the bookworm


glossary and an extensive bibliography. Essential Check Point FireWall-1 NG is by “PhoneBoy,” who knows more about installing and maintaining FireWall-1 than anyone else. My problem is that FireWall-1 is proprietary. But if you’re going to use it, PhoneBoy has produced the ultimate installation and configuration guide.

Hoglund and McGraw have devoted themselves to informing the good guys about what the black hats already know about how to take advantage (exploit) cracks and weak spots in the software we use. I see their Exploiting Software as a follow-up to Viega and McGraw’s Building Secure Software of a few years ago. It’s a worthwhile addition to the security bookcase (one shelf will no longer do).

Looking at Code

About 20 years ago, Marc Donner pointed out to me the importance of reading code carefully. He later taught a course at NYU on code reading. Spineillis has turned out a fine book on Code Reading, accompanied by a CD full of source and examples. He makes the same point that Donner did: You will write better code if you make it a habit to read good code.

Two Stray Penguins

Linux Programming by Example is a very fine book. I happen to be an admirer of Robbins’ Effective AWK Programming (which lives next to my desk) and his book on vi (which I recommend frequently). But Linux Programming is exemplary. Interestingly, Robbins begins with, “One of the best ways to learn about programming is to read well-written programs.” Donner and Spineillis would agree.

Robbins supplies the reader with a vast number of programs and a lot of elucidation. This is a primer in Linux pro-
gramming, but also serves as a tract on UNIX programming. Most of the illustrations are from actual GNU and UNIX V7 code. With ever more companies converting to Linux, this will be an invaluable resource for those converting from another [which one?] system.

I keep Essential System Administration and Essential CVS nearby for emergencies. Another valuable addition to O’Reilly’s pocket guides is Linux. Barrett includes all the commands and flags I looked for and is so up-to-date that Fedora is covered.

**Tinkering**

If you believe that taking apart alarm clocks and building tuners or receivers is the right way to gain a technical education, Hardware Hacking Projects for Geeks is for you! “How to Hack 802.11b Antennas” and “How to Build an Internet Toaster” may be my favorite chapters, but “How to Hack a Furby” is useful, too. All of us who used to read Popular Electronics or Popular Mechanics or who still have a copy of an AARL handbook (my hand’s up) will really love this book.

**Beowulf Redux**

The second edition of Gropp, Lusk, and Sterling’s Beowulf Cluster Computing with Linux is over double the size of Sterling’s volume on Beowulf of five years ago. But if you’re into building a Linux cluster, you need it.