

New Style

Newsletter of the LaCrosse PC Users' Group

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February 1999

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This month:

Feb 24, 7PM Overholt auditorium in the Lutheran Hospital. Marian tells you what's happening in her article immediately to the right.

Next Month: March 31

Tax software. April 15 will soon be upon us and you know that our elected representatives are working full time to turn those budget surpluses into deficits. Both President Clinton and Congressman Kind have announced that they'll oppose tax cuts because you wouldn't spend the money on the right things. The preceding sentence is not a joke, they actually said that.

Presenter will be Steve Anderson. He has used the Federal Tax version of TurboTax since 1993. He works at Trane Company as a Database Analyst.

Digital Duffers

On March 4 at 9:30 AM I'll be the guest of the UWL professors emeritus (emeriti) group the Digital Duffers, doing an encore presentation of my December presentation of photographic management software. Meeting in room 150 of the Murphy Library. Hopefully the assembly will include members of the LaCrosse Camera Club and some people from the community at large.

Spread the word...

We need to make ourselves better known around town. Please tell your friends and co workers about us. If you have any ideas how we can publicize ourselves give us a call or drop an e-mail to: deapublish@aol.com

If you'd like some of our experts to speak at your church or other group, why not give the person a call?

The PC (President's Corner)

Marian Havlik

It was nice to see new faces at our January meeting. For the 24 February meeting in Overholt we should be able to use new AV equipment including a Pentium computer. Our February speaker will be PAUL HAVLIK who will demonstrate SPSS statistical software which is used for Gunderson Lutheran biomedical research.

In between meetings and newsletters, my 1999 contact method of choice will be e-mail. Please update your email address if it isn't correct in this newsletter. Since most computers have modems, you have no reason not

to have e-mail because you can get it free from Juno and others. Once you have e-mail, you'll wonder how you did without it. If we don't have your email address, please email it to: deapublish@aol.com (Don Atkinson)

Back to equipment I use in my homeoffice. I have a 1992 Panasonic 2624 wide carriage 24 pin printer because occasionally I print on wide paper. It's also used to print drafts of long reports, but it needs a new print head. My current thoughts are that \$200+ for a new printhead is better than \$650 for a new wide carriage printer. I'll repair one time.

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Ernesto Brauer giving his presentation on Computers and Medicine at the Digital Duffers February 4



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

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A 1984 Royal electric typewriterprinter is used to print some forms, W2's, 1099's etc. I like this impact printer because it has a parallel port so it can be used to print wide forms from the computer. Several daisy wheels give letter quality printing. Ribbons have to be ordered, and I've learned to deal with it's peculiarities.

For travel I use a Cannon BJ70 printer. It small, lightweight, great for carry on luggage. I can also plug it into the inverter in my van and print on the road. I carry a spare ink cartridge as they always run out when you least expect it. I also use this printer for correspondence, reports etc. Not the greatest DPI quality, and the ink smears if you get it damp, but it'll do until I make my next purchase. A four way switch box is used to switch between printers, but I always make sure printers are off before switching between them. I may replace my double printer stand with a triple printer stand.

My fax/answering machine is a 7in1 Brother 6550. Was expensive (\$900) and complex to set up, but it's great for single/multiple page copies, and to send/receive faxes. I've never tried the scanning feature, nor have I used it as a printer, mostly because I don't have room for it near the desktop computer. When the light goes on, I can use it quite awhile before replacing the toner cartridge (about \$30).

In 1997 my 5 yr old thermal fax/answering machine gave up; it was used for long field projects. I needed an answering machine that would make copies and handle faxes. The quick answer was a Panasonic 5in1 (similar to the Brother) which was only \$500, easier to set up, but uses carbon paper cartridge. If you have sensitive info, you should shred carbon when cartridge is empty.

When I get to a motel, I disconnect the room phone, plug in the Panasonic, and tell motel managers to put all calls through to my room. The caller either leaves a message or sends a fax (no extra fax charges because no one knows what the machine is doing). I also make copies, and can use it as a printer. The print smears a bit if you rub the paper hard, but it's good enough for field purposes and saves running to a copy shop that's only open during hours when I'm out on the river.

What. did you learn new about your computer this week? See you 24 February, and bring a friend. Remember, spring is just around the corner!

Membership Info and Treasurers Report

Gary Stelzig - Treasurer

Membership renewals received include: John Kuschel, Ken Buckley, Gary Stelzig, and Paul Shie. Thanks for renewing.

Renewals for February: None

Our checking balance as of 01/13/99 is \$377.59. This balance does not reflect the recent renewals or a \$129.90 check for purchased software that has not been cashed. The end result is our February balance will be about \$350.00.

Note: since we have a business checking account (our club is set up as a Wisconsin Nonstock Corporation) we have monthly \$4.00 bank maintenance fee plus a .20 cent per check fee plus a .50 cents per deposit fee. Perhaps we need to take another hard look at becoming a non-profit organization - TAX EXEMPT, 501[C][3] - like the national organization APCUG (Association of Personal Computer User Groups, Inc.) of which we are a member. The APCUG national web site is at: www.apcug.org - check it out.

Jonathon Bailey announces that he is available for consulting and other computer maintenance services for \$10/hour. E-mail Jonathon at: AlphaPi2@aol.com or phone him at 785-0583

Jack Storlie relates an adventure with his computer to Paul Pfaff and Darrell Garner.



January 27 Meeting

Carol M. Frank

The meeting started in the Overholt but because the projector wasn't working we moved to the Rasmus next door (the Overholt now has a new projector). Three visitors showed up. They were Al and Monica Fritz and Ken Buckley.

One of the problems discussed was games that weren't compatible with Cyrix and AMD chips. The solution was to get a patch from your chip manufacturer's site to make the games work right. Chuck gave a description of how a video board works and how it uses memory mapping and its own processor to interpret game instructions to give the visual appearance of the game.

Gary wanted advice on Webpage design software for a church to use in making its own homepage. Various members suggested Adobe PageMill, FrontPage Express, AOL Press and other software offered by various servers.

Paul Pfaff had a problem with his printer not working under Windows 98 but Canon gave him an update for his Canon inkjet printer. This was an occasion for Chuck to talk about Oilchange and similar programs that can automatically check your system for what needs updating and download and install any needed updates.

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Jack Storlie had story about employee sabotage of a computer and the On Track data recovery service. It is expensive. An estimate starts at \$500. But if you really need those files it is worth the cost. Marian had to use their service six years ago.

Marian likes the red highlighted words in her word processing program but the red words wouldn't print. It was suggested to check her print setup to see if print colors in black is an option.

The presentation was by Carol Frank on CorelDRAW. CorelDRAW is a vector graphics program as opposed to the raster (pixels) based programs like PhotoImpact, Photoshop or Paintshop Pro.

Instead of pixels a draw program uses mathematic formulas to define paths, and objects. A primary feature of draw (vector) programs is the use of Bezier curves. Bezier curves make smooth curves and are easy to manipulate using nodes.

There are a variety of easy to make simple shapes (stars, polygons, squares, ovals, spirals) in CorelDRAW that can be manipulated and reshaped.

Objects, both simple shapes and freehand drawn, can be arranged in stacks or in separate layers. Layers can be rearranged, be made non-editable, non-printing or invisible. These features are very convenient for complicated plans and schematics.

Objects can be transformed in a variety of ways. Scaling, flipping, rotating and skewing are simple transformations. Perspective, envelopes and extruding give more complicated effects.

Objects can be precisely sized and placed. Grids, guidelines and the placement dialog boxes can all give precise placement in the document.

The dimension tool can measure and label objects and can automatically change when the object is changed. The document can be set to different scales (like architectural scale for instance).

Fooling around with text in CorelDRAW is a lot of fun. Any manipulations that can be done to objects can also be done to text. Text also can aligned to any path. Most documents that aren't text heavy can be laid out in CorelDRAW. Such as business cards, pamphlets and short newsletters. Unlike some draw programs, CorelDRAW supports multiple pages.

Continued to right

New Homes for Old PCs

Gary Stelzig

If your company has recently upgraded computer systems, why not donate the old computers and parts to a charitable cause and get a tax write-off?

A 1/28/99 article in the *Investor's Business Daily* titled - *Old PCs Finding Homes Through Charities* by Russell Shaw - discusses several alternatives. According to a recent Tufts University study, 15 million computers are discarded in the U.S. each year, with about 75% of them stockpiled or cannibalized for parts. Many nonprofit organizations would like to have your old 486 PC or color printer. You can locate many of these organization in your local Yellow Pages and call them. There are several Web sites operated by organizations set up for matching computer equipment donors with needy groups across the country. Four of the best known groups are:

- 1) Computers 4 Kids
www.c4k.org
- 2) The National Cristina Foundation
www.cristina.org
- 3) Share The Technology
www.libertynet.org/share
- 4) The Detwiler Foundation
www.detwiler.org

How these organizations use old computers are similar but also unique. For example, The National Cristina Foundation specializes in donations of computers and software to physically challenged or impoverished people in the U.S and abroad. Some of the other organizations help schools.

Check out these Web sites to see if they can help a family or organization get needed computer equipment.

Currently CorelDRAW 8 is sold for \$429.95. Upgrade from any version for \$229.95. CorelDRAW 5 is \$95. The entire package includes CorelDRAW, Photopaint (a superior product itself) CorelDream (3-D program), Corel OCRtrace for converting raster images into vector or reading scanned documents, Coreltexture, CorelDepth and Multimedia Manager. As usual Corel gives a lot for the money.

Tiramisu! Data Recovery Software

Frank Harris-Smith

Orange Bytes, Newsmagazine of North Orange County Computer Club, October 1998

The night mare began at about 10 pm .on a dark, stormy night in the church secretary's office. I was installing a 4-gig Western Digital hard drive in an older 486 that needed the BIOS conversion software for large drives. The Western Digital drive came with "Ez-Drive" BIOS conversion software that I had worked with before. The Ez-Drive software worked just as the installation guide specified, with one exception. The software partitioned and formatted the new 4-gig drive perfectly and then, went ahead without so much as a "pardon me," fdisked and formatted the original 800-MB drive - the one that had all the data. [Ed. Note: This is a perfect example of why you do a backup before you start upgrading. This should also be a continuing part of your SOP.]

I was stunned. The data were years of accumulated addresses, birth dates, anniversaries and other information that existed for the sole purpose of helping people. I was more than stunned. I felt that this perhaps was the worst mistake I'd ever made. Since I was in a church office, I prayed that somehow the data off the fdisked and formatted drive could be recovered. That was definitely asking for a lot but it is rumored that God can do anything. I pulled the now unreachable "data" drive out of the system, proceeded to load the system software on the 4-gig drive and finally made it home in the not so wee hours of the morning.

The next day I searched the Internet for disk recovery software. I only found one. That one turned out to be a real jewel. Maybe prayer does work. Tiramisu! Probably named after the Italian dessert, is a sweet program. This program looks through the data on the drive and will construct a "virtual FAT" in memory of the actual data remaining on the media. The entire program fits on a single DOS bootable floppy. The data on that drive? Recovered it all. The FAT table had been destroyed (partitioning does do that) and some of the data had been overwritten, but mercifully, nothing important.

So... Where, When, and How much? Where is <http://www.recovery.de> Yes that's a "de" like in Germany. Go there and you

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Windows Without a Mouse

Paul Shapiro,

Monitor, Magazine of Capital PC User Group, Rockville, MD, September 1998

Your computer life these days can be really upset when Windows 95 indicates that “no mouse was found” and/or the mouse pointer just sticks in place right in the middle of what you are doing. It’s bad enough that the latest “office” packages (Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, Quattro Pro, and so forth) only have those little icons across the top of the screen, accessible only by name, or so it would seem. When your mouse sticks, the pointer just cannot be used.

Or so I used to think until I learned otherwise. Here’s what I used to do:

1. Use the <Ctrl>+<Alt>+ key combination to terminate a program
2. Use the <Alt>+<Shift>+<space bar> combination to close or minimize a window
3. Use the <Ctrl>+<Esc> key combination to get to the Start menu, then the arrow keys.
4. Shake the mouse itself!

This latter works for me if the mouse pointer worked OK earlier in the computer session. This is probably true because some dust inside has been shuffled around. With a previous mouse (yup, these problems have caused me to replace mouses [mice?]) I opened the case and actually found a small ball of dust. Once I removed the dustball, the problem was solved.

Going back to the quarter-inch thick manual that came with Windows 95 was no help. I really know that the manual is of little value, but old habits are ingrained.

Fortunately, the Control Panel options in Windows 95 are listed in alphabetical order, because I never have fancied spending the rest of my life guessing what can be done from all the choices available on a CD-ROM disk.

I noticed that the “Accessibility” option was grayed out, which was explained as meaning that not everything in this category had been installed during my original setup. I checked it out and found properties called keyboard, sound, display, mouse, and general. I tried the mouse option. It turns out there is something in Windows 95 called *MouseKeys*, enabled via this *Accessibility* option. When it is enabled and my *Numbers Lock* key is pressed (resulting in a light on the keyboard), I am in *MouseKeys* mode—I can use keys on the numeric keypad to move the mouse. (There is even an option to enable *MouseKeys* with a

simultaneous triple-key selection so that you can retain use of those numeric keys for numbers.)

I tried it out and it works. Depressing an arrow key (2, 4, 6, or 8) moves the pointer in the direction of the arrow. The <home>, <PgUp>, <PgDn>, and <End> keys move the pointer in the NW, NE, SE, and SW compass directions. I was happy to at least move the mouse in the direction I wanted, although with the small increments of motion resulting from each key press, it seemed to take forever to do anything. But at least I could perform Windows operations.

Imagine my delight when I realized that with <Ctrl> and could move the pointer by large increments. I had failed to notice that option. The so-called shortcut key gives an alternate option for enabling and disabling the *MouseKeys* mode. A visual indicator—the <Ctrl> key, one horizontal pointer increment is for 13 characters. The vertical increment is seven lines. Without the <Ctrl>, it takes 8 depressions of the right-arrow key to move one character to the right and 16 depressions of the up arrow key to move up one line!

As a hedge against being locked out of my work, I give my favorite desktop applications a name that includes the shortcut keys I define to access an application. Then, for example, when my mouse freezes while at the desktop, I can just hold down the <Ctrl>+<Shift>+<D> keys to bring up MS-DOS, or <Ctrl>+<Shift>+<Alt>+<E> to initiate the e-mail program Eudora, which itself has enough keystroke commands.

Now the question is, will this technique work as a substitute for the mouse when the mouse does not respond and *MouseKeys* mode is enabled? Wouldn’t you know, I haven’t had a problem with my mouse since I implemented *MouseKeys*! The mouse pointer did, however, stick once in Windows 95, so instead of shaking it, I used *MouseKeys* to successfully regain control of the mouse pointer.

So maybe I don’t have much of a mouse problem any more.

My present great mystery is why Windows 95 and the mouse pointer work perfectly in an application, but the pointer sometimes will disappear when I return to the desktop. Sometimes when the pointer appears to go out for lunch I just call it quits and do the same.

Teach Yourself Windows 98

Gary Stelzig

From an article in the **SACRA BLUE** - the Sacramento PC Users Group Magazine - December 98 - *Teach Yourself Windows 98* by James Halderman -

The author reviews software called Professor Teaches Windows 98. The article mentions that your hardware has to be at least a 486, 8MB of RAM and a sound card. The software comes on a CD-ROM and requires Windows 3.1, Windows 95 or 98. The article suggests that the software is very good for someone who does not know Windows 95 very well and wants to upgrade to 98 or a new computer user that now needs to use Windows 98. If you are currently using Windows 98 on a daily basis then this software may be too simple or basic. The costs of the software is only \$19.95 and as a bonus includes how to use Internet Explorer 4. For more info or to order, check out the software vendor website at: www.individualsoftware.com. In this website under the title New Releases, click on Individual Training for Windows 98. It will show you an outline of what is on the software which includes over 400 screens. Also check out the hardware requirements that are listed there.

Data Recovery—Continued from page 3

will find versions for DOS or Windows FAT 16, FAT 32, Novell 3.x/4.x and Windows NT (NTFS) Whew! When is immediately, or almost so? It depends on your Internet download speed. How much? This is very good software and yes, it does cost. The version I bought cost \$199 US dollars. However, you can download from the web site (<http://www.recovery.de>) a shareware version that you can try free. The shareware version won’t allow you to copy files off the recovered drive but hey, if you can see the files...

If you should decide after test driving the software you gotta have it, the purchase instructions and order form are included with the shareware download. Fax the form to Germany with a credit card number on it and within a week, you’ll be a bona fide “Data Recovery Professional.” My purchase has already paid for itself.

Further Adventures on the Cutting Edge of Technology

by Don Atkinson

Hardware installations and reviews continued from last month's newsletter.

Quantum 12 Gig drive

I'm sure you're familiar with the rule about computing that states that every 18 months power doubles and cost is halved. I'm too lazy to look up who originated it. Well, in this case it took six months for capacity to double for the same price.

In June, as I gathered parts to build the Cyrix, I bought a Maxtor 6 gig hard drive for \$200. The day after Thanksgiving (yes, I actually went out that day to the sales) I bought a 12 gig Quantum for \$200.

This is one of the 5.25" size hard drives, compared to the current standard 3.5". From totally informal observation, it appears to take slightly longer for the drive to spin up initially. But once it gets going it seems at least as fast as a 3.5" drive. If you have one of the current generation of computers you may have trouble finding an open 5.25" bay in your computer case.

It had been my intention to mount the drive in the Aptiva. This would have meant temporarily removing the Sparq or CD-R, installing the Quantum drive, transferring files, disconnecting the 4.3 gig drive and reconnecting everything.

What a bother. Fortunately, I now have networking up and running so I installed the Quantum in the Cyrix. The Aptiva still has access to it.

The Quantum package includes software and a 40 conductor data cable allowing you to hook up two hard drives to your IDE connector.

For reasons far beyond my comprehension the included cable has the old style pin arrangement, one of the center slots is solid, so there's actually only 39 holes. If you try to plug this into the current standard IDE 40-pin connector on your motherboard or I/O card you'll severely damage it. I haven't seen a 39 pin connector in years, the last one was on my 286.

What were they thinking?

On the other hand, the Ontrack disk manager software is marvelous. As you might imagine, the thought of setting the BIOS,

running fdisk (to partition), and formatting such a drive is daunting.

With the Ontrack software you decide on the partition size, I selected two 6 gig partitions for minimum cluster size. Then choose FAT16 or FAT32 file format, it will let you pick cluster size and the software does everything for you. Truly a most easy to use and convenient program.

Atlas 33.6 modem

Back in March 1998 the Aptiva went berserk and destroyed many files on all of its hard drives. This meant I couldn't get online since the P90 didn't have a modem. I had tried various modems with it in the past and couldn't get any to work.

The Atlas NC336IFX(C)3420 has a setup that I've called for in the past, and I believe every manufacturer should emulate: with all jumpers in place, it's a Plug and Play (PNP) device, setup is handled automatically by the system. By moving jumpers you can select COM ports and IRQs yourself.

So, I installed it in the P90, set up for COM4, IRQ 5. I knew these were available, but it wouldn't work. Deciding to cut my losses, I returned to slapping the Aptiva into working order.

Carol asked to have a modem in the Cyrix, so she could surf from her own machine. As you know from last month's column, the Eiger 56K modem would not connect, despite diagnostics reporting that all was well. I pulled out the Atlas card from the P90, leaving the jumpers where they were. The Cyrix came up and flawlessly installed the modem. It appears that there is simply something about the P90 that doesn't get along with modems.

A competent and easy to install modem.

Award 56K V.90 PCI modem

I still wanted to get a faster modem, so I picked this item up at Best Buy on Friday for \$40. It is unusual because you install the drivers first, then put in the card. It was simple and straightforward. The system found the card, found the drivers, and configured it automatically. Once I changed the modem specified in my ISP dial up networking protocol, everything worked.

Member E-mail addresses

Please check over your e-mail address carefully for accuracy. If it isn't right let us know!

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—AlphaPi2@aol.com

Gerald Bonsack—gbonsack@execpc.com

Ernesto Brauer—ebrauer@execpc.com
or ebrauer@gundluth.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 Shie—

paulshie@reinhardtfoodservice.com

Bill Simdars—billsim@lax.net

Gary Stelzig—gstelzig0@aol.com

Jack Storlie—jstorlie@aol.com

Larry Sleznikow—lsleznik@execpc.com

Chuck Whalen—cw@centuryinter.net

The following addresses had "permanent fatal errors" please provide a current address or have a nasty conversation with your e-mail provider!

Paul Pfaff—popfaff@juno.com

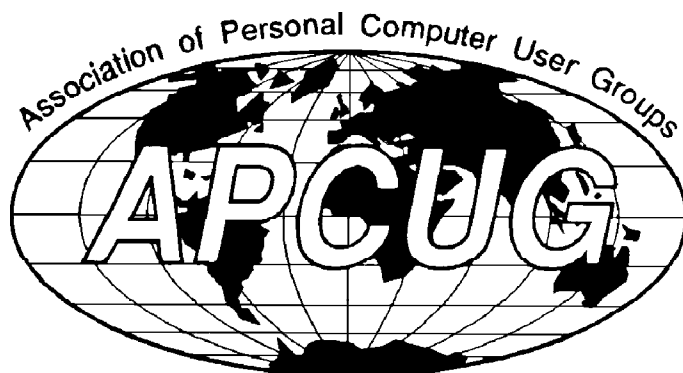
Paul Rekstad—prekstad@execpc.com

Dean Slindee—slindee@execpc.com

The best speed I've achieved so far is 40k. This is understandable since I'm running it through a fifty foot long telephone extension cord. Once I hook up to a heavier wire speed should improve.

It's nice to find another device where PNP actually works and you don't have to spend hours tweaking things to get them to work.

Marian Havlik—President, board 782-7958
havlikme@aol.com
Ernesto Brauer—Vice President, board .. 782-7300
ebrauer@execpc.com
Gary Stelzig—Treasurer, board 788-7075
gstelzig0@aol.com
Don Atkinson 784-0150
Newsletter editor and publisher deapublish@aol.com
Carol Frank 784-0150
Secretary, board, newsletter deapublish@aol.com
Chuck Whalen—ex-President, 788-6900
cw@centuryinter.net
Bob Hansen—ex-President, rjhansen@aol.com



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www.apcug.org

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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.

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P.O. Box 2991

LaCrosse, WI 54602-2991