

# President's Note

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Happy 40th Anniversary, ACGNJ!

## *The Early Years*

*"The first meeting of the ACSNJ was held on Friday night, June 13 at UCTI (Union County Technical Institute) in Scotch Plains NJ. There were 32 in attendance."*

These were the first words written in the very first ACSNJ Newsletter dated June 1975.

I hope you noticed something different in the quote and in my last sentence. I'm sure you are all wondering, "What is this ACSNJ? Is this a typo, Mike?" On the contrary, ACGNJ originally started out as the Amateur Computer **Society** of New Jersey. However, Steven P. Grey, who published a quarterly periodical known as the Amateur Computer Society (ACS) Newsletter from May 1966 into early 1975, sent a letter to Sol Libes stating that the ACSNJ infringed on his "organization." What is interesting to note is that the ACS never held any formal meetings and that Sol was a subscriber to this periodical. Despite the fact that the newsletter had already ended, Sol ultimately changed the club name to what we have known for the past 40 years as the Amateur Computer **Group** of New Jersey. Here is a picture from that first meeting...



That first newsletter summarized what was presented at that first, now very historic, meeting and even included a Directory of Members. This is something we don't practice today with our current newsletter.

As stated in the quote above, there were 32 attendees at that first meeting. The November 1975 ACGNJ Newsletter (Issue No. 4) stated:

*"90 people attended the October meeting (Oct. 17, 1975) held at the Union County Technical Institute. Moreover, 27 new people joined the ACG-NJ bringing the total membership to 102. Which proves that Amateur computing is becoming a big hobby."*

In just four short months after ACGNJ held its first meeting, attendance increased by a factor of three (3) and membership grew rapidly as well. The December 1975 ACGNJ Newsletter (Issue no. 5) provided a distribution of where members resided. I was intrigued by this and thought I'd share it with you...

#### Update on Membership

The membership has increased from 102 to 129 (NJ=108, NY=19, other=2). The breakdown is as follows:

<u>NJ:</u>	Middlesex	34	<u>NY:</u>	Manhattan	7
	Union	19		Staten I.	6
	Morris	9		Brooklyn	3
	Essex	9		Queens	1
	Bergen	9		Monroe	1
	Somerset	7		Jamestown	1
	Passaic	7			<u>19</u>
	Mercer	7			
	Monmouth	5			
	Burlington	2	<u>Other:</u>	Calif.	1
	Hudson	1		Penna.	1
	Hunterdon	1			<u>2</u>
		<u>108</u>			

It's amazing to see that there were club members as far away as California! With no Internet as we know it today, I believe that these remote members most-likely joined for the club for the newsletter.

#### ***First Board of Directors***

As you already know, Sol Libes was the founder and first President of ACGNJ. But you may be wondering who else served on the original Board of Directors.

Well, thanks to Al Katz's talk entitled, "**TCF@50**" which he presented at TCF earlier this year, we are fortunate to have this original list:

- **President:** Sol Libes
- **Vice President:** Martin Nichols
- **Recording Secretary:** Pierce Capell
- **Corresponding Secretary:** Edward Eibling
- **Treasurer:** Kevin Redden
- **Director:** Tom Kirk
- **Director:** William Klotz
- **Director:** Allen Katz
- **Director:** Arthur Fowler
- **Director:** Roger Amidon
- **Director:** Douglas Moser

I'm sure that most of you recognize some notable names who are still contributing to TCF, namely Al Katz and Roger Amidon.

Over the past 40 years, the positions on the Board of Directors has evolved to what we have today. The most significant changes are:

- the reduction to only one (1) Secretary position.
- the addition of an Immediate Past President position.
- a total of eight (8) two-year Director positions (four (4) expiring this year and four (4) expiring at the end of 2016).

### **Sol Libes**

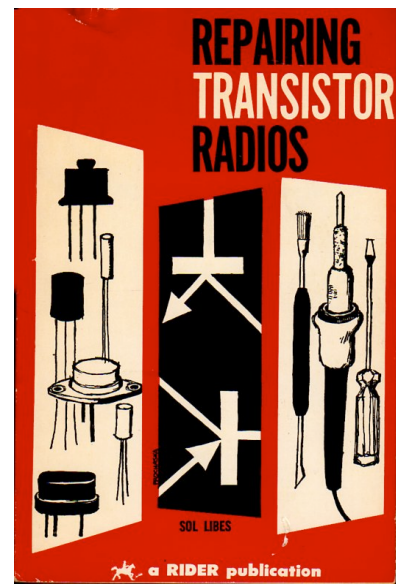
Sol served as the ACGNJ President for six (6) years. He is still a member of the Board of Directors as lifetime Director Emeritus.

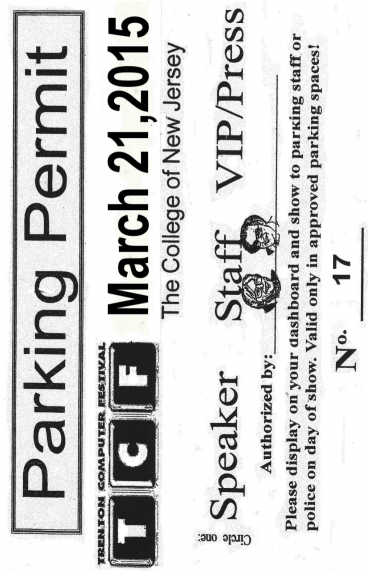
Sol has a very rich and successful career. I thought that I'd share some highlights:

- founded ACGNJ in 1975.
- co-founded the Trenton Computer Festival (TCF) in 1976 with Al Katz.
- member of the IEEE Standards Committee.
- served as a consultant on microcomputer hardware and software design.
- author of many articles in magazines and journals spanning 30 years (including a monthly column in Byte magazine from 1975-1981).
- author of 16 books, the first one entitled, "**Repairing Transistor Radios**" published in 1960.

You can read the full details of Sol's biography [here](#).

Sol, his wife, Lennie, and Al remain the heart and soul of TCF. Despite the many contributions by the usual cast of characters, there is no doubt in my mind that they carry most of the burden organizing TCF year-after-year. You generally don't see that kind of long-term dedication to an effort such as this. Sol, Lennie, and Al have been doing this for 40 years!





About three (3) weeks before TCF 1998, I was given the opportunity to present an introductory C++ talk. The person originally slated to make this presentation was suddenly unavailable. This is where I first met Sol. I didn't realize back then the significance of Sol's contributions. I was just relieved that I was able to put together a talk in three (3) weeks time for my first presentation at a computer show. I remember receiving my speaker packet in the mail for TCF 1998. I thought it was cool how Sol and Lennie used portrait stamps of themselves as authorization for the parking permit. This is something

they still practice today as shown in my parking permit for this year's TCF.

### ***My History with ACGNJ***

On June 13, 1975, I was only 13 years old (turning 14 that November). I first heard of ACGNJ in 1996 as I came across a listing for Bruce Arnold's C++ Users Group in a local computer rag. I attended the very next C++ Users Group meeting and was very impressed. I became a regular attendee at Bruce's meetings and even made a few presentations of my own.

With Java having established itself in application development in the late 1990's, I thought it would be beneficial to the club to have a Special Interest Group dedicated to this relatively new language. In January 2001, I approached the ACGNJ Board of Directors to make my case to start a Java Users Group. I kicked off my first meeting in February 2001 and I have been running the group ever since.

I served as the club Secretary in 2006, President for three (3) years from 2007-2009, Past President from 2010-2012, and President again from 2013-present.

It's been an absolute joy for me to be part of ACGNJ for almost 20 years. It's hard to believe that it's been that long. Despite that length of time, I feel that I'm still a "Johnny Come Lately." After all, computing in 1996 was already well established with the Internet and plug-and-play computing. It's true that computing has evolved quite a bit since then, but we didn't have to build our own computers like Sol, Roger, Claude Kagan, and other PC pioneers had to do.

### ***Acknowledgements***

This edition of President's Note wouldn't have been possible without the help of the following people:

- Bob Hawes provided me PDF copies of the three (3) club Newsletters from 1975.
- Al Katz provided me a copy of his "TCF@50" presentation.
- And finally, Sol Libes provided me with detailed information on how the club changed names from ACSNJ to ACGNJ.

Many thanks to Bob, Al, and Sol!

And, in closing, here is to a very Happy 40th Anniversary to ACGNJ!