

New Style

Newsletter of the LaCrosse PC Users' Group

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Holiday Issue 1998

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This Month:

Dec. 9, 7:30 In the Overholt

Photographic Ware

Last minute nominations followed by election of the Board.

I'll be demonstrating what you can do with hardware and software to manipulate and organize your photos.

Several programs will be mentioned but I'll be doing most of the demonstration using the PhotoImpact suite. See reprint of last year's review of this product on page 4.

You'll see a live capture using the Snappy device and then I'll place the captured image into an existing photo. (Don't worry Marian, I won't be using your photos from the White House for any of this.)

You'll see how to restore damaged or off color photos and help those that just didn't turn out right in the first place.

Here we go again...

Following the striking down of last year's unconstitutional Communications Decency Act (CDA), our spineless representatives quietly passed another vaguely worded, unconstitutional bill, the Child Internet Protection Act. This law makes it illegal for U.S. sites to allow minors to view anything that may be "harmful" to them, whatever that means.

Hey, maybe we've seen the last of Barney, and the Teletubbies will be stopped dead in their tracks. No, that's too much to hope for.

If allowed to stand, we can expect the government will try to force Internet service providers to block foreign sites with "harmful" content. The law is currently enjoined, pending an initial ruling which is due Dec. 4.

like myself, our former president has been unable to attend meetings due to the inconvenience of work. Bob brings us up to date on what he's been doing the last year...

Ex-president's Message

Bob Hansen

Hello from deep inside the Big Blue buildings of IBM Rochester—

I thought I would drop a line to let the members know what I have been up to the last months in my new job at IBM. I am still in the process of selling my house in Holmen and am still living there while we get a new house started in Rochester, MN. I am also still commuting each day which is getting very tiring.

When I first started with the consulting firm and working at IBM, I was working

out in the manufacturing plant on testing the IBM RS/6000 servers prior to shipping. You can think of that as a "burn in period" where the entire unit was put under diagnostic software and tested until something broke. Then I got to replace that something, from a cable to a main board, and prepare for the next step in shipping. I worked the night shift and slept days. My then newlywed bride was not too happy.

After 3-4 months of having this fun, I was transferred to a technical writing department for the AS/400 division. This

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Wade Heidman and Dan Inda of Plus Delta Performance set up for the presentation at the October meeting.



Visit our homepage at <http://www.wi.centuryinter.net/lcpc>

Membership Info and Treasurers Report

Gary Stelzig - Treasurer

Membership renewals received include:

- Paul Pfaff - thank you.

Renewals for December include: Larry Skznikow.

Our checking balance as of 11/13/98 is \$404.00. Expenses for October include: \$12.80 for postage and \$11.61 for newsletter copy costs.

Note: Club elections are held at our December meeting. Only paid members can vote or hold office. Paid members as of 11/25/98 include: Robin Alexander, Jim Andringa, Don Atkinson and Carol Frank, Jonathan & Terry Bailey, Ernesto Brauer, Ken Buckley, Joseph Doucet, George Frish, Kathleen Gallagher, Darrell Garner, Marian Havlik, Dan Kelly, David Madson, Paul Phaff, Beatrice Ring, Paul Shie, Bill Simdars, Larry Skznikow, Gary Stelzig, Jack Storlie, Kay Wagner, Chuck Whalen. Try to make the meeting so you have the opportunity to cast ballots to elect board officers of your choice—not some else's choice!

Beatrice Ring



October 28, 1998 Meeting

Carol M. Frank

Business at the meeting was further nominations for the board. Paul Shie withdrew his nomination. The current nominees are Marian Havlik, Carol Frank, Chuck Whalen, John Kuschel, Gary Stelzig and Ernesto Brauer. Nominations are still open up until elections at the December meeting.

Further business was approval to buy an upgrade to PageMaker. The version that we have been using started to give trouble and the program disks were misplaced when we moved. The cost will be 119.95 plus shipping and handling.

Marian had a question about her sent e-mail being automatically duplicated. Chuck recommended calling AOL about this problem. She also found that her Microsoft Word documents (*.DOC) couldn't always be read by the receiver. It was suggested that she use a more universal format like Rich Text Format (*.RTF). However .RTF files can become very bloated.

Jonathan Bailey asked about finding barcode reading software. Chuck suggested downloading shareware software from the Internet. Jonathan is now a volunteer at the

Lutheran Hospital helping the gift store and other volunteer organizations in the hospital with their computers. He is a very busy eighth-grader!

Beatrice Ring announced that she is leaving the area and moving to Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. Our DOS expert will be living near her daughter and grandchildren.

Our presentation about Plus Delta Performance was given by sales engineer Dan Inda and application engineer Wade Heidman. Plus Delta Performance was established in 1990 and specializes in industrial Electronic Performance Support Systems (EPSS) and Computer Based Training.

EPSS is a computer based aid that has job related information optimized for rapid and relevant access.

As an example Dan Inda showed portions of Phillip Morris' cigarette rolling machine, which is actually a complicated combination of several machines. Clicking on an area in a drawing of the overall machine sends you to detailed instructions and pictures of that section.

Much of this data was once only in long time employees' heads. However as employees retire new ones need this information without a lengthy trial and error learning process. And new employees might not be around for 20 years. Notes may be added to the application which can be incorporated into the next revision.

Workers can attach their laptops to their belts and wear headsets to view the screen while leaving their hands free to handle tools and parts. Many machines are linked to computers and PDP also does monitoring soft-

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Interesting Web Site

Gary Stelzig

Looking for some free tips on various software? Sign up on www.dummiesdaily.com for tips on Microsoft Word 97, Excel 97, Outlook, Quicken, and many others. This is a free service provided by IDG Books Worldwide, and PC World.

Classified Ad

For Sale Apple GS computer with ImageWrite printer. Includes 3.5" and 5.25" disk drives, some word processing and games. Original owner and in working condition. Make an offer. Gary or Rose @ 608-788-7075.

Bob Hansen—Continued from page 1

meant moving to day shift (yea!) and starting to write HTML code. I took that as a new challenge and moved ahead.

Since I started in my current department I have been assigned the task of writing new documentation for the Lotus Domino for AS/400 server. This has been a real challenge since there is almost no text on Domino for AS/400. The Domino product was only announced for the AS/400 last March.

Before I get any further, I must try to explain: The AS/400 is a midrange computer whose capacity starts where PC servers stop. They can be as small as a PC tower or be as large as a few file cabinets put together, and can cost from \$10,000 to over \$200,000 dollars and more. Lotus Notes/Domino is a groupware product that allows offices and large organizations (such as IBM) to have integrated e-mail, databases, discussion groups and calendaring. Applications can be written for Notes that can access PC, AS/400, and mainframe data. Domino is the server side of Notes and has run on Windows NT for many years. Moving to the AS/400 provides enhanced features, but I don't want to sound like an IBM salesman.

It is very interesting to write for the AS/400 in that I get to work directly with new products, figure out how they work on the AS/400 and then write an internet based document that provides users a "How to" easy workshop in a "Step-by-Step" method. I have already published one topic to the IBM Internet Technical Studio site and have 2 more on the way for this year.

The URL for the first topic is: <http://www.as400.ibm.com/tstudio/domino/migrate/indexmig.htm> or go to <http://www.as400.ibm.com/tstudio> and pick the "Migrating to Lotus Domino for AS/400" topic.

I enjoy the work I do and the stress has been light so far. Once I get moved to Rochester, the stress of driving will also cease. I miss the meetings and the friends from the LCPC and am trying to make a meeting. By the time I get home, I either have another job to do or supper is waiting.

My e-mail is the same, so if you have questions about my work, or anything at all, please ask.

Thanks for your interest.

October meeting—Continued from page 2

ware. Dan showed a simulation of a computer linked machine.

PDP also can do their applications bilingually. A sample in Chinese and English was shown. A screen can be instantly switched from one language to another.

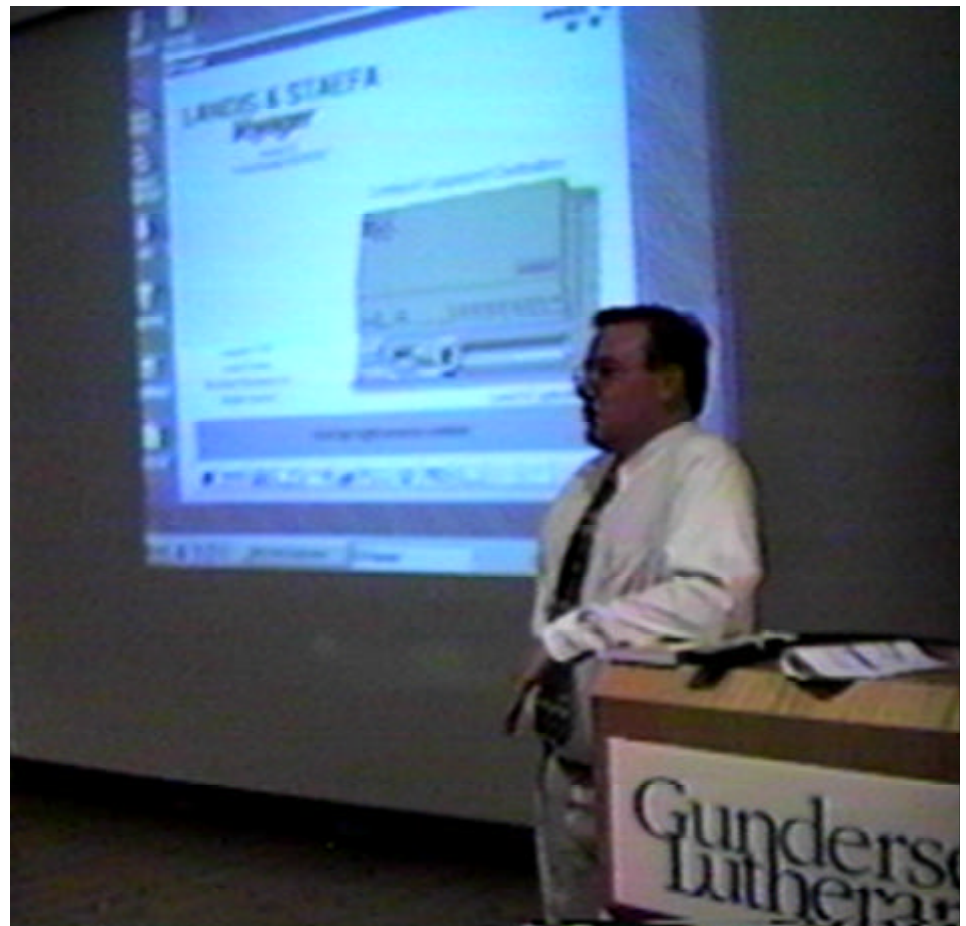
The prize-winning Honda Goldwing application was demonstrated. The wiring diagrams can be useful in forming and verifying hypotheses on problems. These diagrams also have hot spots to click on for greater detail and information.

PDP employs people with technical backgrounds who can quickly learn the essence of the clients' machines and write the applications and training manuals.



This bilingual application emphasised large graphics to help navigate.

Dan Inda showing off the Landis & Staefa application.



Loyal readers of this newsletter will recall that I reviewed PhotoImpact in last October's issue. To save you the inconvenience of taking that issue off of its place of honor on your wall, and pulling it out of the frame, I'm reprinting the gist of the review here.

Ulead's PhotoImpact Suite

Don Atkinson

If you want to ease your Web page creation chores, get this program.

If you have any need to manipulate or catalog images, get this program. Whatever your level of experience or expertise, it will be of use to you.

PhotoImpact (PI) is made up of several stand alone programs featuring hot buttons in them to access other programs of your choice. PI is a major rewrite and improvement over Image Pals, reviewed several years ago. The programs run under Windows 95. Let's start with the simplest program:

PhotoImpact Capture: You can capture the whole screen or select an area to grab. Choose your own hot key to activate, change image color when captured (automatically grab a 24 bit color image as 8 bit (256 shades) color or gray scale image). Select captured image resolution. Generally it works well although I sometimes have trouble selecting the area to capture.

PhotoImpact Album: Image Pals' Album was my favorite program of the previous package, and PI's album is a real improvement of a superior product. Album creates thumbnail images of (usually) graphic files for ease of selection or comparison. You can use image files in nearly every format imaginable.

Select a template, choose the files to include, and give the album a name.

You can annotate each image for convenience in cataloging or searching. Several different catalog templates are included for various purposes; Family Album with space to identify who the people in each picture are, along with their contact information, Personnel File, various Library files, Business Product Catalog, etc. This allows you to easily find all pictures with Aunt Mabel.

In a significant and convenient change, thumbnails can be displayed in sizes between 112 by 112 pixels to 32 by 32 by selecting the size off a menu bar.

Another significant change is automatic updating. Previously, it was most convenient to fill up a subdirectory before making an album since you would have to select new images to create thumbnails for them. With PI's Album you merely check a box in the

setup for the album to have it monitor a selected subdirectory. So you can create or download files willy-nilly and not worry about updating the album, it will be done automatically the next time you open the album.

Image thumbnails can be in multiple albums so you can create topic based albums regardless of the file's location on your hard drive. Thumbnails can be dragged between different albums, if you wish the associated file can be moved at the same time.

Album allows you to do complete file maintenance without leaving the program. You can access file information on any thumbnail along with copy, move, rename, and delete. Relink allows you to reconnect the thumbnail with its file if you move the file without using album.

Double clicking a thumbnail will open the image into **PhotoImpact Viewer**. This simple program does basically that., you can view several images side by side and change the viewing size from 16 times actual size to 1/16th actual size. It's available FREE.

In Album you can add any programs you like to the menu bar. So, once you've found the image you want to work with, you simply drag it to the image processor of your choice on the menu bar. This opens the new program and places the selected image.

Album is available as a stand alone product for \$49 if you wish to purchase separately.

PhotoImpact Explorer This is like Win95 explorer for image files, thumbnails are created on the fly for any graphic files in the directory.

PhotoImpact (image editor) This program is also a major rewrite and improvement over the previous version.

It is not adequate for professional prepress work, but for most of you reading this, PI is the only image manipulation program you will ever need.

PI allows you to do almost everything you can do in programs costing several times as much.

There is a large selection of special effects (over 40), many of which have variable settings.

It is all designed to be as simple or detailed as you like. When you're starting out with the program, or if you simply don't want to go deeply into it, select from the quick palette or use some of the automated commands. As you gain experience, add more menus to the desktop and do your own settings.

The automated commands will alter the image's brightness, contrast, sharpness, alignment, with no settings required from you. It will even attempt to crop your picture. How well does it do when left to itself? It all depends on the picture, sometimes very well, sometimes you hit cancel and do it yourself.

An important new feature is up to 99 levels of undo and redo. Unfortunately, it is linear, you can't remove a command and redo the ones following it.

Probably the most significant addition to the program is multiple objects and layers, this moves PI onto a par with much more expensive programs. You may ask: "What can I do with objects?"

Add people or objects to your images. Pose with your favorite celebrity. Combine that great sunset photo with your shot of Seattle taken on an overcast day. Use multiple objects on separate layers and combine them in any order. An object and layer manager lets you keep track of things.

You can change existing images to a different color depth, go from 24 bit true color to grayscale or 256 optimized indexed color, whatever you need. Text handling is vastly improved. Along with choosing your location, font, color, and style you have a selection of 3-D effects and you can twist and distort the text.

Included on the CD Rom are 3,000 photos and textures. Like the Image Pals CD Rom, the pictures are technically competent but few are outstanding photographs. Most look like someone's vacation shots, there are interesting locations and it's worth sitting through at least once.

Smart Saver is just about worth the price of admission by itself. This allows you to interactively set the level of compression for your JPEG file, seeing how your image will look after it has been compressed.

We welcome Darrell for the first time to these pages, and hope that he's not so outraged by way I've edited his review that he never writes again.

Photo Recall

Darrell Garner

Type of software

This is a photo handling program with several aspects to it.

- a) Photo album, or in their terms "Library"
- b) Photo "Darkroom" or image enhancement tool.
- c) Utility room, used for backup, restore, repair and compact PhotoRecall image database.
- d) Screen Saver

Type of system evaluated on

PhotoRecall was loaded via CD rom onto a Pentium II 233 Mhz, running Windows 95.

Overview

This is a very nice Image Management Program, offering versatility in managing, editing, and sending images to the net. The program loaded easily from the CDrom and did not have a lot of confusing questions to stumble on. I have a flatbed scanner and have many photo images on file. I had no trouble loading a file into the albums of this program and adding sound to the pictures. It was delightful to be able to manage these images (photos) simply.

Specifics

The Library provides a bookshelf appearance that alludes to a stack of albums. By pointing and clicking you can drag one of the *Albums* off the shelf and open it... as you peruse the pictures you can click on the sound icon and listen to your recorded message of that picture. If you prefer more info on the picture there is an icon for properties, where you can add in the details if you so desire for later retrieval. This library has three choices of albums.... *All albums, My Albums, Deleted Albums*. Each with its own roll top desk door that opens or closes as you choose the type of album. A *Slideshow* presentation can be put together with the album and sound activated for each photo with

a personalized pre-recorded sound WAV. However, I did not find a way to get the screen saver to play the sound attached to the files. The *Albums* portion of the *Library* allows you to create a *Portable Player* to send albums to your friends on the Net, or by transfer on removable media.

The *Darkroom* offers a variety of ways to manipulate your image, re-size was an important element to me as *paperport* didn't allow me to resize without re-scanning. In this program altering size was as easy as picking a pixel size..... If I only knew how big 300 pixels were, this is where you have to go by trial and error. *Paperport* at least allowed me the luxury of inches, centimeters, or pixels. Other nice features were the ability to *Crop*, control *Brightness, Contrast*, and *Focus*. Allow *Color Correction* and apply special *Artistic Effects*. I could also *Flip, Rotate* and *Map to a Sphere*. I could also *Emboss, Watercolor, Posterize* and *Vignette*. Trust me, these are not dirty words. *Darkroom* could also be run as an independent program.

The Utility Room is a part of the program that allows you to backup your photo albums and picture database. I did not have much of a database in reviewing this program so I did not use this tool, but I assume it is quite a bit like doing a backup on data files. The *Optimize* feature kind of defrags your customized pictures.

Photorecall Deluxe Screen Saver called up from your settings and display menu can be set to run all the albums or just specific albums. *Sorry*, no sound ability here, that must be a deficiency on the part of Bill Gates. Maybe that will be included with Windows 99.

otes

There are lots of other features to this program, there is a Tech support by phone or Internet and there are unlimited resources for pictures, both free and pay-for. There is a *Web Crawler Wizard* that can be used to source out images available on the internet. The program supports 22 different image types, including JPEG, TIF, GIF.

Member E-mail addresses

lax.net has been sold to **execpc.com**. Mail will be forwarded for some time, so continue to use the lax.net address. **DO NOT** use the existing member name with the execpc.com address, member names on execpc.com are different!

The LCPC Home Page:

<http://www.wi.centuryinter.net/lcpc>

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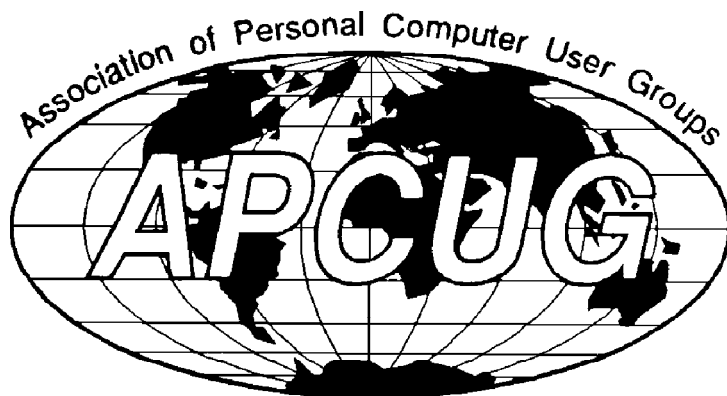
PhotoRecall Deluxe 2.0 was supplied in exchange for this review. It lists for under \$50. For more information go to:

www.ga-imaging.com

or

www.photorecall.com

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General meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month in the Lutheran Hospital, either in the Overholt Auditorium or conference room 1 in the basement, check page 1 for location. The combined November-December meeting is held the second Wednesday in December. Meetings begin around 7:00 PM. Everyone is welcome, attend a meeting or two with no obligation to join.

Dues are \$20 for one year following payment. Membership entitles you to attend meetings, tap into the corporate wisdom, receive special user group discounts from publishers and others, receive (and contribute to) this newsletter. You may also obtain software provided by publishers for review of the product. Unsigned articles are by the editor.

Other user groups are welcome to reprint with proper credit.

The newsletter is printed the Wednesday before the meeting, submit articles by the 13th of the month. Upload to deapublish@aol.com or phone me at 784-0150 if you want to deliver the article. Submit in ASCII, AmiPro, or WP5.

Commercial advertising rates available upon request. Member's personal ads are free.

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