We Wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

I'm so glad to see the DPRG taking off so well, and I'm looking forward to another great year! So many things to be thankful for and so many things to hope for. We've gained so much ground, and there's so much more to gain. The future has so much in store especially in the area of robotics. We should really get busy and stay on the leading edge of technology. Who knows, we may be the ones to usher in a new robotics age! Merry Christmas Everyone and a Happy New Year! God bless us everyone! --Tiny Tim

Two's company 16's a crowd

See the crowd at the December meeting! Officially we had 14 as the number we sent into the DFW-Xchange, but a couple more came in later, and then the second hour a few more came in, but I didn't see how many. After the meeting was over, I took the above picture and that's how many were left. A few of the people were either clipped off the right side like Erick Wagner who you can't see, or behind people or behind equipment, or, as in my case, taking the picture. Anyway, it was a great turnout!

Keil donates 2 eval boards and pledges 5 8051 C compilers!

 has very graciously pledged to donate 5 of their heralded 8051 compilers and has already donated 2 of their software evaluation boards! This is a very, very generous donation! These compilers are the best in the market! Be one of the first ones to get to check out these wonderful full versions of their great C compilers. These compilers are the compilers of choice for 8051 C. If you plan to purchase one, please tell them you heard about it from the DPRG. Please send them email and tell them how so very greatful we are for their generous donations!

Brief Review of the Keil Eval board by Steve Rainwater

I got some time over the weekend to play with the Keil Evaluation Kit. It was very easy to set up (had to buy a DB9/DB25 adapter at Computer City - I never have the right connectors around when I need them!). The software installed without a hitch under NT 4.0. I'm going to try it under OS/2 Warp as well if I get a chance this week.

Within an hour of connecting it, I was happily running programs on it. The push-buttons and LED's are a great feature - you can write a program and actually see them do something with no need to connect the board to an outside device! My wife seemed quite impressed that I could flash some LED's on and off after only a few hours using several hundred dollars worth of hardware. ;-)

Anyway, the board works. The only drawback is the 2k limit on the compiler. It's not easy making a C program less than 2k! Most of the demos and sample code included with the kit won't compile due to size. There are some benchmark programs to test the speed of the CPU and some demo programs for various features of the board and compiler but I guess they'll have to wait for the full-blown compiler software to arrive.

Overall, I'm impressed. I'm going to pull the DMI 6811 / Forth board out of my robot next weekend (if time allows) and get it ready for a new 8051 brain. I'll write up a full account about the Keil board for the newsletter soon - I'd like to try it with the real compiler first, so I can provide some benchmarks for comparison.

B-P Sales donates more books!

Bonser-Philhower Sales, Inc. donated more books for our Library:

- Dallas Semiconductor - Timekeeping & NV Sram Data Book
- Dallas Semiconductor - Silicon Timed Circuits
- Dallas Semiconductor - Soft Microcontroller
- Dallas Semiconductor - 50 ways to Touch Memory
- Dallas Semiconductor - CPU Supervisors

- Dallas Semiconductor - Short Form Catalog
- Dallas Semiconductor - (2 of) System Extension Data Book
- Dallas Semiconductor - Telecommunication Data Book

B-P Sales is located at: 689 W. Renner Road, Suite 101, Richardson, TX 75080.
Phone: 972-234-8438 Fax: 972-437-0897.
Many thanks to B-P sales for the donated books. (I'll bring them to the next meeting so Tyce can add them to our Library).

Amtel sends literature

Amtel has graciously sent us some literature on their latest AT89S8252 devices for distribution at our December meeting. I hope yall were there and didn't miss out!!! We received about 20 product briefs. Also, Amtel sent 1 November 1996 CD-Rom Databook of their Configurable Logic Microcontroller Nonvolatile Memory. I kept one copy of the product brief, so please come to the meeting and browse Amtel's impressive 8051 family CPU products in these handouts. These processors feature 2.7-6Vcc, 0-24Mhz clock, 16ms-2sec watchdog, 3 independent 16bit timer/counters, Conventional 8051 EDA tools, 2k EEPROM, 8K Flash, 256 bytes SRAM.

Micromint Sends Literature

has graciously sent us some literature on their products for distribution at our December meeting. I hope yall were there and didn't miss out!!! We received about 20 Embedded Controllers catalogs and 20 data sheets on their PicStic product. Included in their catalog are Computer modules, Sonar rangers, RTC controllers, Single Board Controllers, and more. I kept a copy of each so please come to the meeting and browse their catalogs of their fine microcontroller products.

Harris Semiconductors Sends Literature

has graciously sent us some literature on their products for distribution at our December meeting. I hope yall were there and didn't miss out!!! We received about 20 brochures of their IC products. I kept a copy of each so please come to the meeting and browse their brochures of their fine microcontroller and peripheral products.

Scott Edwards Electronics Sends Literature

Scott Edwards Electronics has graciously sent us some literature on their products for distribution at our December meeting. I hope yall were there and didn't miss out!!! We received about 20 catalogs of his PIC boards. I kept a copy so please come to the meeting and browse their catalogs of their fine pic microcontroller and peripheral products.

Electronix Express Sends Literature

has graciously sent us 20 copies of their catalogs! My wife however, in an effort to clean up the living room, moved them and they didn't get to the December meeting, sorry! I'll bring them to the January meeting. They've got "Guaranteed Lowest Prices!" on the front cover, and from what I've seen, they do have some really good prices. They're definately worth checking out. I'll probably be buying some stuff from them myself soon. Be sure to check out their online catalog which also has some closeouts not found in the catalog. Some things that looked really interesting were: Motion Detector modules w/data sheets for $2, or motion detector chip (ULN-2232) & lens only for $1, electronics kits, robotics kits, components, multimeters, etc. The catalog is about a half inch thick packed with goodies!

Free subscriptions to magazines

Qualify for your free subscriptions (fill out a bunch of questions) and receive your free year's subscription and years of junk mail. Be sure they're still free before you sign up for them.

- EDN Magazine
- Techweb Business Technology Network

DPRG gets an Assumed Name

We now have an assumed name! I went down to the Collin County courthouse in McKinney on November 26th, 1996 and filled out the form for an assumed name for the Dallas Personal Robotics Group. The fee for getting the assumed name processed was only $9.50. This first came about when we could not open a DPRG bank account since we could not come up with any records that the DPRG even existed. One of our members, Steve Rainwater, did an extensive search in the Dallas County records for references of DPRG. After no records could be found, we decided that we needed to get a DBA for the DPRG. Even though this documentation never seemed to exist, Dallas Personal Robotics Group has been around for >10-15 years and even in the ?Wall Street Journal? as being one of the oldest and largest robotics groups. Some members in our group have stated that they are certain that there was documentation for our group as well as "Not for Profit" status papers. If any documentation can be found, please forward it to me. Anyway, now we are a ligitimate group until the year 2006!

Also, I received a call from Walter and Beverly Bryant. He claims that he may still have some info from the days gone by! He stated that he would donate all that he has including some old newsletters, videos, and hero I&II software. In all of that documenation, he may also have the Not-for-profit status, and a tax id! I'll let yall know the inventory as soon as I receive it! Many thanks to Walter and Bev for the "out of the blue" call they gave me from Georgia and reminiscing about old times.

Reboot Skeletons

Roger brought in this erie looking skeleton. It's the frame for some figures for the Reboot cartoon that comes on TV on Saturday mornings. He mentioned that the real reason he wanted it was because it looked cool. However, put a few servos on it, and it'd be a nice walker frame. Thanks Roger for bringing your cool stuff.

Kevin brings New Micro boards

Kevin Carter brought in his New Micro board. It's a beautiful 8051 plcc board for only $40 bucks totally populated! It has outputs for LCD, keypad, plus all address and datalines to headers. Also, it had a few square inches of prototype area! It looked like a really nice 8051 board for a mere $40 bucks. Definately worth checking out.

Ed Rivers donates newsletters from long ago

DPRG has been around for many years. Last we've heard it was going since 1983! Ed Rivers was one of the members who has been around for a long time and is coming to the meetings again. He donated about a 3 inch stack of old newsletters dating way back. I'll try to get the listing online promptly, and hopefully typed in really soon so that all can read them. Thanks Ed for the newsletters - it'll be so cool to see the early years. Ed also has some videos that he said he'll donate for us to see some of the early meetings.

Philips FAX-back service

Brian, a Philips sales rep, promised that he'd give us some 1995 version Philips 8051 databooks, but until that time we could access their FAX-back service by dialing 1-800-282-2000 to get any of Philips' data sheets or check the web site - http://www.semiconductors.philips.com

Timeless DPRG

One of our members exclaims, "Seems that the DPRG has been around since 1983 and at one time we were even written up in the Wall Street Journal as one of the oldest and largest amateur robotics groups in the world!"

Another member remarks, "I attended DPRG meetings at the OLD Heath kit store in Garland in the early 80's but it had been around years before that! So, pushing 15+ years. There is a guy named Ed Rivers that I think still lives in this area that is a old-timer, maybe we can find him and ask him."

Another member comments, "CNN did a piece on us a few years back, so they may have some data on us as well.

Free email newsletters

I received the following email, thought some of you might like to subscribe to them:

Parallel Performance Group, of Sedona, AZ, announces a Series of FREE E-Mail Newsletters on high-tech software topics. Here's a list of the topics discussed in the Newsletter Series:

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Business Process Reengineering      Real-Time Multiprocessing/Uniprocessing DSP
Multiprocessing                     Neural Networks/Fuzzy Logic/Fuzzy Control
Parallel Processing                 Animation/Solid Modelling
Distributed Processing              Mechanical Design Automation/FEA
Object-Oriented CASE Tools          CAD for Industrial and Architectural Design
Project Management                  Discrete and Continuous Simulation
Image Processing                    Medical Imaging
Graphical Application Interfaces    Virtual Reality
Statistical Analysis                Volume Visualization
Engineering Data Management         Data Warehousing/Data Mining
Electronic Publishing               Geographic Information Systems
Internet/Intranet Technology        Manufacturing Software
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To receive more information, send any e-mail to info@ppgsoft.com; this will return a detailed listing of the Newsletters, and instructions on how to receive sample copies and subscriptions.

Visit our web site at ppgsoft.com on high-tech software products, presented with pleasing professional graphics. If you do e-mail an inquiry to us about a product, please be sure to include your telephone number.

List Server to be up soon

Steve Rainwater, who is president of Network Cybernetics Corporation and our system administrator and donator of our www.dprg.org domain name, indicates that we may have a list server for DPRG soon: "I've got a couple of list server packages, so now it's just a matter of trying to find the time. Maybe this week - but I can't promise!"

We Received the EPLD Software

We received the EPLD software we purchased from Jameco. I gave it to Chris to pass on to Kevin. Kevin noted that he will give the software a review as soon as he can check it out. This is the full version of the CUPL software.

We also need to formalize a Mission Statement. The proposed Mission Statement reads:

- To bring together robotics enthusiasts for the discussion of personal robotics which includes sharing of hardware and software ideas.
- To provide an avenue to meet minimum purchase requirements and get volume discounts via group purchases of equipment and supplies.
- To encourage the development of robotics through the building of robots, having robotic contests, and other means.
- To educate one another in the technical aspects of robotics development.

This is to be hashed out by email and the next meeting.

Parts Librarian and Software/Hardware Librarian

I forgot to bring up in the DPRG business to elect a parts librarian and a software/hardware librarian, so I feel compelled to go ahead and appoint them for now until we can have an official vote. These are thankless jobs with super low pay, I'm glad these volunteered. To the office of Parts Librarian, I'll appoint Roger Arrick, he's got a lot of knowledge of parts, said he'd donate a lot of parts, and donate a nice box to keep the components in! These would be parts that we would used for, say, a group robot. To the office of Software/Hardware librarian, I'll appoint Chris Nelson, he's volunteered to keep track of the Keil Software and the Promax programmer, and whatever else comes his way. Please send them your congrats (or sympathy)!