

A Return To The 4th Dimension

A year has come and gone since I last filed a report on the 4D Summit, the annual conference for database developers who use the 4th Dimension family of software products. As most readers know by now, 4D is the engine that powers our office's CaseNET database application.

This year's conference was held in hot and steamy New Orleans. Despite the party atmosphere of nearby Bourbon Street, the mood of the conference seemed rather subdued. Maybe this was because attendees stayed out too late (not me!). Or maybe it was because of an unusual lack of suspense. Unlike in recent years, the conference's focus was on a recently released version, 4D 2004, instead of the teasing preview of a next version to be released at some unknown future date.

4D 2004, released this past summer, brought extensive changes to 4D's development environment. The new version builds on the advances of previous releases to increase the efficiency and utility of the tools used to create forms (which appear on screen) and methods (which constitute the instructions that tell 4D what to do).

Also continuing the trends of previous releases, 4D 2004 adds more capabilities based on standard protocols for integrating 4D programs with other applications, including web sites, Microsoft Office programs (like Word and Excel) and custom database programs written in other (non-4D) environments. Finally, the latest release adds interface enhancements so that applications can be more up-to-date and consistent with their operating environments, both Mac OS X and Windows XP. (4D 2004 drops support of Mac OS 9 and versions of Windows prior to Windows 2000.)

As usual, the three-day conference schedule included four tracks – four simultaneous 75-minute sessions occurring throughout each day. Inevitably there were times when I had to choose

among sessions when I wished I could attend two or more at once. But the good thing is that 4D Inc. once again provided the session notes of all presenters in several formats, including a book of more than 400 pages and a CD containing PDFs, Power-Point presentations and sample databases to illustrate coding methods.

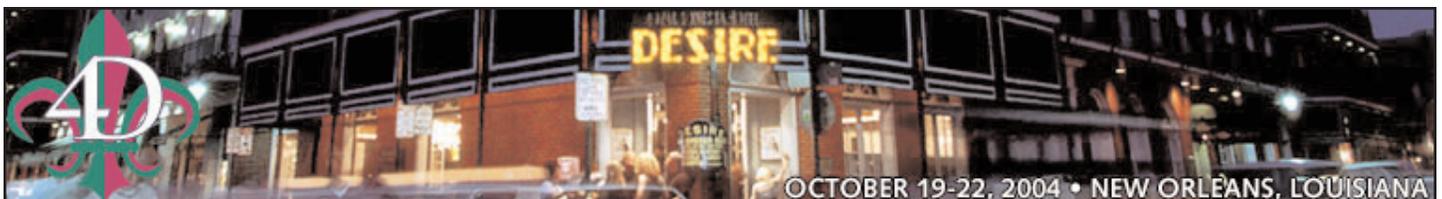
Among the sessions I attended was a two-part, in-depth explanation of how 4D manages memory, with extensive notes provided. Memory management is not the kind of thing you'd want to read about for fun, but the information can be valuable for troubleshooting and optimizing a 4D application. With the information provided, I should be able to diagnose memory-related problems in CaseNET and fine tune its memory settings, making the application run more efficiently and reliably.

I also attended sessions about designing and documenting large database structures, which will help in my efforts to create better programmer's documentation of CaseNET. Another valuable session dealt with programming techniques that can optimize 4D for speed in a variety of situations. These methods will be useful both for new projects and when I rework existing code.

4D Inc. likes to use the Summit to persuade developers to upgrade, so several sessions focused on cool features of 4D 2004. One of the coolest: the method editor has an enhanced macro language that can call regular 4D methods, display dialogs, and actually automate some aspects of writing and testing code. Well, I guess you had to be there...

It will be some time before our office is ready to upgrade to 4D's latest version. Moving from our current version to 4D 2004 will require that all users be on Mac OS X. And there are features of CaseNET that depend on plug-ins that are not compatible with OS X. One of my on-going projects is to make the changes in

(Continued on page 2.)





Wishing you a Beautiful Holiday Season, a Merry Christmas, and a New Year filled with Love and Laughter.



Some Favorite Holiday Recipes

Employees submitted some of their favorite recipes for you to enjoy over the holidays.

Sweet Potato Casserole

Rita Saunders

This is my sister-in-law Mary Jo Walsh's recipe. She is an excellent cook and baker. We have this casserole for holidays.

Ingredients – Casserole:

- 3 cups cooked, mashed sweet potatoes
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs, well beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1/2 cup melted butter

Ingredients – Topping:

- 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 1/2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Directions:

Combine first 4 ingredients. Add milk slowly, checking consistency. Place into 2 quart casserole. Cover with topping. Bake at 350° for 25 minutes. Serves eight.



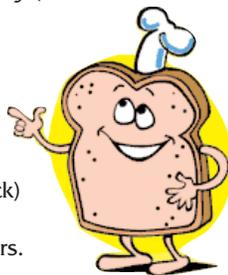
French Toast

Darlene Odom

One of my favorite things to do is to mimic dishes I've tasted at various restaurants. So here's my version of "The Corner Bakery's" Baked French Toast. This recipe serves about 12 people. Make it the day before to be served the following morning. It's kind of long but it's worth the work!

Ingredients:

- 1 loaf of sliced Challah bread (you can find it frozen in your grocer's freezer), or
- 1 loaf of raisin bread from The Corner Bakery (which is what I use)
- 3 cups milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 10 large eggs
- 1/4 cup plus 1-tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 4 tablespoons margarine or butter (1/2 stick)
- 6 medium-size firm bananas, sliced
- One 8-ounce bottle maple syrup, (I use Mrs. Butterworth's)



Directions:

1. Grease 4-quart ceramic casserole or 13x9 glass baking dish. Arrange bread slices, overlapping slightly, in dish.
2. In a medium bowl, beat milk, salt, eggs, and 1/4 cup sugar with a fork or wire whisk until well mixed. Slowly pour egg mixture over bread slices; prick bread slices with fork and press down to absorb egg mixture. Spoon any egg mixture that is not absorbed back on top of bread.
3. In cup, mix cinnamon with 1 tablespoon sugar; sprinkle over top of bread and dot with 2 tablespoons of margarine or butter. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

4. To bake, preheat oven to 325°. Uncover and bake 45 minutes or until knife inserted in center comes out clean.
5. Prepare Banana sauce while bread bakes: In non-stick skillet over medium-high heat, melt 2 tablespoons margarine or butter. Add banana slices and cook until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Pour maple syrup over bananas; heat to boiling 2 to 3 minutes until mixture thickens slightly.

Chocolate Amaretto Custard Cake

Carolyn Donhau

This cake was my Grandmother's and she made this only at Christmas time. Her mother used to make this cake for birthdays and Christmas in Denmark. I have substituted a boxed cake mix and instant custard. It is very rich and I hope you enjoy this as much as my family. Enjoy.

Ingredients:

- 1 chocolate cake mix
- 1/4 cup Amaretto (you can substitute Kahlua or Bailey's instead of Amaretto)
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips (melted)
- 2-3 tablespoons butter
- 1 1/4 cup milk
- 3 oz. Instant Custard pudding mix
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Directions:

- Heat the oven to 350°. Grease and flour 12-cup bundt or angel food cake pan.
- Melt the 1/2 cup of chocolate chips in sauce pan.
- Beat all ingredients in a large bowl on low speed, scraping bowl occasionally for 2 more minutes.
- Pour into prepared pan and bake 40-45 minutes, until a wooden pick comes out clean.

Cool 15 minutes before removing from the pan. Decorate with frosting or you can make a glaze of 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar, 2 teaspoons milk or cream, liqueur to thin. Drizzle the glaze over the cake.

If you like whipped cream, it is simple to make. Instead of buying the substitutes, try the real thing. You won't believe the difference in the flavor.

Use heavy cream (not half 'n half). Place the cream, a stainless bowl, and the beaters in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight. The colder all items are, the faster it whips. Pour 1 cup cream and 1 teaspoon vanilla into the bowl and beat at medium speed until starts to froth, then increase to high and continue whipping until done.

Pumpkin-Cream Cheese Pie

Eileen Downes

These recipes are from a Betty Crocker holiday cookbook. I haven't made them before, but this is what's on the menu at my house on Christmas Day.

- Prep time: 15 minutes
- Start to finish: 5 hours 30 minutes
- Servings: eight



Pumpkin-Cream Cheese Pie *(continued)*

Ingredients:

- 1 refrigerated pie crust (from 15 oz. package)
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 8-ounce package plus 1 3-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 3 eggs
- 1 15-ounce pumpkin (not pumpkin pie mix)
- 1 tablespoon milk

1. Heat oven to 375° F. Place pie crust in 9-inch glass pie plate as directed on package for one-crust filled pie. Bake about 8 minutes or until light golden brown.
2. In large bowl, beat sugar, flour and cream cheese with electric mixer on low speed until smooth; reserve 1/2 cup in small bowl. Add remaining ingredients except milk to cream cheese mixture. Beat on medium speed, scraping bowl constantly, until smooth. Pour into crust.
3. Stir milk into reserved cream cheese mixture. Spoon over pumpkin mixture. Cut through cream cheese and pumpkin mixtures with knife in S-shaped curves in one continuous motion for marbled design. Turn pie plate one-fourth turn and repeat.
4. Cover edge of crust with 2- to 3-inch strip of foil to prevent excessive browning; remove foil for last 15 minutes of baking. Bake 35 to 45 minutes or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 30 minutes. Cover loosely and refrigerate at least 4 hours before serving. Store covered in refrigerator.



Cowboy Steak 'n Veggie Soup

Patti Brower

Ingredients:

- 1 pound boneless beef sirloin steak (1 inch thick)
- 1 teaspoon dried basil leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 2 14 1/2-ounce cans ready to serve beef broth
- 1 16-ounce jar chunky-style salsa or picante
- 1 1-pound package frozen vegetable soup mix
- 1 15 1/2-ounce can Great Northern beans, drained, rinsed*
- 1 cup torn fresh spinach

Garnish (if desired): Fresh basil, parsley or cilantro sprigs

Directions:

Cut beef into 1/4 inch thick strips; cut each strip into 1 inch pieces. In medium bowl, combine beef, basil, salt, pepper, garlic and oil; toss to coat.

Heat Dutch oven or large saucepan over medium-high heat until hot. Add beef mixture; cook and stir 4 to 5 minutes or until browned.



Stir in broth, salsa and vegetables. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low; simmer 10 minutes.

Stir in beans. Cook 4 to 5 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Stir in spinach.

Serves 6 (1 1/2 cup servings)

*Note: I add a 15-ounce can of potatoes cut-up and I eliminate the beans. Enjoy!!

Veal Shank with Balsamic Onions and White Beans
Anthony Olivadoti

For a low-fat entree, be sure to remove all visible fat and membrane from the veal shanks. Tie them to retain a nice shape. I haven't tried this but it sounded great. Bon Appétit!

Ingredients:

- 2 large onions, halved, sliced
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme, crumbled
- 1 1/2 cups dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar*
- 4 medium veal shanks (about 1 3/4 pounds), well trimmed
- 2 cups canned unsalted chicken broth
- 1 14 1/2-ounce can Italian stewed tomatoes
- 4 large garlic cloves, pressed
- 1 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- 1 15-ounce can Great Northern white beans, undrained
- 1/4 cup sliced fresh basil

Directions:

Heat Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onions and sprinkle with sugar and 1 teaspoon thyme. Season generously with salt and pepper. Stir to mix. Add 1/2 cup wine. Cover and cook until onions are very soft, about 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add vinegar and cook until liquid evaporates and onions are caramelized, about 14 minutes, stirring frequently. Transfer all but 1/2 cup onions to bowl. Season veal with salt and pepper and add to onions in pan. Add broth, tomatoes with liquid, garlic, red pepper, remaining 1 cup wine, and remaining 1 teaspoon thyme. Partially cover and simmer, turning occasionally, 1 hour 15 minutes. Uncover; cook until veal is very tender, about 45 minutes.

Stir beans into veal. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook until heated through. (Can be prepared up to 2 days ahead. Cover stew and onions separately and refrigerate. Reheat stew and onions over low heat.)

Mix basil into veal. Transfer veal shanks to bowls. Pour vegetables and juices over the veal. Top each with reserved onion and serve.

Four Servings. Per serving: 360 calories; 3 grams of fat; 443 mg. sodium; 51 mg. cholesterol.



"I don't know what it is either. Let's call it Chef's Surprise."



Kid's Korner The Missing Christmas Gifts

By: Anissa Aguilar-Downes

On Christmas morning, everybody in the house woke up and went down to the living room. There were no gifts under the nice tree. The little girl Anissa was very upset and said, "Did Santa Claus forget about us or did he think we were bad this year?" The mom said that when she got Baby Patrick a bottle in the middle of the night, there were lots of presents under the tree. There were so many gifts, she couldn't even count all of them.



In the afternoon, a lot of people came to the house for dinner. They all were asking, "Where did all the presents go?" The parents were showing all of the people their new house and when they went into Baby Patrick's room they found him opening all of the presents. He thought he was the best baby and he should have all the presents to himself. The parents took the presents downstairs and everybody opened them. Anissa was very happy that she got what she asked Santa for.

January Birthdays, Anniversaries and Other Notable Events

New Year's Day on January 1st.

Happy 15th Anniversary to **Karen Barron** on January 2nd!

Happy Birthday to **Eileen Downes** on January 5th!

Happy 18th Anniversary to **Rosalind Lanier** on January 5th!

All Staff Meeting on January 7th.

National Clean Off Your Desk Day on January 10th.

Happy 4th Anniversary to **Juliana Dunklin** on January 16th!

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 17th.

Inauguration Day on January 20th.

Happy Birthday to **Darlene Odom** on January 21st!

Happy Birthday to **Sandra Cortina** on January 23rd!



Employee Bio Jammal Davis

Nickname: Jay.

Birth date: June 16, 1978.

Birthplace: Chicago, IL.

Family: Wife and three children.

Position: Administrative Clerk.

Hobbies: Cooking.

Favorite Food: Chicken Tacos.

Favorite TV program: I don't have one.

Favorite Color: Blue.

Favorite expression: "So it is."

Favorite Smell: The smell of my wife's perfume.

Favorite Childhood memory: The year my little league football team won the championship.

If you could meet one person in the world, either dead or alive, who would it be? My Great-grandfather.

What's most important in life? My family (which is my Ministry).

Is the glass half full or half empty? Half empty. There is always room for more.

What's guaranteed to make you smile? Seeing my children grow.

What's the first thing you do in the morning when you wake? Thank God for yet another day.

My friends would describe me as: Crazy.

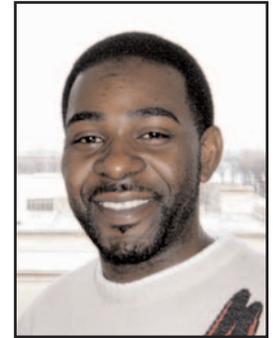
A perfect day for me would be: Studying my NIV Bible and listening to Rev. T.D. Jakes with my wife.

Most embarrassing moment: I don't have one.

Proudest moment: Last year I was asked to speak at my pastor's 1st year anniversary celebration.

In 5 years I see myself: Owning my own business.

Anything else you'd like to tell us? Happy Holidays!



ERC Update

The Employee Recognition Committee hosted a luncheon reception honoring Juliana Dunklin. The former Ms. Jones was married on November 20, 2004, in Las Vegas. The ERC along with the entire staff feasted on Mr. Submarine sandwiches, chips, cake and punch. Juliana received nice gifts from the office.

In addition, the ERC was delighted to present a certificate for five years of dedicated service at the Trusteeship to our co-worker Jay Tribou during the monthly meeting.

Congratulations to Juliana and Jay on their accomplishments.

Lavone Kizer-Merritt





Don't Overdose On The Holidays!

By this hour you've survived most of the usual Thanksgiving rituals: shopping in crowded grocery stores; cooking loads of special foods all day; driving or flying to the place where you celebrated the big feast. You've gotten through the sit-down dinner with friends and family and managed to deal with everyone's quirky personalities and behaviors. And yet again, you probably stuffed yourself to discomfort, vowing not to eat or drink as much next year – all the while eyeing that other piece of pumpkin pie.

You've even survived the day after Thanksgiving, one of the biggest shopping days of the year: millions of people rushing around looking for just the right gifts for everyone on their lists, spending more money that they could afford in hopes of making their family happy. The holidays are a time for great joy for some, and a time of stress and frustration for others. None of us should be denied the joys of the holiday season and so I have put together the following suggestions to help you "bust" the holiday stress and enjoy this time.

1. Plan ahead. We know well in advance, (like a year before), that the holidays will require a lot more of our time for special preparations in addition to our regular routines and responsibilities. However, many of us get caught short, in crisis management, running around at the "eleventh hour," trying to get the last minute stuff done, feeling a bit (or a lot) stressed out. The solution is to plan ahead and schedule these tasks and events with greater care. It always seems to get done sooner or later. Why not sooner, at your pace, without so much of the hassle?
2. Delegate. There is a big difference between "I do it" and "It gets done." Which is more important to you? I hope, "It gets done." Sure it's fun to "do it all," but that may be an impractical goal that only serves to frazzle and stress you out. Share the shopping, cooking, cleaning, etc., responsibilities with others. You don't have to "do it all" yourself. It would be nice if we could, but there is only so much time. And people generally appreciate the opportunity to participate in the preparations.
3. Get enough sleep. During the holidays, with all there is to do, the parties, the preparations, the shopping, the wrapping, and the cooking, it is easy to pay for the additional time required with our sleep time. The problem for many is that when people don't get enough sleep, they get cranky and don't enjoy what they are doing as much. Not only that, they may not exactly be a pleasure to be around! Each of us has a different sleep level that we require to feel rested. Especially during the busy holiday period, take the time for adequate sleep so that you have the energy to get into the full swing of things and enjoy it as it happens.
4. Don't overindulge. Anything in moderation. The holidays are a time when it is easy to overindulge in what we eat and

drink. The problem is, we pay for it later and sometimes sooner. A little advance planning might help as well. For example, let's say you know that you always accumulate an additional five pounds over the holidays. Make it a point to drop five pounds before the holiday season. Many find it is easier and less stressful to lose that additional weight before, rather than after, the holidays.

5. Set a financial budget and stick to it. We tend to want to be generous and when shopping, it is easy to fall prey to "impulse buying" and "go all out" with the credit cards. Then, we experience the "post holiday blues," when the bills arrive in January. Plan what you will spend before you go to the stores, when you are rational, and then stick to those budget amounts when you are in the stores, when you are more emotional.
6. Enjoy the journey, not just the destination. Don't "dread" any part of it including the shopping, the wrapping, the cooking, the cleaning, etc. Find happiness in all of it. Enjoy it all. Some place all their eggs in one basket. If all the celebration and the joy are scheduled for that one night, perhaps Christmas Eve, what happens if it's a disappointment? The whole season is a bust. Enjoy all the stuff leading up to the "big night" and enhance the quality and your level of enjoyment of the entire season.

I'll stop here, as I don't want to stress you out with a long article to read.

Have a happy, festive holiday season.

Carolyn Donahue

Dear Kyle...

What is your take on "regifting?" I feel that once a present is given to me I'm allowed to do whatever I want with it, including giving it to someone else. My wife says it's rude and immoral. What do you think?

Signed: Giving It Back in Gurnee

Dear Giving It Back: I had an English professor who felt the same way as your wife. Someone gave me this really great copy of a term paper and I "regifted" a few of the best paragraphs. Unfortunately, my teacher, as big a holiday humbug as there ever was, called me out and gave me that same speech on immorality you got from your wife. You'd think she'd have appreciated how well I wrapped the old parts in shiny fluff and even topped it with a big bow of Shakespeare. I called it "Scrubby: A Gestalt Approach to Burt Reynolds' Facial Hair;" she called it plagiarism. There's just no pleasing some people.

And pleasing people is what I'm all about. That's why I feel no compunction about regifting. Think of it less as me being too cheap to buy new things, and more as finding homes for all the nice gifts I receive, but have no use for. For example, a few years ago, my brother gave me a very nice toaster. I hate toast. My brother likes toast. Hence, my brother gets an oddly familiar, though very nice toaster for Christmas. The same goes for my grandma's annual roasted-chestnut strudel. Why should I suffer when my other grandma has no teeth left and can't taste vinegar anyway? Everyone gets what they want and I save money. Where's the harm in that?

Of course, the practicality of regifting never bothers anyone. It's always the "principle" of it that gets everyone's underwear in a twist. By their reckoning, we're supposed to keep everything that's ever given to us. I've seen where that leads. My uncle's garage is so packed with junk and knick-knacks that taking things out of storage is like playing life-and-death Jenga. I'd rather keep my life uncluttered. Especially of roasted-chestnut strudels.



Hot Christmas Gifts For 2004

Are any of you last-minute shoppers? If you still have Christmas shopping to do, I can give you suggestions for some hot gift items this year.

Let's start with toys! The top five Christmas toys for 2004 are:

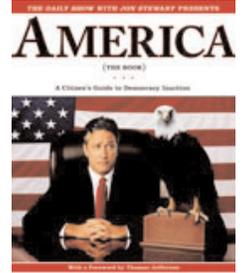
1. Techno – video games and the systems to play them on are huge again this year.
2. Boy toys – action toys like scooters, dirt bikes, skateboards and other electric or battery-powered toys.
3. Remote control – 2004 is the year of the remote control toy. Hobbytron's remote control stunt cars are very hot.



4. Oldies but goodies – classic children's toys such as Barbie, and other Disney character toys.
5. Educational/creative – Leapfrog Enterprises, Inc, has junior computer games called "LeapPad" which is hot this season. Other creative and educational games include the Fisher Price toddler's line and Discovery Toys.

Online shopping is also a very convenient way to shop. Amazon.com is a huge online retailer and a few of their top sellers are:

1. Books – top two books right now are:
The Daily Show with Jon Stewart Presents America (The Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction, by the writers of the Daily Show, Jon Stewart.
(Story continued below.)



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He's Just Not That Into You: The No-Excuses Truth to Understanding Guys, by Greg Behrendt, Liz Tuccillo.

2. Kitchen & Housewares – top three items are:
Black & Decker JW200 Lids Off Jar Opener.
Matfer Exopat non-stick Baking/Roasting Sheet.
Calphalon Commercial Hard-Anodized 12-inch Everyday Pan with Lid.



3. Electronics – by far the most popular electronic item is the Apple 4GB Mini iPod.
Lastly, I want to mention good ole Wal-Mart. Bargain shoppers will have no problems finding affordable gifts

here! I'll just mention a couple of Wal-Mart's most popular electronic items which include:

1. Digital cameras.
2. MP3 Players.
3. Laptop computers under \$800.
4. Portable DVD player with 7" screen.

I hope some of these top selling ideas help you on any last-minute shopping you may still need to do.

Happy Holidays!! *Cheri Johnson*

