

# New Style

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Newsletter of the LaCrosse PC Users' Group

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April 2000

## This month: March 26, 7 PM in the Overholt

DeSoto High School students and faculty discuss how they're spending their district's tax dollars.

It's got to be better than when I was in high school in the early seventies. Our computer programming class consisted of creating conditional flow charts and learning how to read an IBM punch card. We did have a computer room, complete with four 300 baud teletype terminals, a monitor, and a heavy lock on the door. By the way, we never even got to look in the room for the programming class, although I did use it once for a physics project.

## President's Message

By Marian Havlik

We're looking forward to having students and teachers from DeSoto High School give our April presentation. Recently, there was an article in the La Crosse Tribune on one student that is involved in this high school computer project. We're sure to learn something new from the younger generation.

Someone recently told me that they could not get a disk from Juno. I just got a Juno 4.0 CD. If anyone needs to borrow this, please let me know. I'll bring the CD to the April meeting.

I'm anxious to find out how tough Chuck was on LCPC during Windows Bootcamp. Sorry I missed the March meeting, but I was Vice President Chuck Whalen

traveling from March 18-April 8. I drove over 3500 miles (alone), and visited museums, libraries, etc. in Ohio, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Had some nice surprises, and it was good to see old friends, many of whom now make very good use of computers.

One friend has a picture framing business, and also restores old photos. He has a huge scanner, a huge printer, and big monitors. He recently started printing photos on magnets, the flat kind you use on a refrigerator. Another friend just installed a 30 gig HD. Cost less than \$400.00. And to think they concludes on page 3

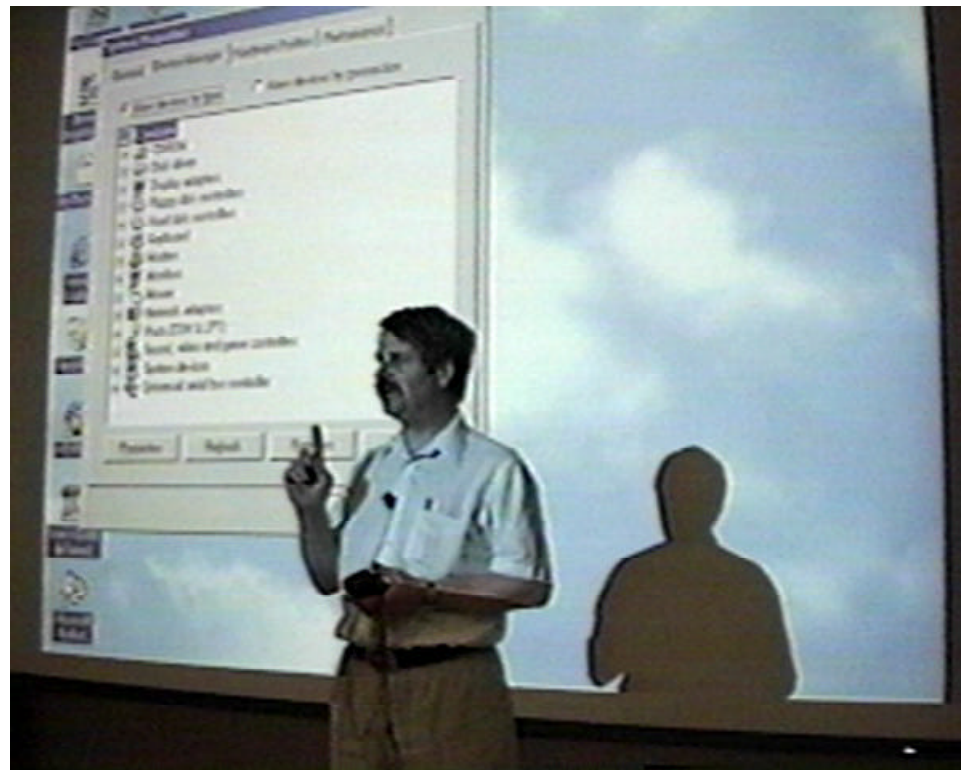
## Memo to Bill Gates

Bill, you're an important person. You'll go down as a significant person in the history of this century. You're largely responsible for the creation of an entire new industry that has generated billions of dollars.

Your commercial, where you talk to the camera about what you've helped create, well Bill, it sucks. I'm sorry, it just does.

So, here's a suggestion: hire someone with a great voice, James Earl Jones, Tony Jay, the guy who introduces Art Bell. Show a series of pictures of yourself over the years, from teenage, baby faced nerd to multi billionaire, baby faced nerd. The narration goes something like this: "Twenty five years ago Bill Gates saw the future and worked to create it. (insert 1978 Microsoft company photo) He saw that if computers were to be accessible to everyone they had to be easy to use. So, Microsoft introduced Windows, which quickly became the operating system

concludes on page 4



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

## Membership Info and Treasurers Report

Gary Stelzig, Treasurer

Thanks to Alvin and Monica Fritz for renewing their membership. Three new members joined our club after the last meeting. I am sure the nice program we had for April with Chuck had something to do with the members joining. The three new members are: Sandy and Jim Wheat, Lisa Doherty, and Shane Lambert. More info about two of these new members follows.

From **Sandy Wheat**:

"We are indeed green about computers. Jim Wheat, my husband, knows far more than I do. We use a Dell system with 233 Mhz, 64 Meg RAM, 6.4 gig hard drive, Epson 610 scanner, HP 722 printer, Zip, sound card.

The programs we use are: Corel Word Perfect Suite 8, Netscape, Adobe Photoshop 5.5, Autocad 13, Family Tree Maker (an old one), and Finale 97, a music notation program. We have Windows 98. Those are the basic ones. There's a lot of other junk loaded on that we would like to delete, but haven't. We are always running out of space and are being told "illegal operation".

What we'd like to learn: what's required to add RAM, what's involved in adding a CD writer, (would it take the place of a larger hard drive?), want to learn to do photo editing with Photoshop, learn how to create a website, stuff like that. Those are from Jim. My needs are more basic: why does it keep running out of space and telling us "Illegal Operation"? What do all those little boxes do? etc. So that's the story, from worn-out musicians."

From **Shane Lambert**:

1: I have a Compaq Presario with a 500MHz AMD, 36Gig Hard Drive, 128

Shane Lambert



## Coming Reviews!

These members took software for review we look forward to their articles.

Arlene Weise ..... *Quicken 2000*

*TurboTax In this month's New Style,*  
thanks Arlene

Ernesto Brauer & Marian Havlik .....  
..... *Microsoft Office 2000 book*

Kathy Gallagher ..... *Star Office*

Bill Brockmiller ..... *Go Back*

Marian Havlik ..... Inkjet refill  
..... & *On-track*

Darrell Garner ..... *Final Data*

Chuck Whalen ..... *Adobe ImageStyler*

Earl Heartt ..... *MS PhotoDraw*

Lisa Doherty ..... *Via Page*

Meg RAM, and all sorts of other goodies added on.

- 2: I use Web Development and Image Processing software on a daily basis, but I also use the system to play games. I love driving simulations and role playing games.
- 3: What you are presenting now, is it what should be presented? I would like to see a stronger emphasis on Internet and how it affects everyone's daily life.
- 4: Being in computers for more than 15 years, I would be interested mostly in how other people use their computers. I hope the knowledge I have acquired over the last 15 years can benefit the club and its members.
- 5: Only one problem which has stumped techs everywhere, even in the club. Still haven't fixed it so I guess I just live with it. I am getting the error "Pure Virtual Function Call" while printing to my HP Desk jet 722C.

It will be kind of neat to see my name and this information in the newsletter. Maybe it will break the ice with other members and I can start to enjoy the benefits the club has to offer. Thank you. "

The club checking balance as of 03/30/2000 was \$444.62. This includes a \$80 deposit and photocopy expenses of \$7.91.

## 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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## Windows Bootcamp recruits attentive audience

Carol M. Frank

The March 29 meeting as well attended. Many people had their pens and notepads ready.

"Master Sergeant" Chuck Whalen started out immediately about why programs keep getting bigger. Even though Win 95 & 98 are 32 bit, they sometimes don't seem any faster than Window 3.1. Consumers keep demanding more features, so programs keep getting bigger. Besides, with software coming on CDs there is more room to add on more features.

The "official" minimum requirements for Windows 98 is a 386 DX20 with 4-8 mg of RAM. In real life a Pentium or equivalent with 64 mg of RAM is needed to get anything done. With more RAM it is possible to have multitasking.

As an example, Chuck calculated how much memory a full color picture on 8<sup>1/2</sup> x 11" would take to print, 20 Meg of RAM. If enough RAM isn't available, Windows must "swap" to the harddrive to make up the difference making the process slower.

Chuck covered many topics and answered several questions.

- ☐ Costs of harddrives
- ☐ Saving your computer configuration as hardcopy (cheap insurance)
- ☐ Access violation solutions
- ☐ Managing DLLs
- ☐ "user" and "gui" heaps
- ☐ Removing programs
- ☐ Registry backups
- ☐ Start up disks
- ☐ Anti-virus programs
- ☐ Firewalls
- ☐ Replacing the harddrive
- ☐ An easy way to improve performance

New member Shane Lambert (another battlescarred Windows user) also contributed.

To describe all of what was covered would take too much time and space.

There will be a VHS dub of the tape by this month's meeting. Anyone wanting a Beta dub of the tape should buy a different VCR.

New member Lisa Doherty took *ViaPage*, web designing software, for review.

## Quicken Turbo Tax

by Arlene Wiese

Now that we have finished our tax return, I can breathe a sigh of relief! I hope the rest of you were treated more kindly than we were.

Installing Turbo Tax was simple. The first screen gives you an option to download any changes or upgrade that is available to effectively prepare your tax. I did go online and did the download, which took about 6 minutes (at 45,333). For the Wisconsin portion of our taxes I did not bother even looking to see if I could get a form. I was just concerned about the Federal one.

You have the option of going through an interview to tell the program what forms you will need (and more than you need!). If you have been diligent keeping records where your money went and what it was used for Turbo Tax will import the data into the proper spots on the schedule(s) you need to file. In my case, the records were poorly kept for a variety of reasons.

There are plenty of spaces to record all of the charities that you have given to as well as space to list any companies you get dividends, interest and other income from. A form to show all of the estimated tax paid is automatically filled in if those numbers are found on the import.

For the average taxpayer, Turbo Tax will very likely do a decent job helping make out your tax return, but for me, I'll be going to my friend, the CPA who has helped us these last 13 years!

For the past 13 years we have not felt confident doing this monumental task by ourselves. There were too many places to "get caught" by paying too little tax or by not taking advantage of the tax breaks offered to us as landlords.

This year was no different, although it was helpful to run some numbers through Turbo Tax, we again had a CPA prepare our taxes.

The schedule for depreciation of a property, the sale of our home in the country, a capital gain, a capital loss, my husband's serious illness last fall and a conversion of traditional IRA to a ROTH IRA were too much for me.

A year from now I will might purchase a copy of Quicken's tax program to assist our tax preparer with what I hope will be the last time we will need to deal with depreciation of real estate since our only rental property is presently for sale.

### President's Message from page 1

paid \$8,000.00 in 1987 for a 116 meg HD. Times sure have changed!

A nephew in the Chicago area works for a company that is setting up a live interview web site. Eventually you could do a job interview without traveling. This type of work enables him to work at home several days a week. At home, he's connected to the Internet continuously (has one of the new fast connections). He was surprised at my knowledge of technology. Then, of course, some others I visited still resist the world of computers, even for free email. My sister would rather write a letter, or talk on the phone. Just can't convince her that email is just like writing a letter.

While traveling I ended up calling long distance to the nearest city with an AOL number so I got my email quite frequently (50 messages at a crack is terrible to deal with). Just gave my hosts a couple of dollars to cover the phone calls. However, I found

local AOL numbers in some surprising places like Harrisonburg, WV.

One son in Pennsylvania does not have electricity, but does have a phone. During the days I was there, I charged the laptop in my van, and then got email, and worked til the battery gave up. He lives in Amish territory so it's not so unusual not to have electricity in his area. His rural area has frequent electrical outages when they have storms, but he'll probably install solar panels and batteries this year.

This son has an unusual setup to pump water: a generator runs a compressor that pumps air into a propane-type storage tank. That's enough compressed air to pump his well for a week. Although they have a new house, they heat and cook with wood. All of this made me appreciate electricity even more.

*OK, I know, these tax reviews should have been published a couple of months ago. Put this issue aside and refer to it on Feb. 1, 2001 when all your W2s have come in and you're ready to start your taxes*

## QuickenTurbo Tax vs. Kiplinger's Tax cut

by Don Atkinson

Did you hear the one about the guy who committed suicide rather than fill out his tax forms?

What were you doing the weekend of April 15 and 16? I was trying to get a question answered about IRA contributions so I could submit my taxes. I reviewed the help files of both *Intuit's (Quicken) Turbo Tax* and *Kiplinger's Tax Cut*. Then I downloaded the IRS publication dealing with IRAs. Ultimately, I had to wait until Monday morning so I could talk to my brokerage.

Finally getting the answer, was I doomed to hours of recalculation and filling in form after form? No, modern technology came to my rescue and I only had to make one change on one supporting document. Having made that change the tax program inserted the new value automatically, recalculated everything and even transferred the information and updated the state return. Imagine the tedium and frustration I was saved, all for thirty dollars. Even if you have a simple return these programs greatly ease an odious annual chore and will help you plan for next year.

When Carol and I were at Comdex in November the Intuit people told us that they'd be sending out complimentary copies of Turbo Tax. Well, when February was half over, with no sign of Turbo Tax, I purchased a copy of Kiplinger's Tax Cut, a program I've been using since I bought a 1993 copy from Best Buy for one cent in August of that year. As you might expect, Turbo Tax arrived the next weekend. I do want to thank Intuit for their generosity in providing this product, along with Quicken, free to all attendees of their presentation to the APCUG at Comdex.

Both programs are the "deluxe" versions, meaning they have video clips explaining certain points, Turbo Tax includes "Money Magazine's Income Tax Handbook", Tax FAQs, and copies of IRS publications. They both cost about thirty dollars and use very similar methods to reach the same goal.

Comments apply to both programs unless stated otherwise.

Both programs installed without any problems. To get you started they offer to import last year's personal information and finan-

cial data from Quicken. Then they take you through an interview process where you list your income from all sources and your deductions. This is divided into sections: wages, dividends, interest, capital gains and losses, etc. If you don't have anything to enter in a section it will be skipped. Turbo Tax's interview seemed marginally easier to follow although it missed an item relating to unemployment income. The question about repayment should have been included, but since it wasn't I opened the appropriate form (available at the bottom of the screen) and entered the data. I found the interview process to be somewhat stifling and wished I could more easily select forms, enter information in my own fashion, and then go through the interview to make sure I hadn't goofed.

Getting to the forms was easier with Tax Cut, and it devoted about 60% of the screen to the listing. Turbo Tax opens a window about 20% of screen size, showing fewer forms and a smaller font size.

Tax Cut divides the process into three steps: Prepare-you enter all your information; Review-the program checks for omissions, conflicts, and items that may red flag your return by the IRS, also allows you to do planning; and File-print out your return in traditional or the new 1040PC format or e-file, transmitting the data directly to the IRS. This seems a logical and readily understandable sequence.

Turbo Tax has nine steps, the first five of which involve entering data. Then the review, state taxes, file, and planning. Both programs allow you to move by clicking the appropriate tab.

After completing your Federal return it's time to do the state, you'll download the forms from the program's web site. Here is the real difference between the programs.

With Kiplinger's Tax Cut you sign on and download, if you have earned money in a second state and need to get its forms you just download them, get as many states as you'd like, they're all included in the cost of the program.

When you go to Turbo Tax's web site have your credit card handy, they're going to charge you \$27.95 for each state. Ouch.

For those of you keeping score at home: Turbo Tax- \$57.95 to prepare Federal and state return. If you need both Minnesota and Wisconsin forms the price is \$85.90. Tax Cut costs you \$30, period. I don't know what Turbo Tax's state program looks like because I didn't shell out the money to get it.

Tax Cut state preparation is similar to Federal but consists only of adjustments to income and deductions that differ under state law because all of your 1040 information has been transferred in. If you go back and change anything in the Federal return it is immediately and automatically changed on the state form as well.

Both programs encourage you to visit their web sites and download any updates before starting. I got Tax Cut's 8 Meg update before I started, four days later it FORCED me to take a 4 Meg update before it would download the Wisconsin state form. This really annoyed me.

I can't imagine why you would do something as complicated as filling out your taxes without the help of one of these programs. Which one? There is little to choose in quality between them, although I think Kiplinger's Tax Cut is better ordered and somewhat easier to use. The big difference is the price. Paying \$27.95 for each state is highway (interstate?) robbery and Intuit should be ashamed.

Despite minor annoyances, I recommend Kiplinger's Tax Cut without reservation.

**Coming next month:** DeLorme's Street Atlas USA.

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*Memo to Bill Gates cont. from page 1*  
chosen by the vast majority of computer users.

"Since that time, Windows has been developed and refined to make it even better, easier to use, and with more features. That's why Windows has been selected by ninety percent of computer users as their operating system."(Close with shot of Bill standing in front of Microsoft offices with thousands of employees behind him.)

# Getting Art Smart Via the Net

*Dona Z. Meilach, reprinted from Personal Systems, the Journal of the San Diego Computer Society, January 2000*

If e-shopping has cut into the traffic in brick and mortar stores, is it possible that people will visit their favorite museums on the Net and bypass seeing the exhibits in person? There are many exciting offerings on the Net and ways to see art in far flung museums that you may never get to visit. Even better, is that you get a chance to walk into some of your favorite paintings.

You can find a list of museums, their holdings and the ability to search by type of object at [www.virtuallibrary.org](http://www.virtuallibrary.org): museums around the USA at <http://vlib.org>. but there are more places to get art smart on the web where browsing is fun and educational. Your students can get homework help here, too, because many sites include art history, artist biographies, and more.

## The Musee D'Orsay

My favorite "let your mouse do the walking" visit is to the Musee D'Orsay in Paris, France, at [www.orsay.com](http://www.orsay.com). Accessing the site is heckuva lot easier than flying to Paris (maybe not as exciting) but the price is right. It's free. Using a technology called "live picture", you can move around the museum inside and view the paintings, even zoom in close enough to see brush strokes. You can practically climb on the sculpture, and you can get the full ambiance of the museum by walking around it on the outside, too. You may not see the mimes they often have out in front, but then neither do you have to worry about wind and rain from the Seine.

In the Musee D'Orsay, the cameras pan and zoom around the room. When a red dot

appears beneath your cursor, you click on it and enter a room, a picture, or another part of the museum.

## Walk into Van Gogh's Bedroom

This is a "Wow" site and it will get even better as new exhibits are offered. Intel had developed a fully immersive and freely navigable 3-dimensional recreation of the "Van Gogh's Van Goghs" exhibit as it appeared during its run at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. It's a free trip, too. You can select a gallery from the museum's floor plan, enter it, then enter a painting, either alone or in the company of other online visitors, engage in real-time text or audio chat, and even take a guided audio tour of the exhibition. You can actually step into several of Van Gogh's works, such as the *Bedroom* and the *Yellow House*, to explore the use of perspective by the artist, and a day in

*Continued on page 7*

Chuck talked some about DLLs during Windows Bootcamp, here is more on that subject

## Troubleshooting DLL Conflicts

This article by Russell James originally appeared in the October 1999 issue of *PCAlamode*, the magazine published by the Alamo PC Organization, San Antonio, Texas.

### What are DLLs?

Dynamic Link Libraries. What does a DLL do? DLLs are best thought of as programmer's toolkits. They contain programming code that is often reused from one application to another. Some DLLs have one or two routines, while others may have a hundred or more. Rather than reinvent the wheel, a programmer will use a DLL containing optimized code for the task at hand. Dialing your modem, selecting fonts and colors or quickly sorting lists of information are examples of the types of work they perform.

### Why Do They Cause Problems?

There are two types of DLLs:  
Shared or common-used by many programs.

Proprietary-used by one program or by one software publisher.

With the earliest versions of Windows, Microsoft established the `\windows\system` folder as the designated storage place for DLLs that are common. The proprietary DLLs were supposed to be installed in the program's own folder. As new and improved versions of DLLs were released it was intended that the updated version would replace the earlier version and that the DLL would be backward compatible. In a perfect world you'd have just one copy of a shared DLL on your system and it would be available to any application that needed it.

The Windows operating system (any flavor) allows only one copy of a DLL to be in memory at any one time. The DLL will remain in memory until it's no longer needed.

Let's start by looking at the following scenario:

1. A program is launched from your Startup group or folder when you boot your system. That program was distributed with an early version DLL that is stored in the program's local directory. The DLL has 20 internal functions and is loaded into memory.

2. A few minutes later you load a recently released program. That program needs the

same DLL (by name), but is supposed to utilize the newer version that has 80 internal functions.

3. Since the early version DLL is already in memory everything may seem OK when the program is first launched.

4. As soon as the more recent program asks for one of the 60 missing functions you're in trouble. You may get a complete crash, a lockup or a message blaming something that's completely unrelated.

### Where Are They Found?

The most common DLLs are those that are part of a programming language such as C++, Visual Basic, etc. These DLLs provide the same "run time" environment as the developer's own system, but don't allow you to edit the program. Software publishers must include these critical DLLs with their programs because they can't assume you already have the right one on your system.

Software publishers often seem to be careless or unable to follow the rules. In some cases, they just don't know better. Both small and large publishers are guilty of not keeping their programming utilities up to date; this results in distributing DLLs that are several years old. Distributing a new program with old DLL has the same effect as loading an old program on your system.

Microsoft has incorporated several features into the Windows 98 operating system that help to resolve the problem of an old DLL being installed into a shared directory: however it doesn't always work. The worst offenders are installation routines that don't do any version checking and simply unzip files directly into the shared directory, overwriting whatever is there. In many cases WIN98's System File Checker can recover the correct version. Having a current backup is still the best protection.

One of the most common mistakes made by a program's installation routine is to place a common DLL in the program's own folder, rather than put it in the system folder where it belongs. That's the easiest thing to fix, if you're careful and follow some simple guidelines. Programs bearing the MS Windows 9x logo on the box generally don't cause prob-

lems, as they have to meet some very strict and recently revised compliance standards.

### How Can We Locate DLL Problems?

The following process is intended to let a user check their system for DLL version conflicts. Before doing so, I strongly recommend that any patches and updates available from MS be installed. Installing these updates will put the newest versions of the most problematic DLLs on your system and give you a valid reference point for what's really old on your system. The most critical DLLs are available in two updates:

1. Windows 95 Service Pack I:

<http://support.microsoft.com/download/support/mslfiles/SETUP.EXE>

2. OLE 32 Update to Service Pack I:

<http://support.microsoft.com/download/support/mslfiles/OLEUPD.EXE>

If you are running Windows 98, click on the Windows Update in the Start menu and you'll be taken to MS's semi-automated update site. The site will take a look at your system and give you a list of what has not been installed on your machine. There are also some other cool add-ons to your Windows 98 that will make the trip more of a fun time.

Now let's check for duplicate DLLs in those Windows 95 systems. Close any programs that are running and tap the F3 key to bring up the Find window. In the "Named" field type in \*.dll. In the "Look in:" field look to see that "My Computer" or "Local Hard Drives" is the selection. Make sure that the "Include Subfolders" box is checked. Click the "Find Now" button and wait a few minutes while the list is generated. This could take a while on some of the newer systems. When the search is completed click on the "Name" bar above the list to sort the files alphabetically by name.

Look through the list for duplicates. The files that will cause problems will be those with copies in the `\windows\system` folder and in some other program folder. The most critical files will also be listed in the `\windows\sysbckup` folder. These will usually be the same version as one in the `\windows\system` folder. Now comes the time consuming part of the process. Check the search listing for duplicate files that have a copy in the `\windows\system`, a possible

copy in `\windows\sysbckup` and a copy that is anywhere else. These are the files that we are concerned with.

Be sure that you understand the process before continuing any further. Some of you may wish to contact a computer specialist who is experienced in dealing with software conflicts.

Compare the duplicates by holding the Alt key down and double clicking on the duplicates. Click on the Version tab and compare. The one in the `\windows\system` folder should have the latest version. If the file in a programs folder has a lower version number, change the extension to `.d_1`. Do not delete any files. Renaming the file will prevent the old version from loading and force the program to look in the System folder for the right DLL. Make a note of the programs where you changed the filenames for future reference. After changing the extensions on the duplicate files reboot your system and load the programs that used the older DLLs one at a time. If the program runs then it is probably okay. If it doesn't run then restore the original name of the old DLL.

If this is too complicated or time consuming, there is a program that will help with

checking for duplicates called **DLL CHECKER**. You can download a trial version at [www.vb2java.com](http://www.vb2java.com). The program does the job of finding the duplicate file and highlighting it and the version information is part of the list of file information. It is a \$15 shareware program until December 1, 1999, but if you are having problems with Windows error messages it could be worth your time especially if your system has many programs loaded. It will also scan your system for VBXs and OCXs. [Note: Check the Web site to see if the Shareware Version is still available. The registered version is just \$25]

The registered version allows you to scan more than one drive, not just the drive that the Windows operating system (any 32-bit flavor) resides on. Using the context menu mouse button, you can select a duplicate file name and have **DLL CHECKER** rename the file for you. For example, if the file `c:\windows\mso97.dll` is a duplicate file, **DLL CHECKER** will rename it to `c:\windows\mso97.d_1`. This will also be noted in the log file, `DLLCHK_R.LOG`, located in the directory where **DLL CHECKER** resides. The default size of the

grid font is 8 point. Using the two font buttons in the toolbar allows you increase or decrease the font size.

## Is It Better to Do It Yourself?

If you feel comfortable working with your files and troubleshooting your system errors then maybe this is the route for you to go. If you don't feel comfortable changing file names and tempting the software demons then be sure to write down the error messages exactly as they appear and any information about what programs you were running at the time, any changes that have been made and brother-in-laws that have been "helping" you. This will save you a lot of labor costs if you decide to have a qualified technician try to troubleshoot your problems. I can tell you for sure that it does no good at all to write "fatal error" on the work order.

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### Art Smart, Continued from page 5

the life of the artist, respectively. When you place your cursor over an object, such as a painting on the wall of the bedroom and it appears, you'll get a detail view of it and an explanation of who is in it and perhaps why Van Gogh used that detail.

Spend some time at [www.artmuseum.com](http://www.artmuseum.com) and learn about art in a completely new way. The amazing technology allows viewers to virtually walk through the paintings, turn 360 degrees, look up and down and discover surprising hidden elements just navigating with your space bar and arrow keys.

## An Incredible site for sights

[www.incredibleart.com](http://www.incredibleart.com) is exactly what it says it is. You can get an art education here, read about art movements and artists, see posters, original art, and animation posters, buy the art and even talk to a decorator. Need a picture of a nude?

You can get a print of Renoir's *Bathing Girl* for \$11.00, have it matted and framed in your choice of metals or wood and have it shipped out ready to hang for under \$40. The thumbnail images are large and beautifully illustrated with zoom-in capabilities. They load quickly. You can search by artists' names alphabetically, by subject matter or art movement. If you register as a member, there

are discounts, promotions and other values. You can even send free greeting cards. An Incredible theater provide users with fee access to short art-related film produced by and starring famous artists such as Salvador Dali. Upcoming are live hosted chat sessions, interviews with featured artists and extensive art-related news updates.

## No more bare walls

Another excellent site for posters and art prints is [www.barewalls.com](http://www.barewalls.com). Whether you need to decorate a room or college dorm, barewalls.com offers a selection of more than 150,000 prints and posters averaging under \$20 each, perfect for those with tight decorating budgets. Barewalls has followed the trends for art and this year van Gogh's *Starry Night* has outsold all other prints. Movie buffs will like a poster from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and sports fans might buy *Neiman's Golf Champions*. In addition to a wide selection of posters, framed or unframed, they also offer an auction site at [www.auction.barewalls.com](http://www.auction.barewalls.com) that allows buyers to bid on a wide range of artwork.

## More resources

If you can't find what you want, if you know about an artist or a work that you want but you can't locate it, go to [\[collectables.cc/request.htm\]\(http://collectables.cc/request.htm\). If the artist isn't in the group of people they work with, they can search for a particular artist. Just give them as much information as you can and they'll try to locate the work for you.](http://www.art-</a></p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

Want to know what a piece of art you may have is worth? Recently, I wondered how much a couple of prints I had bought in Japan might be worth today, if anything. I did a search for the artist's name and found a gallery that carried his work. I wrote to them about getting an evaluation. Sure, they said, send us a photo of the print, any information such as date, imprint number, and size and we'll tell you what it's worth. If I can ever find a buyer at those prices, maybe through an auction, I can buy myself a new computer. One never knows.

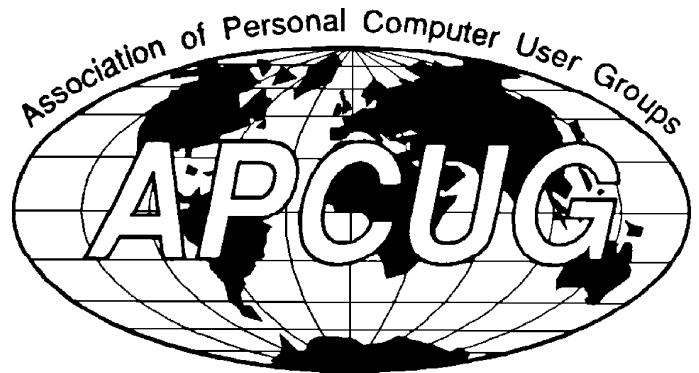
Today, it's easier than ever to be art smart from the confines of your computer screen, but always reach out to supplement information with books from your library and bookstore.

*Dona Z. Meilach has been reporting on the computer industry since 1980. She is the author of 10 books about computers and 42 books about art. Her latest book is **Decorative & Sculptural Ironwork, 2nd Edition**. Available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.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.

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