

New Style

Newsletter of the LaCrosse PC Users' Group

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August 1999

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This Month

Wednesday, August 25 at Gunderson-Lutheran Medical Center, Overholt Auditorium, 7:00 PM.

This month's presentation will be given by Scott Finn, Webmaster for WWTC and a Microsoft Certified Engineer. The topic will be Building a Webpage Using "Front Page".

Humor in these pages

At least one member expressed reservations about last month's fantasy concerning Bill Gates and numerology. In my introduction I labeled it as nonsense and the lead paragraph says: "if you believe in mythology or want to read just for fun sake," Did anyone test the "proofs" offered? I didn't, the story has typical hoax text: "this really works".

It was included because I found it quite amusing. When taking over as editor I wrote that we were all computer hobbyists because we found it fun, and that readers could expect a lighter tone to the newsletter. Part of that was giving the newsletter a name in a type font similar to that used by Heileman's Old Style labels. I have always included computer related humor in these pages, the newsletter of a computer hobbyist organization.

For those who feel that humor does not set the proper tone for a professional organization's publication, I will not include any humor items until further notice.

OK, that's long enough.

Last weekend, I took a copy of July's newsletter when visiting my religiously conservative relatives. They all read the Gates story and considered it nonsense and without foundation in fact. They even told me some rumors they'd heard.

concludes to right

President's Message

Marian Havlik

At our July LCPC meeting, Dr. Ernesto Brauer, LCPC vice-president, gave a presentation on PowerPoint. Ernesto used the new computer installed in Overholt 2 days prior to our meeting. Although PP may seem difficult at first, once you get acquainted with this portion of Office software (fast becoming a standard for presentations), you can do everything from printing a handout, or transparencies for use by children, or do a show for your business presentation.

I demonstrated a PP show I gave recently at a meeting in Pittsburgh, and showed how graphs are made, and how they can be changed. PP is not intuitive, and has too many places where you can make changes to a text slide or graph. However, after using early versions of Harvard Graphics for many years, I really like the slide sorter feature (now standard in all presentation software). I made changes up till the morning of my presentation.

Does anyone have experience using a scanner for 35 mm slides as well as for color prints? One was advertised locally for \$129 (plus \$30 rebate). We all know you get what you pay for, but how much difference is there really in \$100, \$200, \$300, and \$400 scanners, both in terms of how pictures look for computer presentations, and how pictures

Then we went outside for the cookout. But it started to rain just as they were about to light the fire. I felt sorry for them because they had gone to all that trouble piling brush around me and tying me to a pole.

The preceding paragraph was humorous fantasy. More humor appears on page 5.

look when printed? The scanners I've seen made specifically for slides (CDW) cost \$600-\$1700, so the question becomes how good will a \$99 model work, or for that matter the \$600 model?

We had a LCPC Board Meeting on Saturday, 7 August so Don and Carol could be there. Among issues discussed were future programs. Our speaker for August will be Scott Finn on "Making a Web Site Using Front Page". In December Don Atkinson and Carol Frank will tell about their trip to Comdex in November in Las Vegas. Other future speakers include former LCPC President, Kathy Slindee, who has been working at First Logic for some time. For another meeting a local Xerox representative will tell us about the latest Xerox products and what Xerox is doing now and in the future. We're still trying to line up a Microsoft speaker. Kathy Gallagher has joined the Program Committee.

I've been reading about the operating system, Linux/Red Hat. Has anyone you know been playing with this new system? I think it'd make an interesting LCPC program.

In the 16 Aug 1999 issue of the New Yorker magazine there is a 42 pp. article on Bill Gates and the Microsoft trial. Interesting reading.

Member Paul Havlik (Feb. 1999 speaker) has been under the weather for nearly 2 months. He's had complications after knee surgery. Hasn't even felt like playing with his computer. He likes jokes, so snail-mail him a print out of a good joke: 125 Rosewood Lane, West Salem, WI 54669.

What did you learn new about your computer this week?

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

Membership Info and Treasurers Report

Gary Stelzig—*Treasurer*

Renewals include Ernesto Brauer - thank you. Paul Bequette joined our club after the July meeting. Paul has a Compaq Presario. Pent II, 233mhz, 5 gig HD and a couple of scanners that are making his hair turn gray since they do not run right. They may be corrupting his operating system. Paul uses his computer in his custom printing business. He does foil printing as a specialty, and provides traditional printed products also. He uses a considerable amount of graphics and fonts. He enjoys talking to club members, because their experience can be so helpful. Welcome Paul.

Mike Larson joined our club in May. He has a Compaq computer with Windows 95 and a Lexmark printer. He recently signed up with AOL and is having some problems getting into AOL. He would like to buy MS Office 2000 when the price is a little cheaper. He works part-time at the La Crosse Recycling Center. He does some volunteering at St. Francis Hospital by helping get patients to various activities. Mike also enjoys writing fiction stories - a couple of his essays were published in the La Crosse Tribune. Welcome Mike.

Paul, Mike, and others—bring your technical problems/questions to the meeting - were there to try help you. There are no August renewals. Still a couple of renewals past due.

Our checking balance as of 8/13/99 is \$349.17. July expenses of \$6.60 for stamps.

The graphic featured here in the print version caused trouble in Acrobat and has been removed for that reason.

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:

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Search Engines

Gary Stelzig

A June, 30th, 1999 article titled 'New Search Engines Drill A Little Deeper' in the *Investor's Business Daily* discusses some newer Web search engines. Everyone wants to find answers to their questions as quick as possible on the Web. The following three Search Engines, according to the article, can provide more accurate Web searches. Each of the new searches has its own tack on how to make Internet searches easier:

1) **AskJeeves**(www.askjeeves.com) has more than 7 million responses to questions such as "How do I grout tile?" to "How can I get out of the doghouse?". Answers are based on past questions sent by users. Questions can be posed in common language and the software can parse the question for meaning and grammar and then search a database.

2) **GoTo.com**(www.goto.com) does not fill its home page with banner advertisements. Instead the company makes its money by selling advertisers access to popular search keywords used on GoTo.com. For example, a dentist would pay GoTo.com when its site pops up under a search for "dentist" or "teeth". GoTo.com has a financial interest in making searches faster. This makes more money for them and you get faster responses without the extra banner advertisements.

3) **About.com**(www.about.com) boasts that it has 690 company-trained human guides, each supposedly an expert on a specific topic. These guides feed material into a database for later retrieval. As with all data on the net, one can sometimes get bad information - garbage-in equals garbage-out.

Another Search Engine, I have heard about is: www.dogpile.com. Try out some of these sites and bring your comments to the next meeting.

Loyal readers of this newsletter will remember that I called "Ask Jeeves" to your attention last year. Along with answers to your questions, Jeeves searches Excite, AltaVista, WebCrawler, Infoseek, and Yahoo for web sites that you may be interested in. Dogpile adds Lycos and a half dozen less useful engines including looksmart, thunderstone, goto.com, and about.com, I've never heard of them either-ed.

Maizell's I/O

Jerry Maizell,

Jerry Maizell's writing appears regularly in Chicago's *Near North News*, reprinted from *Hard-Copy*, Journal of the Chicago Computer Society, July 1999.

LWPA: The Power to Surf Invisibly

I have the power to cloak men's minds.

In radio days, devouring Lamont Cranston's adventures as the Shadow, I lusted after the secret mantle of invisibility. Little did I know that it would be the Internet that would make this ineffable power necessary, and that I would wrest it from the Internet itself. Neither new nor secret, this power bubbled up from the primal ooze in the ancient days of Internet time—1997. I will indoctrinate you into the cult.

The World Wide Web hosts an unwelcome spider: a potential for considerable compromise of your privacy. Many web sites want to know your name, age, snail-mail/e-mail address, interests income, what other sites you visit. For starters.

You may not care if the Crummy Cookie Company or WackyWeb Bookstore collects such info from you for marketing purposes. But what if you visit sites that betray your interest in, for example, treatments for a particular disease? What if that information is collated so as to identify you, and passed on, purposely or inadvertently, to employers, insurance companies, governments or other snoops who might use it in ways you would rather they didn't?

Like the banker on the Maryland health commission who used state computers to match cancer patients to bank customers, and canceled their loans. (Time, Aug. 25, 1997)

Surfing generally reveals largely insignificant information about you: your ISP, the number assigned to you (which changes on every call), which browser and operating system you use. To get the goods on you, many web sites induce you to register in order to enter or fully utilize their pages. Registration information, if combined with the other details, may enable tracking of your web activities. Many sites place "cookies" on your drive, which are returned to the sites on future visits.

You needn't, of course, enter personal info if you don't wish to, and you can turn cookies off in your browser. But this may keep you from some interesting sites. The *New York Times*, for example, won't permit access unless you accept their cookie. Many

vendors use cookies as the basis of their online purchase Systems.

Perhaps the biggest Internet annoyance is junk e-mail, known as "spam." Software developers, Internet pundits and legislators struggle to discover methods of defeating spam. *Lucent's Personalized Web Assistant* can make you invisible to most would-be privacy invaders and subvert spammers who don't already have your address.

LPWA is free. You needn't download any software. It asks no questions beyond your real e-mail address and password. Merely edit your browser preferences with the simple instructions at www.Ipwa.com, and login for each browsing session. Then for each new web site registration enter your user name, password and e-mail address as a backslash followed by "u," "p" and "@" respectively. LPWA translates these into random letters/numbers, consistent for each login at each site, but different for different sites.

If a site e-mails you, LPWA forwards it to you anonymously. Even if you care naught about anonymity, energy: you type only two keystrokes per ½ login line, and you needn't remember passwords/ usernames. Widely used, LPWA's target-revokable e-mail addresses could castrate spam. Combine LPWA with general anonymizers (www.anonymizer.com; www.cyberarmy.com) and you're all but invisible.

Don't surf naked. Cloak yourself in translucency.

Passwords:a Tale with a Tail

In my mind's ear I hear Lawrence Ferlinghetti drawling his poem, Dog: "... a real realist, with a real tale to tell, and a real tail to tell it with."

Ferlinghetti's images were evoked by a press release I received touting *MyPassword.net*, a web site that offers to store all your web usernames and passwords for you, for free. Why would anyone want to send his password list to complete strangers? There must be a tale behind it, if not a tail.

Though a little Internet searching unveiled the name, address and phone number of the site's owner/operator, the site itself discloses no information. Nothing wrong with that in

itself. Some of my own web sites provide no contact information at all. But I'm not asking anyone to send me anything.

These guys may well be, like many Internet startups, operating on a shoestring from their basement on their way to fame and fortune, with a service that will be in great demand. Or maybe they just want to collect a lot of passwords for.... reasons of their own. If it's legitimate, I don't think it's well thought out.

This reverie started me musing about Windows passwords. Windows 9x, of course, provides no password security at all, Microsoft having opted for convenience instead. You may have convenience or security, but rarely both. That's OK for most home or small business users, as long as they are aware of it. I've been surprised to find, though, that many people think that because Windows asks for a password at startup, that only those who know the password can use that system.

To bypass the Windows logon password one need only hit the escape key. It's a good idea to have a logon password, though not for security reasons. Without one, Windows tends not to save other passwords you do need, such as your Internet dialup password.

If you forget your logon password you don't need high-tech skills to fix things. Windows stores its passwords in files with the .pwl extension. Click Start, Find, Files or Folders, and in the "Named" box type *.pwl, and hit Enter. (If someone removed the Find entry from your Start menu click a blank spot on the desktop, hit the F3 key and remove the word Desktop from the "Look in" box.)

One of the files found should be in the Windows directory, and will be in the format of "yourname.pwl." Rename it something like yourname.old. You could delete it, but I prefer to save things until I'm sure everything works. Shut down, reboot and enter your name and a new password.

A variety of inexpensive (\$5 - \$10) password and other security tools are available from <http://posum.com>. If you really want to store all your passwords, there's a list of password managers here. I've not tried any, but a highly praised one is Password Keeper (\$20; www.execpc.com/~sbd/PassKeep.html).

If you want to handle web site registration usernames/ passwords easily and securely, I recommend Lucent's service, *LPWA* (That's assuming you trust Lucent/Bell Labs. At least we know who they are.

But when, like Ferlinghetti's and Victor Records' dog, you look "into the great gramophone of puzzling existence" that is the Internet, don't blindly bark your passwords into some strange maw.

I got a copy of Glider about five years ago when I got the P90. Somewhere Kathy obtained a copy of the game and was much more diligent exploring it than I was.

Kathy Gallagher

I had my computer for a whole month before I even played solitaire on it. So, this Glider game is quite a big jump. I've never played an arcade game. I'm assuming that this game is on the same order. I had quite a time even getting out of the first room. This paper glider falls from near the ceiling and the first thing you need to do is push it with your arrow button into the upward airflow (from a heating/cooling register -ed.). Then you need to push it to the left to avoid hitting the table and direct it to the next upward airflow. Part of the problem when you miss your mark is that everything disappears and your don't have time to analyze where you went wrong. After you've been in the next upward airflow it's time to propel yourself into the next unknown i.e. the next room.

Each room has added things, I'm not used to thermals so I don't always know if something looks like a hazard but isn't. At times I avoided things that didn't need to be avoided.

You start out with five gliders. Each time you make a mistake one of the original gliders disappears. The one thing good about having a second or third shot at a room is you get added time to see what the room looks like to see the traps or opportunities to get through it and propel yourself into the next world of the unknown. The whole thing disappears rather fast so there isn't much time to evaluate for the next time. Once you use up your five gliders it's a slow process for the whole game to disappear with a pack of cards saying "game over". Then on to the next game with the same things you've already done. You repeat the whole process from square one, same rooms over and over until you get it right. When you make it into room three or four the added attraction is something flying across the room that will kill the glider or a floating balloon that will also do in the glider. I thought I was doing well until I looked at the box. It says that there are sixty challenging, surprise filled rooms. That means I have merely fifty-five rooms left to explore.

Another room that I've been in has lots of shelves to navigate around and a paper shredder. I have sent a few gliders through the shredder already. I have also burnt one up in the candle. The downward airflow I got by with the turbo.

The instruction book mentions rubber bands that are supposed to help you on your journey and a battery that is supposed to give you turbo power. I found that a battery on a shelf can be tricky to pick up. I have picked it up only to demolish a glider so I gained extra power to the demise of my plane. I have since picked it up several times and not killed the glider. I found the symbol for rubber bands, the first time I tried to pick that up I smashed the glider. My goal after that was to pick up those rubber bands.

It seemed to me that the rest of the game was filled with more villains to do in the glider before I could get to the area where the rubber bands were. I think I went through four games before I made it to that room again.

There is a room where there doesn't seem to be a way out. There is a wall on the end where you usually go. There was a staircase I couldn't find a way to get into. I have no idea where I was to go. I haven't seen that particular room again.

There was a fan that I put the glider into the airflow and it didn't get blown forward so I don't know what that was about. The rest of the fans worked the way they should. One of those fans blew it right into a shelf and smashed it.

There are pieces of paper that you're supposed to pick up. Each time you pick up a piece it would add another glider to your arsenal. The problem with that is you must have very nimble fingers to pick it up without hitting something else and therefore destroying the glider you're currently using. So far my fingers haven't been that nimble. There are other rooms you can load to try a new game. The one I tried was much faster paced. I didn't make it past the first room.

Remember I said earlier, that some things look ominous but aren't. I take that back. I have passed the electric socket many times and thought it was not dangerous. Well, it is, I passed it and got fried. I must have been lucky and passed very close but not touched or it wasn't making the live sound. It seems that sometimes you can do the same things and have different things happen too. I have nipped shelves and wondered why the glider didn't get smashed. Another time it will do basically the same thing and be gone. I have picked up the box of rubber bands in one room easily one time and the next few attempts I made I hit the shelf. I must have been a keystroke off.

reprinted from Datasheet II, Newsletter of the Tarrant County College Computer User Group, August 1999

Long Filenames

Carrington Dixon

Traditionally, DOS users have been limited in the names that they could choose to give files. DOS limits filenames to at most eight characters with a three character extension. As the extension was usually dictated by the application, this meant that the user had to create a meaningful filename out some combination of eight characters. As the sixteen bit versions of Windows ran on top of DOS and used the DOS file system, the limitation affected Windows users as well. This is no longer the case with the new, thirty-two bit versions of Windows.

Both Windows9x and NT support filenames of up to two hundred fifty-six characters. No longer need a letter to John Smith be called something like, JSMITH07.DOC. Now it can be called, John Smith, Re July Board Meeting. DOC. Other operating systems have supported long filenames for years; it is a relief that Windows finally does.

The rules for using long filename are fairly simple:

- * Do not use reserved words, such as AUX, CON, and PRN, as filenames or directory names. Directory names and filenames must not contain the backslash separator character (\), a character whose ASCII value is in the range 0 through 31, or any character explicitly disallowed by any of the file systems. The wild card characters "~" and "?" are especially bad choices.

- * Use the backslash (\), the forward slash (/), or both to separate components in a path.

- * Separate components in a directory name or a filename with a period (.).

- * The following characters are reserved for Windows and should not be used in directory names or filenames: <:"/\\|

- * Directory names and filenames can be created in mixed case, but users must anticipate that searches for directories and files will always be performed by means of case insensitive comparisons. If a file called ReadMe.Txt already exists and you try to name another file README.TXT, the naming of the second file will fail.

- * When used to specify a directory name, the period (.) identifies the current directory. For example, the pathname .README.TXT indicates that the file is in the current directory.

Continued on page 5

long filenames cont.

* When used to specify a directory name, two periods (..) identify the parent directory of the current directory. For example, the pathname ..\README.TXT indicates that the file is in the current directory's parent directory.

* With most versions of Windows, three periods (...) identify the next higher directory; that is, the parent of the parent of the current directory. This method can be extended to as many parent directories as are available.

* When used as part of a directory name or filename, a period (.) separates individual components of the name. For example, in the file README.TXT, the period separates the file's name (in the smaller sense) from the file's extension.

So far so good. The biggest snag is how to use these long filenames with older soft-

ware that still expects the old eight-dot-three DOS limitations. Windows gets around this by generating an old, DOS-compatible filename for each file created with a new long filename. The only problem is that the generated filenames may be even more cryptic than usual. The following is Microsoft's explanation of how the Windows NT file system does this:

To translate a long filename into a short (8+3) filename, NTFS uses the following guidelines:

* Deletes any illegal characters and any spaces from the long filename.

The following are illegal characters: .\"/>

(Note that all but the first and the last three characters are illegal in long filenames as well as in short.)

* Removes additional periods from the filename if valid, non-space characters fol-

low the final period. For example, this really long filename: 123.456.789.TXT becomes 123456~1.TXT.

* Ignores a final period and retains the second to last period. For example: this long filename: 123.456.789 becomes 123456~1.789

* Truncates the filename, if necessary, to six characters and appends a tilde (~) and a numeral. Each unique filename created ends with ~1, while duplicate filenames end with ~2, ~3, and so on.

* Truncates the filename extension to three or fewer characters.

* Converts all letters in the filename and extension to uppercase.

Unfortunately, neither Windows NT nor Windows95 have any provision to allow the user to specify both a long filename and a 8+3 (short) filename.

Fort Worth Star-Telegram, May 24, 1999

also from DataSheet II, July 1999

Tech SupportHumor

Submitted by Olan Watkins

Customer in computer shop: "Can you copy the Internet onto this disk for me?"

Overheard in a computer shop: Customer: "I'd like a mouse mat, please."

Salesperson: "Certainly sir, we've got a large variety."

Customer: "But will they be compatible with my computer?"

An unfailingly polite lady called about an installation that had gone terribly wrong.

Customer: "I brought my Windows disks from work to install them on my home computer."

Tech training stresses that we are "not the Software Police," so I let the little act of piracy slide. Tech Support: "Umm-hmm. What happened?"

Customer: "As I put each disk in it turns out they weren't initialized."

Tech Support: "Do you remember the message exactly, ma'am?"

Customer: (proudly) "I wrote it down. 'This is not a Macintosh disk. Would you like to initialize it?'"

Tech Support: "Er, what happened next?"

Customer: "After they were initialized, all the disks appeared to be blank. And now I brought them back to work, and I can't read them in the A: drive; the PC wants to format them. And this is our only set of Windows disks for the whole office. Did I do something wrong?"

A woman called the Canon help desk with a problem with her printer. The tech asked her if she was "running it under Windows."

The woman responded, "No, my desk is next to the door. But that's a good point. The man sitting in the cubicle next to me is under a window, and his is working fine."

Tech Support: "All right... now double-click on the File Manager icon."

Customer: "That's why I hate this Windows —because of the icons —I'm a Protestant, and I don't believe in icons." Tech Support: "Well, that's just an industry term sir. I don't believe it was meant to—" Customer: "I don't care about any 'Industry Terms'. I don't believe in icons." Tech Support: "Well.. why don't you click on the 'little picture' of a filing cabinet.. is 'little picture' OK?"

Customer: [click]

Customer: "My computer crashed!" Tech Support: "It crashed?" Customer: "Yeah, it won't let me play my game." Tech Support: "All right, hit Control-Alt-Delete to reboot."

Customer:

"No, it didn't crash —it crashed." Tech Support: "Huh?"

Customer: "I crashed my game. That's what I said before... I crashed my spaceship and now it doesn't work." Tech Support: "Click on 'File,' then 'New Game.'"

Customer: [pause] "Wow! How'd you learn how to do that?"

And another user was all confused about why the cursor always moved in the opposite direction from the movement of the mouse. She also complained that the buttons were difficult to depress. She was very embarrassed when we asked her to rotate the mouse so the tail pointed away from her.

This guy calls in to complain that he gets an "Access Denied" message every time he logs in. It turned out he was typing his username and password in capital letters.

Tech Support: "Ok, let's try once more, but use lower case letters."

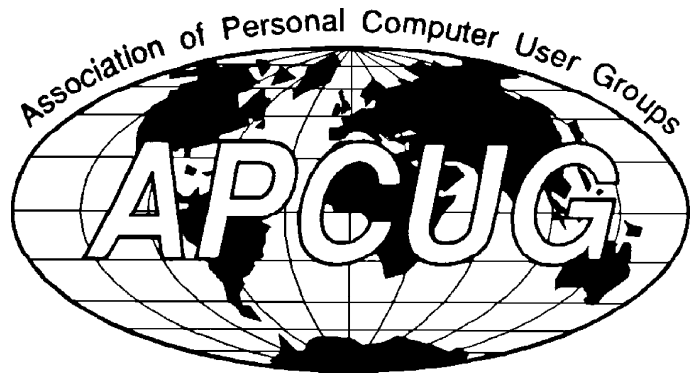
Customer: "Uh, I only have capital letters on my keyboard."

My friend was on duty in the main lab on a quiet afternoon. He noticed a young woman sitting in front of one of the workstations with her arms crossed across her chest, staring at the screen, impatiently tapping her foot. He asked if she needed help and she replied "It's about time! I pressed the F1 button over twenty minutes ago!"

Got a call from a woman said that her laser printer was having problems:

the bottom half of her printed sheets were coming out blurry. It seemed strange that the printer was smearing only the bottom half. I walked her through the basics, then went over and printed out a test sheet. It printed fine. I asked her to print a sheet, so she sent a job to the printer. As the paper started coming out, she yanked it out and showed it to me. I told her to wait until the paper came out on its own. Problem solved.

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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.
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