

New Style

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Newsletter of the LaCrosse PC Users' Group

volume 20 number 8

August 2000

This Month: August 30, 7PM in the Overholt

Robin Alexander presents "Access", the database portion of MS Office. Probably also and expanded Q&A session.

About this newsletter...

Shane Lambert was unable to do this newsletter as scheduled. We've had one day to put it together. That's why it has all this empty space (like the area below).

President's Message

By Marian Havlik

We were very pleased with the crowd at our July 26th meeting. Many were at an LCPC meeting for the first time. Ordinarily, we only introduce all of those attending about once a year. Otherwise, we only ask new attendees at each meeting to introduce themselves.

After the July introductions, we really realize what a diversity of interests we have when using computers. In future months we promise to spend a lot more time on problems and questions.

Although the "Introduction to Programming Languages" by Gary Stelzig, Treasurer, may have been a bit intimidating, it gave all

of us a better idea of how computer programs are actually written — sort of like hearing about how the pistons in a car work, but not really needing to pay much attention to the technical details when driving around.

Now when you hear them talking about "lines of code" you'll at least have an idea of what they mean, and how much work it is to create software (and why sometimes there are so many problems with software).

Of course, the two practical applications (games) made "programming" more real. Thanks again, Gary, for an interesting program.

Gary Stelzig

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Message from Bob

(former member and president)

Marion,

Thanks for keeping me on the LCPC mailing list. It is great to see messages from people I know and then try to help out once in a while.

Hey, I finally bought a new computer! and I didn't build it myself (shock). I broke down when my wife said "let's just get it" and bought a Compaq Presario 7000. I'll let you all know how this one works and if I find any problems with it.

Good computing.

Bob Hansen



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

Future Programs

August 30: Robin Alexander on "Access", the database portion of MS Office. If there's time, he'll also answer more Excel questions.

September 27: Shane Lambert on "Internet Basics". Topics will include Setting-up Software, Netiquette, Pitfalls, Spam, and Questions.

October 25: "What Do I Need In My Next Computer?" by Bill Brockmeyer.

December 13: A local business will demonstrate hand-held products, such as Palm, and other computer toys - just in time for Christmas.

Dr. Ernesto Brauer has offered to give a program on Palm technology, so we'll plan that for early 2001. If you have another program requests, please let us know.

E-mail Addresses

If your email address changes, even slightly, please notify Gary Stelzig, Treasurer, so we can update it in our member list, and in the newsletter. Doing it by email is probably easiest.

Meeting Videotapes

Why do we videotape meetings? This is done for two reasons. Our Newsletter Publisher and Editor, Don Atkinson, has worked 2nd shift for several years. His wife, Carol Frank, Secretary, tapes meetings so Don knows what's going on. The video also helps Carol write-up a meeting summary for the newsletter. Don and Carol both deserve a round of applause for the many years of doing a great job with our newsletter. They're glad to have a well deserved break from doing the newsletter every month (more on that later).

Since our meetings are open to the public, we know of no restriction against the practice of videotaping meetings. Think of sporting events etc. on TV, with shots of the public's reactions.

We only keep tapes of important programs, like the "Windows Bootcamp" program Chuck Whalen, Vice-President, gave in March 2000.

Incidentally, if anyone would like to borrow that video, please ask as I have an extra tape. Most videotapes are reused in rotation every 2 or 3 months.

LaCrosse Tribune Technology Page

The article in the La Crosse Tribune, July 8, generated a great deal of interest in LCPC. We hope to see those who were at our July meeting at future meetings, and we look forward to more new faces at future meetings.

We encourage you to look at the La Crosse Tribune's Saturday Technology page. They usually have several items of general interest. Also look for occasional LCPC ads in that section of the Tribune. The next ad will be the Saturday before our September 27th meeting.

Our secretary, Carol Frank, also sends meeting notices to several radio and TV stations. General meeting notices are also published monthly in the La Crosse Tribune.

Helpful Members

Recently I forwarded an email from Gloucester, MA, to the LCPC list. Natalie McDonald asked for help in finding information on her great-grandmother. Member Sandra Wheat was kind enough to send her "wonderfully detailed information". Natalie tried to thank Sandra by email for taking time to "transcribe all those quotes about her family", but for some reason Natalie could not get through, so she asked me to forward her thanks to Sandra which I did.

That's what LCPC is all about. People helping people. Thanks, Sandra, for helping answer this request.

Treasurer's Report

The club checking balance as of 08/11/2000 is \$475.37. July transactions include a \$100 deposit, bills of \$6.60 for stamps, \$11.08 for photocopies.

Renewals paid include Chuck Whalen - thank you. At our July meeting four new members joined the club. They include: 1) Petter Schaettle, 2) Robert and Mary Pluntz, 3) Robert and Delaine Stolpa, and 4) Ralph Dupae. - Welcome new members. More details about our new members will be in the next issue.

No August renewals. Past due include George Frisch, Paul Bequette and Darrell Garner.

Ralph Dupae - rdrboats.msn.com

Robert and Delaine Stolpa - das439@aol.com

Petter Schaettle - n9xvy@fflax.net

Robert and Mary Pluntz - rpluntz@aol.com

Member E-mail addresses

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

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July Meeting well attended

Carol Frank, secretary

Thanks to the power of the press, the July 26 meeting was well attended by many visitors. They kept member Arlene Weiss busy handing out name tags. As an introduction president Marian Havlik gave a bit of history of LCPC and her involvement with it. She then had members and visitors introduce themselves and describe a little about their involvement with computers.

There was a drawing for the demonstration software *PageCharmer* and gel wristrest mousepad at meeting's end. Ernesto Brauer won *PageCharmer* and Chuck Whalen the mousepad. At the end of the meeting Jack Storlie gave a little talk about his proposal to merge the city and county computer services into a "Computer Utility".

The problems tonight were brought by visitors. First was Steve Bufen (?). Since he installed Win95 things had gone downhill, now none of his peripherals and programs work. Chuck started out by asking if he could boot from a floppy and if the C: drive could be seen. Affirmative to both of these ques-

tions determined that the harddrive works. Mr. Bufen says it boots in Safe Mode and "can't get out of DOS". He had tried reinstalling Win95 five times. Ernesto suggested that he bring in the box and keyboard to see what is happening. This is really a tough one.

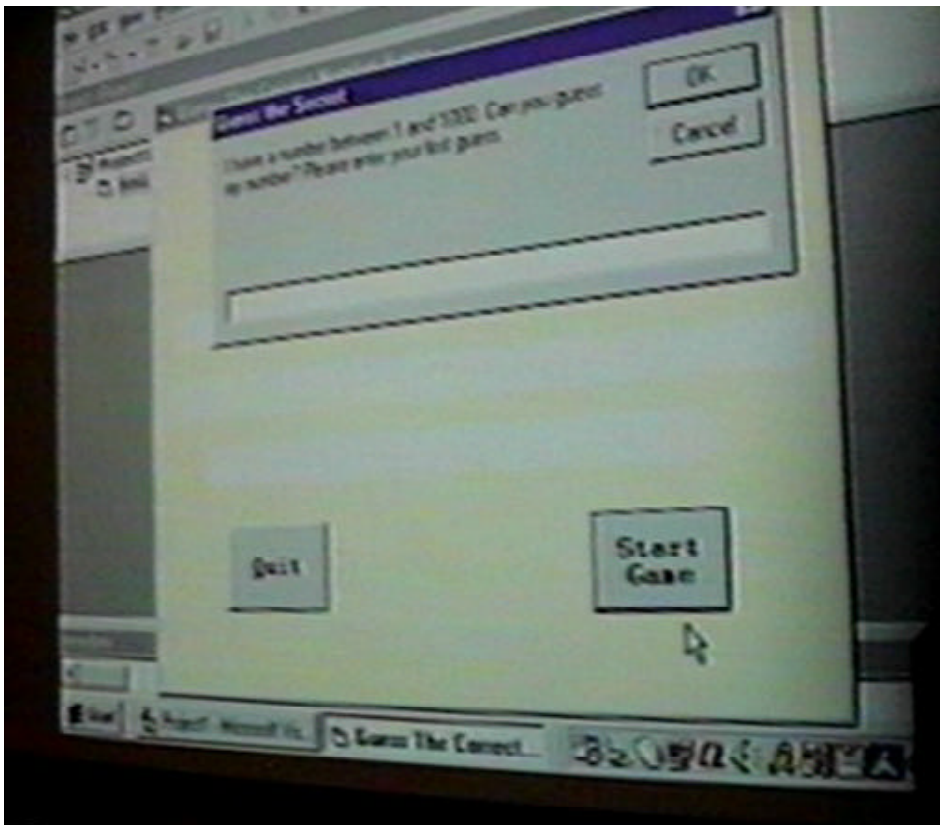
Leon Wolf had a couple of questions. Could he reformat C: without affecting D:? Chuck said yes (if D: is a physical drive and not a logical drive created by partitioning C: -ed.). He then asked if he could reload Windows without loading AOL or other stuff. Chuck said if he choose to load Internet Explorer it can load all it needs automatically.

Then Mr. Wolf wanted to know how to make a short cut icon for e-mail. Chuck demonstrated by going into Explorer, selecting the desired file, right-clicking, hold and drag to the desktop. There he selected the short cut option.

Dennis Graves was working on a document in MS Office and had a shortcut for it on the Office Bar. He now wants to remove it. Chuck explained that all he had to do was

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Gary's Guessing Game



Board Meeting

Marian Havlik

We had a LCPC Board Meeting 9 August. The Board has updated the list of members, prospective members, and all available email addresses.

We're looking into permanent name tags for regular members at meetings, and will continue to have stick-on name tags for guests.

Paul Pfaff will help Gary Stelzig in welcoming people to meetings, hand out name tags etc. Permanent name tags will be collected after every meeting. Arlene Wiese has assumed the duty of putting up posters indicating the meeting location, and she'll also send out email reminders the weekend before each meeting. If you do not get a pre-meeting email reminder that means we do not have your correct

email address. The Board agreed that the La Crosse Tribune publicity has been very beneficial

Shane Lambert has agreed to produce the newsletter every other month, alternating with Don Atkinson/Carol Frank. Thanks Shane, for offering to give the current publishers a break. Shane also offered to help

update the LCPC web site, and will coordinate with Chuck Whalen on that project. Other additions to our web site were also discussed, such as a listserv to help solve problems, answer questions etc.

After the La Crosse Tribune, September 23rd ad, the Board will evaluate future newspaper ads.

Carol Frank is checking into the computer show that is scheduled for January at the La Crosse Civic Center. We'd like a table near the exit doors like we had in January 2000. We'll need lots of help to man the table. Last January we handed out 1100 LCPC flyers at the Computer Show.

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs. Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World Magazine, frequently writes for Forbes ASAP, Working Woman, and Family Circle, and is the president of the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He can be reached at stevebass@earthlink.net.

The Napster Conundrum

It's Free, It's Easy, It's Wrong

By Steve Bass, PIBMUG

I'm writing while listening to Dave Brubeck. Not unusual but this is one of Brubeck's long out of production cuts, a song I've been searching for on CD for a couple of years. You guessed it: I found it on Napster. It was free.

Another? "High Wire," a just released cut from a Rob Brown and Sunny Wilkinson CD that wasn't available at cdrom.com or Barnes and Noble, my usual haunts. Right. It was already on Napster.

Napster works by connecting you to other people wanting to download MP3 music. Once connected, you search on, say, "Brubeck" and Napster's servers find everyone logged on with music that has "Brubeck" in the listing. You can limit the search to a reasonable number of hits—100 is the default—or ask for 900 (and sometime you get your wish, filling the screen with songs). Once the search is complete, a click on the title starts a download; click on the sender's name and he or she is added to your Hot List, providing a way of finding them in subsequent sessions.

So yes, I'm using Napster, feeling conflict and guilt, and collecting songs. I logged on last month and it wasn't for research or a future article. I just had to see it for myself. Free music, all you can download, all perfectly anonymous.

And entirely illegal.

Gimmie Some More

The problem is just that: the music is free, as much of it as I want, and stunningly easy to get. With a high-speed connection, I can pop a 5MB song onto my PC in less than 30 seconds. Hell, it takes me that long to turn on the amp and CD-ROM player on my home audio system. In about seven minutes I can download and start listening to the equivalent of an entire long playing record, about 55MBs. And it's ever so tempting to dip in and grab another few songs.

Scour Your i-drive for Gnutella

Want more? While less valuable than Napster, there's Scour.com, an Internet app that supplies music, videos, and images. Scour works with i-drive.com, a site that supplies users unlimited—and free—online storage space.

The story is that things get even more outrageous with Gnutella, a free program that provides anything you want. Search on Word and you'll get the program. Music? Easy. Porno? No sweat. But that's nonsense so let's dispense with Gnutella right away. First, Gnutella is more difficult to use than Napster or Scour.

Once you master Gnutella and start searching for items, you'll find more junk and x-rated sites than you can possibly imagine. For example, a search on Wordstar (stop laughing) brought up wordstar.html, a file with an x-rated URL embedded inside. Same thing happened with a search for most popular programs. In a way it's a lot like unmoderated newsgroups with unfiltered files and messages.

Worse, Gnutella is probably the easiest way to pick up a virus or have your system examined by an experienced hacker. You can safely get a taste of what Gnutella's capable of by searching at CapnBry's site. <http://capnbry.dyndns.org/gnutella/gs.php> If you want Gnutella, get it at <http://gnutella.wego.com>

The Napster Connection

On the other hand, Napster's files are 100 percent MP3s with no worries about viruses. The program's commercial enough with a relatively easy interface so you'll get the knack in a few minutes. If you use a personal firewall—I'm using ZoneLabs free Zone Alert (zonelabs.com) and feeling comfortable with it—you'll be safe against intruders.

Of course, there are a few downsides to Napster. Not all the music is complete, and not all of it is good quality. Some Napster users are conscientious and make it clear in the song's title that the song was cut short. Often a cut doesn't get ripped-transferred from the CD to the hard drive—properly and the music is distorted.

When you log on to Napster, you fill in your connection speed. Unfortunately, not everyone tells the truth. So you might find yourself downloading from someone using a 56k modem, making your high-speed access valueless. Or if you've decided to share one of your folders filled with music, slow connectors may start grabbing songs and you might feel guilty disconnecting them before they get anything downloaded.

Knock Knock, it's the Net Cops

In mid-June, the Recording Industry Association of America, a trade association, and a handful of record labels sued Napster, alleging it's contributing to massive copyright infringement because of its members trading songs through the service.

Nobody's going to catch you, so don't worry.

The biggest bugaboo you'll face is ethical. My concern is for the songwriter and performer, the two groups who are generally stuck holding the unsavory end of the stick. So not only do they get screwed by the record producers, now the customer gets a chance to chisel them out of their royalties.

The Process of Denial

Some people I've talked with justify using Napster thinking it will force the record industry to pay attention and change their greedy ways. Maybe it will. I know I'd gladly

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pay a buck or two for each cut I want, provided I'm not stuck with the entire CD.

What I want is the ability, as with Napster, to check out and listen to the entire song, not a 15 second sample. For instance, I heard about four minutes of "The Time of the Barracudas," a Gil Evans and Miles Davis cut on the radio. I liked what I heard. After I downloaded the entire song on Napster, I realized it wasn't something I wanted to listen to again. I deleted it, just as I would with shareware I couldn't use. Had I purchased the \$16 CD, I would've been stuck with it.

And what's the business plan for the 19 year old behind Napster? The program's free and there's no advertising on Napster—no banner ads, no cookies, and no intrusions on our privacy. My guess? The kid's going to sell it to one of the big record companies.

So the question we're faced with is whether Napster is a rogue, a way to let everyone pirate music from the Internet. Or is Napster a change agent, pushing the industry towards reform.

Me? I've gotta go. There are a couple of Herbie Hancock cuts I'm trying to find.

Sidebar: HERES HOW: NAPSTER

Limiting uploads: Maintain control of who's able to take files from your shared music directory. One way is to limit the number of downloads to one song per person.

Check your sharing folder: It's critical you pay attention to the folder you're sharing with other Napster users. It's easy to inadvertently check the box to share the entire drive.

Security Tip: When you first begin using Napster, don't share any songs. In Napster's configuration, set the number of files to share to zero.

Don't Share at All: The safest way to use Napster is don't allow anyone to get at your files. That way you're completely safe from intruders.

Limit your Downloads: Don't try to download too many songs at once. You'll run out of bandwidth and may get knocked offline. Think about it: Your one connection will divide the bandwidth among all the songs

you're downloading because each song is coming from a different user. It's better to grab a few songs; they'll download more quickly and if you are disconnected, you'll lose only a few songs.

Dump partial songs: Get rid of incomplete partial files. Check out the file before you allow it to be copied to the next person. Better, set Napster to delete incomplete files.

Be Polite: Check if others are downloading files from your drive before you log off. Use Napster's Chat feature to warn people just starting a download if you're planning on logging off.

Hotlist Tip: As you search, watch for people on the list with multiple selections of your favorite author. Put them on your Hotlist and ignore users with just one selection.

Protect Yourself: Use Zone Lab's free firewall, Zone Alert. It will stop outsiders from doing any harm. (www.zonelabs.com).

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right click on the document icon on the Office Bar and select the delete option. This will delete the shortcut only, not the document. However any customization for that document will be lost. Ernesto pointed out that icons with little arrows on them indicate that they are shortcuts. If there is no little arrow be careful that you don't delete the document itself.

The presentation, "An Introduction to Programming Languages" was given by member Gary Stelzig. Gary had worked as a programmer for many years at Heileman's using Cobal and C. He then took more classes to learn about other languages and is now working for Dairyland Power. Programming is the stuff that works "behind the scenes" to make programs run.

First Gary showed a program done in C. Special compilers or editors are needed to assemble programs. C is considered a low level language and needs considerable hands on work. A source file is created and a se-

quence of events (flow chart) is determined. Libraries are linked, the program is loaded and executed. Libraries are part of the compiler program and are ready made codes that can do strings, math, constants, arrays, etc.

Gary showed some of the protocols and operators (characters like, =, -, /, =, ==, <, >, etc.) that are used in C and what they mean.

Marian asked what he used C for at Heileman's. Reports were created by selecting data from a database and the C language is used to format it. The C language can be very precise in determining appearance.

After leaving Heileman's, Gary took programming courses at Western Wisconsin Technical College and UW-L. He took advantage of the student discounts to acquire Visual C++ and Visual Basic.

Visual C++ is more complicated than C and many Web applications are done in it. The interface in MS Visual C++ is easy to use. Gary showed a simple program that he did as a class project. This was a calculator for finding the equivalents for numbers in

decimals, binary, and hexadecimal. The audience also played a simple number guessing game.

The text shown in the work area is color coded, Black is code, Blue is keywords and Green is comments that explain what a particular code line does.

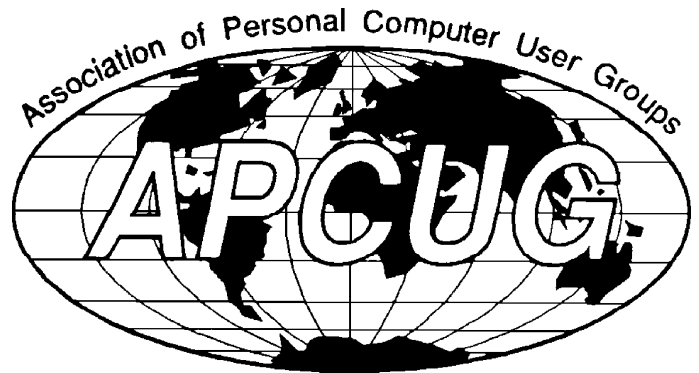
Last of all was MS Visual Basic, which is a very popular programming language. Commands are similar to MS Office and common command icons can be dragged and dropped into the working area to put in ready made codes for functions like boxes, picture, text, etc.

The audience played Gary's final project "Wheel of Fortune". This version was quite basic, but with slicker graphics and colors it wouldn't be much different than any game you would buy.

As a conclusion Marian made comparison of programming to understanding how a car is put together, understanding how it works isn't necessary when using a computer or a car but it makes it easier to understand what is going on if there is a problem.

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LCPC is a member of APCUG

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

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

Other user groups are welcome to reprint with proper credit.

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

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

LCPC

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