

New Style

Newsletter of the LaCrosse PC Users' Group

volume 19 number 1

January 1999

Inside

- ▣ Report on last month's meeting
- ▣ Treasurer's report
- ▣ E-mail addresses
- ▣ On-line electioneering
- ▣ Cutting edge of Technology

This Month

January 27, 1999

CorelDRAW presented by Carol Frank
Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center—
Overholt Auditorium
7:00 PM

Last Month

A video tape of most of the graphics presentation from our December meeting is available if you're interested.

It's even available if you aren't interested.

Board Meeting

The Board met twice this month. We determined officers (see below) and Marian suggested Darrell Garner for Program director. She also suggested changes to the community announcement in the LaCrosse Tribune which have been implemented. We also talked about changes to our mailing list and about ensuring having the Overholt for 1999.

At the second board meeting all four board members and Darrell Garner attended. There was further discussion on program ideas (see list to right). Ways to increase membership were talked about. Carol has designed a card for library racks and other places to introduce us. Ernesto will spread the word about us at Gundersen-Lutheran. The general membership is encouraged to bring friends to meetings and help get the word out. We need more people! The LCPC is not known to the community at large.

The Board

President—Marian Havlik

VicePresident—Ernesto Brauer

Treasurer—Gary Stelzig

Secretary—Carol Frank

Program director—Darrell Garner

The PC (Presidents Corner)

Marian Havlik

On behalf of the new LCPC Board, and as the president in the last year of the millennium, I welcome you, and hope each of you attends all meetings. The Board invites you to bring a guest to every meeting.

We have some timely and interesting programs planned, but we also need your suggestions. We'll be asking for them at the January meeting.

Although I have been an LCPC member since December 1986, many of you don't know much about me. Although a nurse by training (until 1987), I've had a biological consulting business since 1977. We do research on rivers. Our projects for state, federal and private agencies vary from one day to 11 weeks, from Wisconsin to Nebraska, Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, and Missouri. Projects result in reports up to 150

pages in length, and presentations at regional and national meetings.

I first found out what a \$13,000 word processor could do in 1982 at WWTC. Since I got arthritis in my fingers at a young age, I was thrilled with the idea that I wouldn't have to type a manuscript over if journal editors wanted it changed (which of course they always do).

So I made up my mind to get a computer as soon as I could afford it, and read what I could about them.

It didn't take long to know I wanted an IBM compatible. I got an AT & T 6300 in July 1985. \$4,000 for a computer, 9 pin printer, and Lotus Symphony software. It had 640K memory, and 2 floppies. I had

Continued on page 2

Don with the new Bill Gates wallpaper he found on the internet and slightly modified

Tentative Schedule of presentations

January—Corel Draw, Carol Frank

February—SPPS Statistical Software,
Paul Havlik

March—Taxes?

April—Y2K, Chuck Whalen

Ideas—Geneology, printer maintenance, websites, upgrades & maintenance, networking. *If you have any ideas let us know.*



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

Continued from page 1

Microage tell me how to save a file, and turn it off and on, and figured out most of the rest on my own. I wondered how I'd ever fill up a floppy disk. Silly girl. After several years of use by grandchildren, we took my first computer to Goodwill in 1998.

In December 1986, after I loused up my program disk, I got a used 5 meg hard drive for \$400. I upgraded regularly until 1993 (Lotus no longer upgrades Symphony). Except that Symphony didn't have all the whistles and bells of some things released after that, I loved it because I easily created text and tables in the same document, and can tell exactly when I changed a file, and how big the file is (something you can't easily do with newer software). I could also create simple graphs, and export them to Harvard Graphics for a nicer picture or slide. One of my favorite files has a report, tables, graphs and a database in 100,000 bytes.

In May 1992 I got a new desktop (486-66 that's had some upgrades). Two weeks after the new computer, I found out I was going to be gone a month, and realized I couldn't survive without a laptop. So laptops have been my PC of choice since then. Some have been better than others, and I've liked different things about each. I've been using a Compaq Presario 1622 since March 1998. I prefer the eraser mouse to the touch pad, but like the textured case of the Compaq although it is heavy to lug through an airport (I never travel without a laptop).

Currently my laptop modem isn't working, and so I handle e-mail on the desktop (can't afford down time to get laptop fixed).

Although I have MSOffice and Lotus Suite (also Word Perfect 6.0 for DOS which I hated), I'm not thrilled with any of the current word processors for reports. I prefer to work on a report in Symphony (much easier on the eyes), and then import it to something else if I have to, but of course you lose formatting.

A recent development has been that many groups require meeting abstracts and manuscripts to be in a certain format (Times New Roman, 12 pt.), so I'm trying to force myself to use Word more. But I have yet to figure out how to attach a Word file to an AOL e-mail (no trouble attaching an ASCII file to an e-mail). I have given a number of presentations at meetings using the laptop and really like that as it is much cheaper than slides. More on equipment next month. Happy New Year. Marian Havlik

(2000 is correctly the last year of the current century and millenium, ed.)

Membership Info and Treasurers Report

Gary Stelzig, Treasurer

Membership renewals received include Marian Havlik, and Carol Frank and Don Atkinson.

Renewals for January include: Kay Wagner, Jack Storlie, Gary Stelzig, Paul Shie, Ken Buckley, and Robin Alexander. Also a couple of prior month renewals are past due—John Kuschel, and Larry Sleznikow—hope to see you at the next meeting.

Our checking balance as of 12/13/98 is \$381.59. This includes \$6.40 postage for our December mailing. Not included in the statement is check written for \$129.90 to purchase Page Maker 6.5 for Don and Carol to use for our newsletter. The club does have regular and special expenses - please renew your club dues promptly - thanks.

December Meeting

Carol M. Frank and Ernesto Brauer

The La Crosse PC Users' Group met at the Overholt Auditorium. Presiding was Chuck Whalen who talked about the history and growth of Century Telephone and discussed long distance service options.

During our business meeting elections resulted in the nominations and approval of Marian Havlik, Carol Frank, Gary Stelzig and Ernesto Brauer to the LCPC Board. Chuck Whalen quoted General Sherman in declining nomination.

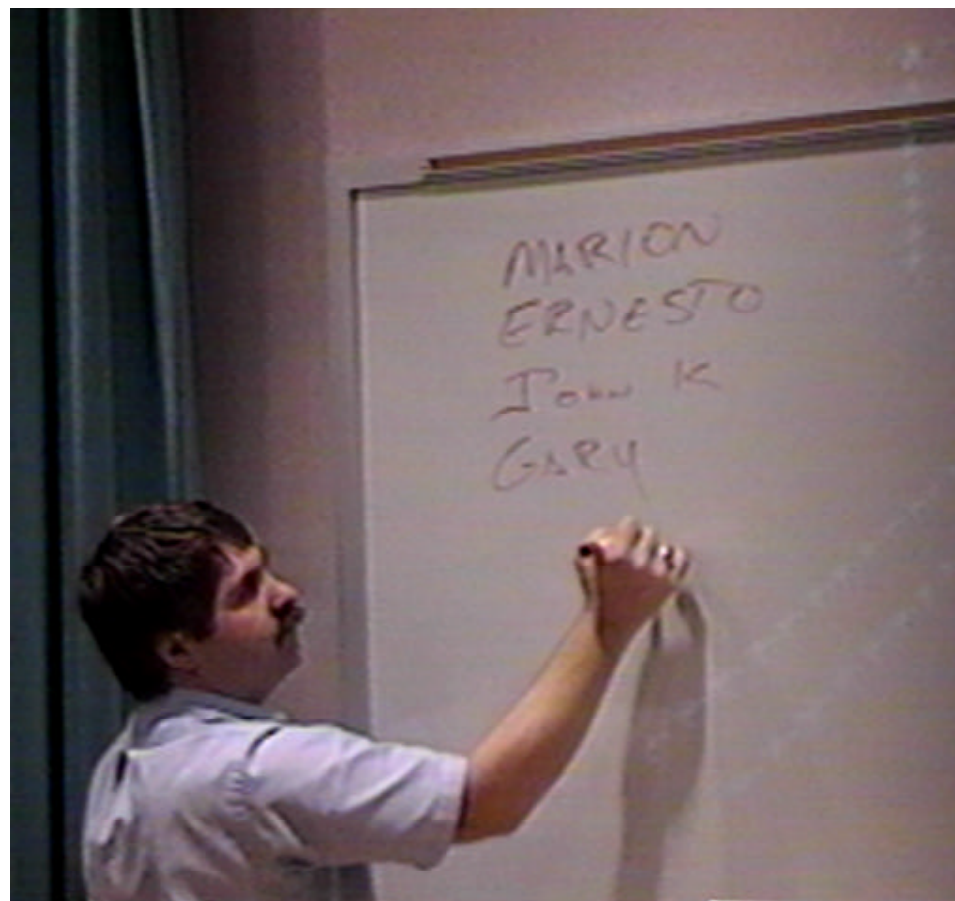
The LCPC wishes to express our thanks to Chuck Whalen, 1998 President and people that deserve our thanks, our Newsletter editors for their continued and tremendous work.

Gary had a message from the APCUG asking for our advertising rates. They will be \$10 a quarter page, \$20 a half page and \$40 for a whole page. Members still can advertise for free.

We had talk about IRS tax forms being submitted by e-mail. The principal benefit

Continued on page 3

Chuck Whalen writing down the board candidates



Continued from page 2

for the IRS is to avoid rekeyboarding the information in and avoiding errors. Chuck talked about problems with scanning numbers. Scanners can never be accurate as an expert typist when it comes to numbers. Professional tax preparers file electronically and now there is an end-user program for electronic filing. The IRS \$5 charge remains.

Marian's double message problem that she mentioned at the previous meeting was apparently an AOL problem. One day it just cleared up. Now she keeps losing her addressbook. (It's just one thing after another) Chuck explained that he exports his addressbook as a text file for a backup.

Marian's laptop modem failed while she was in Milwaukee. Her laptop is so essential for her business she doesn't want to give it up for a month for repairs. Chuck talked about plugging in an external modem.

Don had his experience with a Norton virus checker that fouled up AOL. The newest version locks up while dialing. Now we have to go through the internet get to AOL.

Chuck recommends the *Windows Resource Kit*. This is a help file that is not automatically loaded with Windows 95/98. A huge book call the *Windows 98 Resource Kit* is also available.

Don Atkinson gave an excellent presentation regarding graphics software and photographic manipulation with the emphasis on *Ulead's PhotoImpact 3*. He explained the sources for graphics include:

- Pictures on CD-ROM or floppy
- Videotape - using "Snappy" to printer port to download images
- Scanners (on hand demonstration)

Don demonstrated scanning a photograph, cropping and rotating the image. He also changed picture resolution, resampling (changing file size), converting to a different format (Full-color to Grayscale) and did cloning (a painting tool) to remove stray hairs from the sky.

He also showed how to adjust color, making selections and photocomposition. He showed how to fix up old family photos by cloning and adjusting contrast. He also lined up and stitched two images together.

To top it all off the *JEPG Smart Saver* can give a preview of different compression levels to get the optimum compression for a file.

Don also showed the *Ulead Explorer* which works like Windows Explorer but



Ernesto (left) watches as Don does some image manipulation during his presentation

makes thumbnails on the fly for any image files. The *Ulead Viewer* used to get a larger look at any of these files is freeware.

The *Ulead Album* program is very useful and easy to use. Don demonstrated changing thumbnail sizes, searching according to keywords, and how to create an album using a template. There are templates for different purposes. The templates come with different text fields. There can be templates for photographers, real estate, employee records, family records.

Places were one can get this software is egghead.com via the Internet. Other software mentioned *Paintshop Pro 5.0*, *Adobe Photo Deluxe* and *Picture Publisher*.

The LCPC Board wishes you all a great New Year!

An Unusual Opportunity

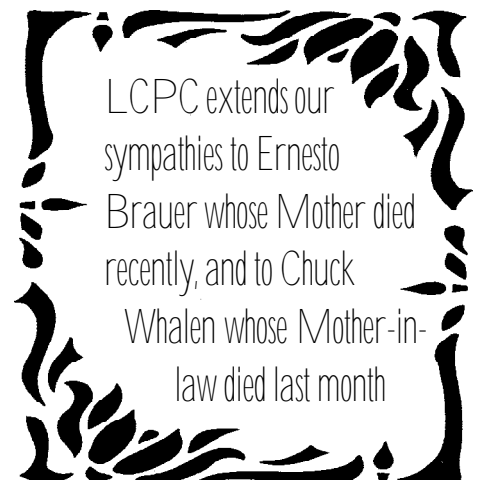
For those of you who foolishly missed my informative presentation in December, or if you simply want to see it again, you can catch an encore when I present it to the UWL Digital Duffers on Thursday, March 4, 10AM.

More meeting information in our next thrill packed issue!

Interesting Web Site

Gary Stelzig

From an article in the **SACRA BLUE** - the Sacramento PC Users Group Magazine - December 98 - they mention that Yahoo now has its own Yahoo! club and is offering qualifying organizations space on its Web server to exchange messages and information. For more info on Sacramento's site and about Yahoo's offer use: <http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/sacramentopcusersgroup> or www.sacpcug.org



Online Electioneering

*In this election year, Tony investigated some of the candidates' Web sites and thinks about the Internet's effect on future campaigns. Reprinted from November **Sacra Blue**, the Sacramento PC users' Group magazine.*
Tony Barcellos

As I write this, the 1998 general election is nearly over. Although I confess that I am a major political junkie (who once even lost his job as the result of an election), it will be a relief to catch one's breath in the aftermath of all the electioneering, political junk mail, campaign phone calls, and incessant ads on TV and radio.

The Internet has affected election campaigns as it has so many other things. At last month's general meeting, I commented on the welcome trend toward making campaign information available on the World Wide Web.

The office of California's secretary of state maintains a Web site presenting contribution disclosures from various candidates. During this initial phase, posting one's campaign finances on the secretary of state's Web site is optional (and not all candidates have shown themselves willing to do this). However, in the elections of the year 2000, campaign disclosure reports must be available online. This is a campaign reform that is truly helpful to the plugged-in voter who wants to see what people and groups are bankrolling the various candidates and initiative campaigns.

In addition to the official site operated by the secretary of state, Web sites devoted to individual candidates and state propositions have popped up all over the place. I visited several of these in the weeks preceding the general election. To my surprise, some of the statewide candidates did not take the trouble to get some expert advice in creating their Web sites. A number of these campaign sites were wretched.

Granted that such sites are narrowly focused on advancing the candidacies of their respective sponsors, it was nonetheless surprising to discover how often they omitted a feedback procedure. Perhaps the idea is that you're supposed to sit passively at your browser while political propaganda is poured through your eyeballs into your brain. However, it might be nice occasionally to click an e-mail button and offer the candidate some comments. If there's no button labeled "E-mail us!" (or if it's too

well hidden), I guess they're not interested in what you think.

To my mind, these candidates are missing a safe bet. Whether the respondents praise you, roast you, or try to give you unsolicited advice, their messages provide invaluable free information on what's going on among the voters. A smart candidate should have people reviewing such comments and keeping a finger on the political pulse. I give a demerit to anyone who operates a one-way Web site.

Links

My favorite Web sites did not try to keep you captive. Instead they offered links to related sites, including rosters of endorsements, poll results, political ads in MPEG format (for the curious who don't log long hours in front of the TV), and position papers. From these sites one could travel the political landscape, even ending up at a rival's site in just a jump or two. (No, I didn't find any link buttons labeled "My idiot opponent's site".) In one Web tour, I bounced from a gubernatorial candidate's site to the *Los Angeles Times*, to a non-partisan election information group, the site of the other major gubernatorial candidate, to the *San Francisco Examiner*, and then the *Washington Post*.

Sure, anyone can do this, but well-arranged links make it much more convenient and ensures that your online session is much more productive. One non-surprise: it was easier to get to newspapers that had endorsed the candidate than those who endorsed his rival. A similar selective bias affected the choice of polls available for perusal. I don't suppose you can blame someone for putting the best face possible on his own Web site.

E-Junk

My political opinions are quite strong and I can defend them vigorously. However, I tend not to take disagreements personally. This means I can roam the Web sites without getting worked up into the kinds of fren-

zies one can hear on KSFO radio out of San Francisco. (They have a Web site, too, complete with Real Audio.) One thing, however, really ticked me off.

Strangely enough, the item that really outraged me was the fault of several newspapers. I love newspapers and most days read three different ones. But newspapers routinely add a ridiculous feature to their Web sites. After reading an article, you may be given an opportunity to respond to a poll question. If it were something like "Did you find this article informative?" I would not be inclined to complain. But the questions were more along the lines of "Do you prefer Candidate A or Candidate B?" and "Should Congress vote articles of impeachment?" Although the results are posted with a tiny, tiny disclaimer that this is not a statistically valid way of conducting a poll (which is just another way of saying that the results are meaningless), they are otherwise displayed with as much authority as anything else on the site.

As you can easily guess, the online community is hardly representative of the population at large. Although we can expect the skewed demographics to moderate with time, as to some degree they already have, we are still far from online access for everyone. Remember the classic story about *The Literary Digest's* poll of its own readers, resulting in the announcement that "Alf Landon would defeat Franklin Roosevelt in a landslide?" There was a landslide, all right: FDR carried all but two states.

Although the online polls I visited might have offered exaggerated comfort to candidates Lungren and Fong, I quickly discovered that the demographics were not the only things that were skewed. On one site, you could conveniently vote over and over again. I was a bit surprised when, after seeing the displayed results, the polling buttons reappeared. (I hadn't even gone away and then logged back on.) I pushed the button for my candidate again and examined the new numbers. I had voted twice! Eventually, I got bored and wandered away. I now understood why the Libertarian candidate was running a strong second in the race for governor. What a farce.

Okay, maybe the Web site sponsors are interested in the political affiliations of the people who log on to their sites. I have no

Continued on page 5

Member E-mail addresses

The LCPC Home Page:

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

Robin Alexander—

robin_alexander@uwlax.edu

Jim Andriga—

jander@centuryinter.net

Don Atkinson/Carol Frank—

deapublish@aol.com

Jonathan Bailey—digisoft@aol.com

Gerald Bonsack—gbonsack@lax.net

Ernesto Brauer—ebrauer@lax.net or

ebrauer@gcgundluth.org

Joseph Doucet—josdoucet@aol.com

Darrell Garner—dvgablur@aol.com

Bob Hansen—rjhansen@aol.com

Marian Havlik—havlikme@aol.com

Dan Kelly—

74541.311@compuserve.com

John Kuschel—

johnk@reinhardtfoodservice.com

or impjohn@aol.com

Paul Pfaff—popfaff@juno.com

Paul Rekstad—prekstad@lax.net

Paul Shie—

paulshie@reinhardtfoodservice.com

Bill Simdars—billsim@lax.net

Dean Slindee—slindee@lax.net

Gary Stelzig—gstelzig0@aol.com

Jack Storlie—jstorlie@aol.com

Larry Slezniak—lslezniak@execpc.com

Chuck Whalen—cw@centuryinter.net

Continued from page 4

problem with that, realizing that people who don't want to share the information will undoubtedly go elsewhere or click the wrong button. But when supposedly responsible news organizations present worthless polls right alongside actual news articles, one starts to think of such exemplars of reportorial probity as *The National Enquirer*. Maybe this won't bother most people, but I found this to be depressing evidence that folks you'd like to take seriously are right in there contributing to the ceaseless flow of netjunk. I'd complain about it, but I couldn't find the feedback button!

Tony Barcellos is a past president of the Sacramento PC Users Group and former newsletter editor. You can give him feedback at tony.barcellos@sacpcug.org.

Further Adventures on the Cutting Edge of Technology

Don Atkinson

Everything is working! Hard to believe, everything is working!

Well...

OK, so I still have to manually shut down the Cyrix, and TextBridge OCR software, and Myst won't run on it. Yes, the Aptiva is full of dead pointers. And the P90 still is operating with a partial installation of Windows 98. But that's being picky.

In the past month, I've installed or relocated to a different machine:

- a. supplemental hard drive
- b. tape backup
- c. modems
- d. Local Area Network

And they're all working! Things are definitely getting better and easier to install and configure.

D-Link LAN package

Two years ago I tried to connect my computers into a local area network. Despite being helped by Bob Hansen we could not make it work. I suspect that there is a fault in one of the cards. Since I only had the two cards and no hub, it was impossible to diagnose the problem. For some time now I have been looking at the network components available at Best Buy.

Recently, the **D-Link** package was featured with a rebate, so I decided this was the way to go. The D-Link package contains everything you need to set up your computer network. A card for each computer, the hub, software, and cables to connect everything together. The cards install in a PCI slot and are plug and play configured. Installation requires that you remove your computer case, install the cards physically, connect the cables to the hub, and turn your computers on. At startup your windows 95 or 98 operating system will detect the new cards and ask you to provide the software. Software comes with the package although the Windows disks have compatible drivers on them.

Following installation the lights on the hub will tell you that you have a connection to each machine. If you do, it is now time to set up your network.

When installing the network software under Windows, you should have checked

the box that said "share files and printers". Never having set up a network before, I believed that was all I needed to do. Actually, you must go in to the properties box for each of your drives and printers, select the sharing window, and choose the kind of sharing you wish to do for each drive.

One thing I don't understand yet is why I have to keep remapping the drives. Mapping drives allows you to designate letters for drives on a remote computer so that Explorer access them directly.

Overall, I am very pleased with the ease of installation and the contents of the D-link package. I heartily recommend this product. For first time users such as myself it would have been very nice if they included a small booklet about setting up your software under Windows, since this is the environment which most people will be using.

As I said earlier the D-link package is available with rebate. I only hope this rebate does better than all the others I have sent in from Best Buy. For some reason, I have never received the promised refund from any previous rebate I've submitted.

Eiger Labs 56K modem

At the same time, I purchased a 56K modem from Eiger Labs. This modem is also a plug and play compatible device. Again, installation was straightforward and the new device was detected and software installed at boot up.

However, that is the end of the good news.

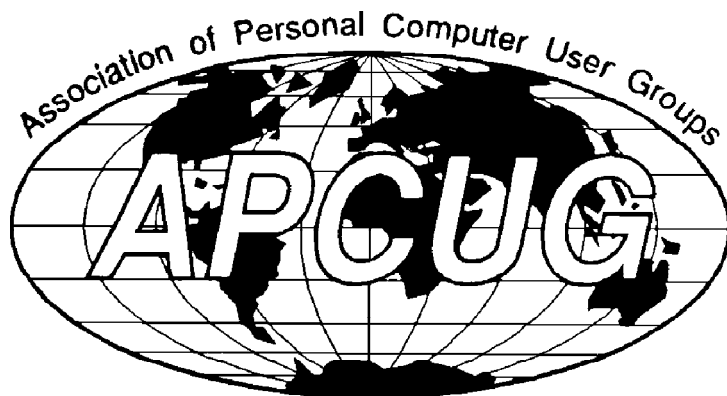
The modem would dial and seemed to negotiate but was unable to get a connection.

This was the case for AOL and for Full Feed, my ISP. The tech people at Full Feed told me that the modem was not connected to their server. I finally took advantage of having two telephone lines by placing both computers into the terminal mode and trying to interconnect.

The Eiger Labs modem would answer the phone but could not negotiate a connection. When the Eiger dialed the Aptiva's modem it would not wait for the Aptiva to answer before starting to negotiate. Frustrated, I returned this modem.

More next month.

Marian Havlik—President, board 782-7958
Ernesto Brauer—Vice President, board.. 782-7300
Gary Stelzig—Treasurer, board 788-7075
Don Atkinson 784-0150
Newsletter editor and publisher
Carol Frank..... 784-0150
Secretary, board, newsletter
Darrell Garner 788-3500
Program director



LCPC is a member of APCUG

New Style is published eleven times a year, monthly Jan-Oct and a combined Nov-Dec issue

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.

LCPC

P.O. Box 2991

LaCrosse, WI 54602-2991