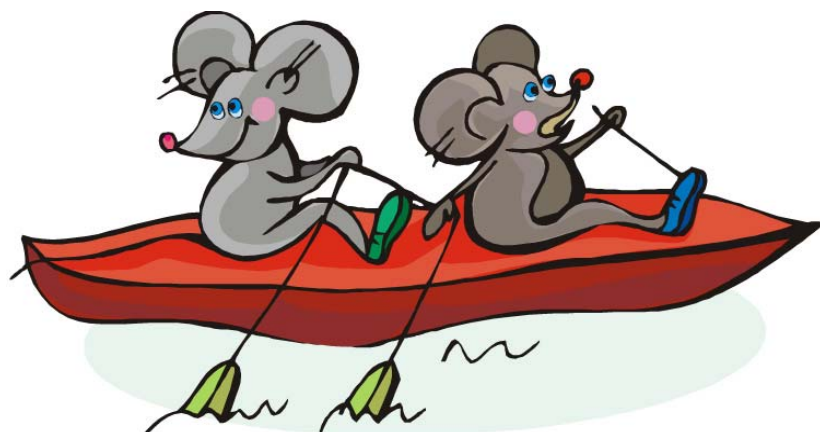
- Few laptop and no netbook keyboards have separate numeric keypads. Each manufacturer (Asus, Dell, H-P, Lenovo, Toshiba, etc.) has its own method of emulating a numeric keypad. Most use a key labeled "Fn." Consult your User's Manual.
- Web sites almost never advertise that they accept foreign characters in passwords. "Special characters" are not the same as foreign characters. Your best bet is trial-and-error.
- Be careful about using too many foreign characters. My credit union's site locks up if I use more than three of them.
- I would be interested in hearing from readers who tried Unicode characters in passwords. Unicode allows you to use alphabets such as Arabic, Chinese, Cyrillic, Greek, or Hebrew.
- Though she was from South America and it does contain an accented character, my late mother-in-law's maiden name is not Suárez, nor is the £ symbol in my password! However, I change my credit union password every three months. Make another attempt later.

MARTIN ARBAGI is a member of the Dayton Microcomputer Association (www.dma1.org; Martin Arbagi (at) gmail.com)

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TBA

March 7

TBA

April 4

TBA