

# New Style

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Newsletter of the LaCrosse PC Users' Group

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September 2000

## This Month: Sept. 27, 7 PM in the Overholt

Shane Lambert presents the Internet. Shane will tell you everything you want to know about getting the most from Al Gore's creation.

## Gary blows up this newsletter

Yes, this newsletter is two pages longer than usual. Starting on page 5, Gary introduces us to ten of our new members that joined in July or August.

If you're keeping track of such things (I'm not), that means this issue ties for third place as the largest newsletter ever published by LCPC. I could be wrong about that, I'm working from my very fallible memory.

## 640k should be enough for anybody

Some of you may recognize these immortal words, uttered by Bill Gates in 1980.

Times change and software becomes ever more resource hungry.

At last month's meeting, Chuck Whalen suggested having 128 meg just to run Win98.

I recently took our flagship computer from 64 meg to 192 (added a 128 meg chip). The difference was remarkable. Poser4 figures that would barely load could now be manipulated freely. Then I replaced the 64 with another 128 for a total of 256 meg, this yielded only a slight improvement.

If you're looking for a cheap way to increase performance, install more memory.

DIMM chips are under a buck a meg (depending on size), SIMMs are about double that.

## President's Message

*Marian Havlik*

"I need to belong to LCPC — I have so many computer questions". This typifies many of the comments I've heard the past couple of months.

No matter how long we've used computers, we all have questions — on something.

We've added at least ten new members the past two months. LCPC welcomes them.

We had a good crowd at the August meeting to hear Robin Alexander tell us how to set up a database in MS Access. Robin explained the difference between a flat and a relational database, and the difference between MS Access and an MS Excel spread-

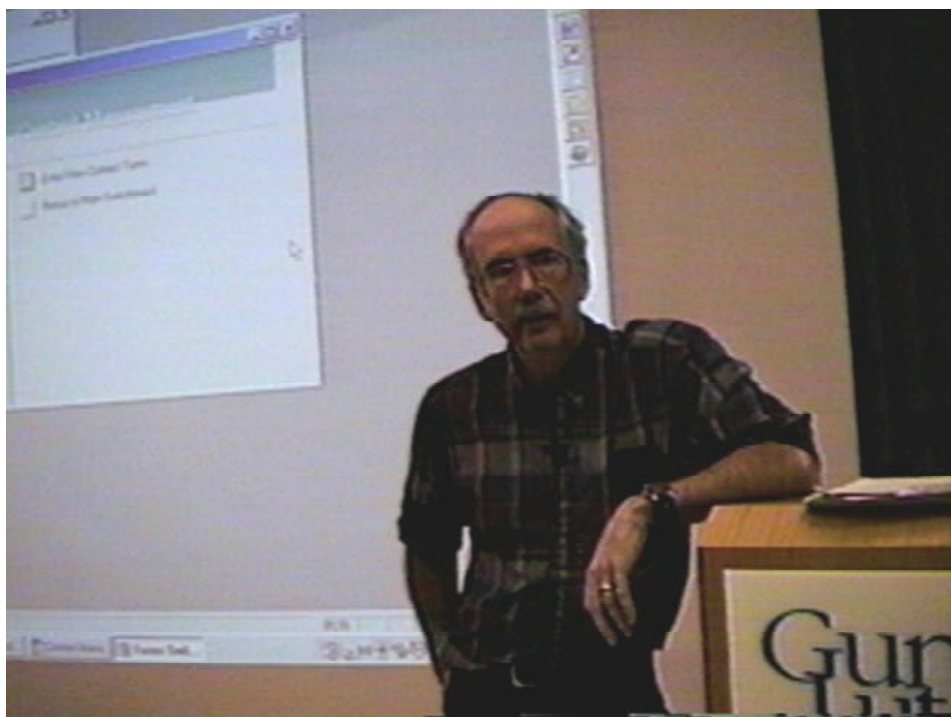
*Robin Alexander*

sheet. Since the meeting Robin was kind enough to answer a question of mine on a formula function in Excel.

## Free Cue Cat

If you ask for a catalog at Radio Shack, you'll get a free *:Cue:Cat* with software. A *:Cue:Cat* is a mouse without buttons that looks like a cat, ready to pounce on a mouse. The *:Cue:Cat* reads bar codes from the Radio Shack and other catalogs, ISBN numbers, and similar interactive bar code features. Scan a bar code and you'll get the

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

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corresponding page in the Radio Shack catalog on their web site. This bar code scanner will also work on some other web sites. You can order a :Cue:Cat online at: [www.crq.com](http://www.crq.com)

Eventually a lot of things that have bar codes can be found on the web the same way. A :Cue:Cat is touted as "fun, and it will change the way you find information on the web". Some newspapers and magazines have sent one to all of their subscribers. The La Crosse Library has 2 :Cue:Cats for you to try out the technology.

I got mine, but am less than thrilled with it at this point. I had some trouble getting it set up and configured with AOL, and the registration number is long and complicated (this is emailed to you). But I don't like dangling attachments on my laptop, and I wonder if we'll be charged for upgrades? Overall, at this point I don't think I'll make that much use of the :Cue:Cat since I don't do that much surfing on the web. I'll give away a :Cue:Cat at our September meeting.

## Should LCPC consider a moderated/unmoderated listserve?

Between recent meetings, LCPC had several questions from members and potential members. I'd like to suggest that LCPC consider a listserv, possibly moderated for start-

ers. A listserv is a way to handle computer questions, as we did during August.

Basically, you submit a question or comment to a listserv, and it goes out to a group of people who have subscribed (no charge) to the listserv. You can subscribe or unsubscribe to a listserv at any time by sending a prescribed message. Common sense rules of courtesy govern all listservs. "Always think before sending a message" (I usually go over any message I send to be sure I mean what I say, and say what I mean).

In a moderated listserv, a moderator makes a decision as to the suitability of the question for the listserv. The moderator usually posts the email for the entire listserv. In an unmoderated listserv the email goes out to the entire group almost immediately. You are then free to respond to the message, or ask another question, or ignore/delete email. Sometimes listserv messages are archived so that you can check on past messages (we are not prepared to do that now). For an exceptionally well-run listserv check out the information on this listserv that deals with all kinds of mollusks:

<http://www.listserv.uga.edu/archives/conch-L.html>

Feel free to comment on this idea, either by speaking up at a meeting, or sending me an email. I'll collate the responses and email them to the group.

## PowerPoint

There was an article in the *Wall Street Journal* (April 26, 2000) on PowerPoint presentations used by the military. It seems as though all of the whistles and bells in this portion of MS Office were being used to excess. So the Pentagon declared war on electronic slide shows.

An order went out telling the military to cut to the pie charts and just get to the point. All that was needed was the information, and not an overwhelming blizzard of jazzy, but often incoherent visuals. A "PowerPoint Ranger" is a derogatory term for a desk-bound bureaucrat more adept at making slides than tossing grenades.

It seems that military briefings were being emailed, with slides of booming tanks and spinning pie charts, and were gobbling up so much of the Defense Department's bandwidth that they were slowing more critical communications between HQ and field units. A piece of technology that was supposed to improve communication, became a barrier to it.

However, PowerPoint shows no signs of retreating in the military. Indeed it seems to be spreading since they are teaching foreign officers how to use the software. A Duke University professor said "if we really want to accomplish something we shouldn't be teaching our allies how to use PowerPoint. We should give it to our enemies and we'd never have to worry about them again".

## 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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# Understanding Access

Carol M. Frank, secretary

The August 30 meeting had several new people attending who introduced themselves.

The problems brought by attendees were answered by Chuck, Shane and Darrell.

There were questions on managing AOL address book, AOL e-mail and Internet Explorer. There was a question about printing envelopes from CorelDRAW. Since they are printed from an HP printer, Shane suggested that they download an updated printer driver from HP. This led to a discussion about HP driver updates and about printers and inks from other printer companies.

Chuck demonstrated how to adjust performance settings in Windows.

Chuck also explained the differences between Windows 95 and 98. The main differences are that Win98 is better at registry cleanup, recovers from errors better, better auto back up system and a good system file checker. Win98 can also execute a program directly from cache memory without copying it.

The program was about Access, the database portion of MS Office, presented by Robin Alexander, accounting instructor at UW-L.

First of all, members are cautioned that not every version of *Office* has *Access*. Check carefully that the version you are buying has the features you want.

Robin started by explaining the differences between a real database and a spreadsheet.

Spreadsheets can be messed up more easily since cells can be moved around. In a

database, each row is a record, an object. Columns are fields and each field has an ID number to make it easier to find the data.

- In a database, changes are saved to disk immediately.
- Spreadsheets can do sums of cells, databases don't.
- Databases can hold more information than a spreadsheet.
- Databases have more structure, ease of putting in data, recording, selecting and processing data.
- Access can be used as an interface for larger databases such as Oracle, Sequel Service and DBII.
- Access can be used by several people at once without inconveniencing each other.

Robin showed how easy it was to get started by using all kinds of Wizards to create different kinds of simple forms. These forms can be modified in Design mode. There are different report forms that can sort data in different ways and can add graphics.

Access can make mailing labels and works with MS Word to do mail merge.

Marian asked which files could be imported. Robin answered that most data formats can be imported, such as Paradox, Comma delimited, and Excel.

Another question was if Printshop Deluxe can combine three mailing lists and print them out. Shane answered mailing lists can be done

in Printshop Deluxe by using its own special database. These files can be exported in a Comma delimited format.

Continuing on, Robin explained that Access is a relational database. That means data in one table can be related to data in another table, making for flexibility.

For example, a phone number table can relate to the main table of names and addresses by the use of linking fields. The relationship screen is used to set up relationships between tables. Subforms can be added to the main form for inputting data.

Robin showed an elaborate form with many tables used for questionnaires with links to other forms.

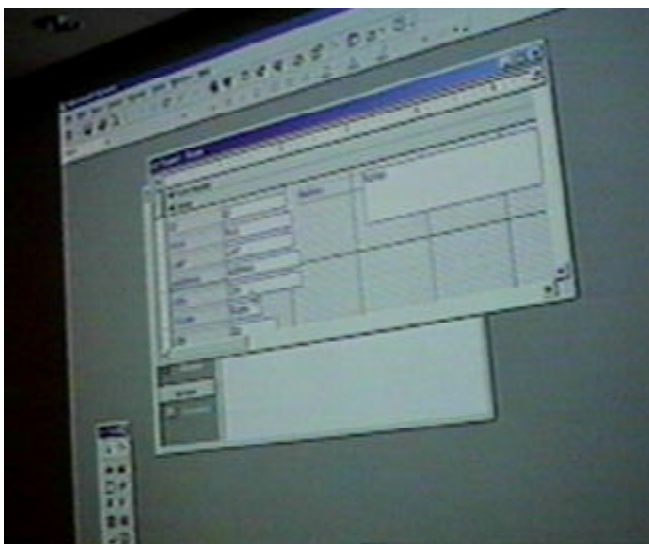
Access uses *Visual Basic* as its programming language and can be modified by those proficient in it to fit different purposes.

Robin concludes that Access' Wizards make it simple for beginners to get started in simple forms but the more elaborate ones do take some time and effort to assemble and adjust.

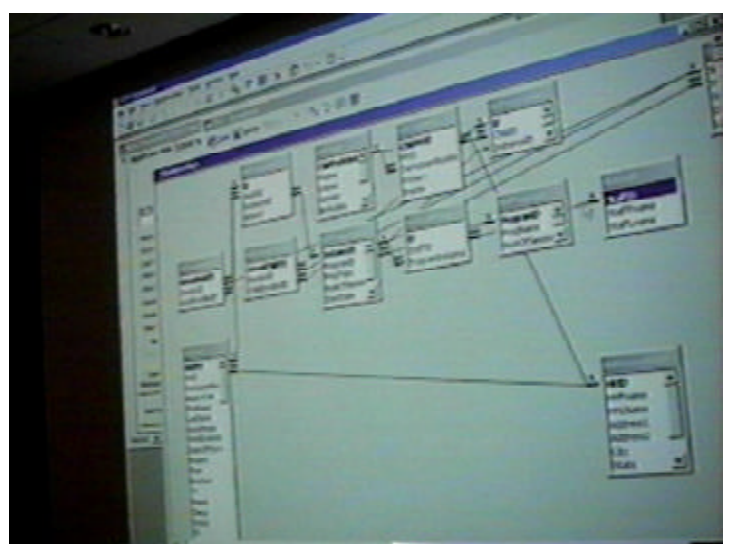
After the presentation, it was time for more questions. When Robin's computer is in sleep mode the HD space goes down to 200 KB and then becomes unusable. He had turned off hibernation. Chuck suggested limiting the swap file. He demonstrated this by going into My Computer, Properties, Performance, Virtual Memory. He recommends never to have more than three times the RAM allocated (minimum 32 MB). Since Robin's

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*Design Mode in Access*



*Relationship Field showing an elaborate linking of subforms*



# How is Your Privacy at Risk?

by the Freedom Fighters of Zero-Knowledge Systems

Reprinted from the *Phoenix PC Users' Group Newsletter*, July 2000

Your computer leaves a digital "fingerprint" alongside all your online activities and conversations.

Fingerprints in the real world fade with time, but in Cyberspace, your IP address is recorded in databases and

traffic logs alongside everything you do and say. The Web pages you view, the contents of your chat sessions, your newsgroup posts and even email you thought was long gone—much of it is catalogued by companies seeking to profit from whatever customer data they can collect.

Combined with tidbits of personal information you casually reveal online (your name and address, for instance) your computer's IP address can be linked to your real-life identity. Even if you provide false information to Web site registration forms or use can password-protected web services, your IP address, and thus your personal information, can be traced back to you.

**Your messages are sent in a format that can be read by anyone, just like a postcard.**

Internet traffic passes through a myriad of computers while it travels from your computer to its destination in Cyberspace. At any point along the way, technically-savvy snoopers can intercept your message and read it as if it were a postcard. Sensitive information, such as your real address or your opinions, can be lifted from your message without your knowledge, and be used against you.

**You can never take back what you say online.**

In the physical world, you can participate in a radio talk show, or converse with your seat mate on the bus without giving your name. But your online conversations—whether they be in chat rooms, web forums, or newsgroups—go on the record permanently.

Online conversation forums give the illusion of privacy, because you might use a login or screen name that's different from your real name. It "feels" like you're protected: your words scroll off the screen, seemingly gone forever. This couldn't be further from the truth. Your IP address is still recorded along-

side all your comments and stored in company logs. Your values, beliefs and opinions may evolve, but the things you say or write online today can be used against you years from now, out of context, and out of date.

**Web site "cookies" can be used to follow you around online.**

Cookies (bits of data placed on your computer by Web sites) are generally harmless and can enhance your Web experience by displaying customized content, like your local weather forecast, on a site you visit regularly.

But when more than one site uses the same cookie, such as the ones that web marketing companies place on your hard drive, you can be pretty sure they're doing it to track and profile your Web visits, or share information about you with other sites.

**Online marketers use Internet security weaknesses like the ones above to build a detailed profile of you.**

Because it's cheap and easy for companies to record your every mouseclick, the Internet has created an explosion in profiling. Where you live, what you earn, where you went to school, your hobbies, your credit history, your marital status... Marketers collect this kind of information to build a precise portrait of you, so they can target you with ads for the "best" car and the "best" vacation. One ad network claims to track 35 million Netizens and record data in 800 different categories for each.

Aside from having your mail box stuffed with bulk messages, insurance companies, employers, and anyone else can gain access to your profile, which can lead to discrimination or harassment. Impersonation, fraud, and other crimes that involve theft of your personal information are also on the rise. Easy Internet surveillance has even led to human rights abuses in countries that do not protect freedom of speech.

**Privacy policies and computer databases do not offer reliable protection.**

Privacy policies outline how a company gathers information about its users and what it does with that information. Most promise not to share your personal information with others, or at least tell you how to "opt out"

of these arrangements. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing if a privacy policy is being enforced. Privacy "seal" programs are popular, but can only certify that a company does what it claims in its policy. If a privacy breach occurs, these corporate-sponsored seal programs have no power to compel corrective action. Left to self-policing, companies large and small have frequently been exposed as privacy abusers.

Some "privacy" solutions claim they can protect your interests by storing ALL your personal information for you. These sites offer the opposite of privacy: most are services set up to deliver customers and their private data right into the arms of merchants. Storing all your personal information in a single database is dangerous as well: if the site is compromised, ALL of your personal information can be compromised.

*Provided by Zero-Knowledge Systems Inc., the creators of Freedom online privacy software. Freedom combines strong encryption and the power of a network of proxy servers to protect your online privacy. Freedom allows you to surf the web, send email, participate in chat rooms, post to news groups, filter cookies and eliminate spam, without compromising your privacy.*

*For more privacy information visit [www.freedom.net](http://www.freedom.net)*

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computer had 64 MB RAM, 192 MB of hard drive space was allocated for Virtual Memory.

Mike Larson asked what would be good technical writing software. Marian answered that it depends on who you are writing for and what they use the most. Most government agencies use MS Office and therefore she has to use it.

A question about digital cameras was why the software with it has the default as BMP and it can't be changed to JPG. Chuck answered that BMP is the least common denominator for pictures. There is no compression and so has the best quality. JPG will lose quality everytime it is saved.

# Meet New Members!

Gary Stelzig

Below is some info about ten of our new members that joined in July or August.

**Peter Schaettle:** I am retired, 22 years Purchasing Agent, 10 years Production Scheduling, and 3 years Lab Technician. All at La Crosse Rubber Mills Co (now La Crosse Footwear, Inc.)

Our computer at home is IBM Aptiva E3N with AMD-K6-2, 300 Mhz Processor, 64 MB RAM, 6.0 GB HD, 32X CD-ROM, 56K Modem. Software we often use includes: Windows 98, e-mail is Outlook Express. Internet browser is Netscape Communicator 4.72. We want to learn some computer "basics".

Note: Despite what they would like the reader to believe, the popular "Dummies" and "Idiots" books do NOT have everything for dummies and idiots. (see next comment).

Yes, I am a "Ham" radio operator. There is a lot of software written for ham radio applications. I have some on a CD which I got from another ham. He downloaded it from the Internet and put it on a CD.

My problem: I don't know how to install it on my computer. (It doesn't come with an installation program like commercial software does.) Can someone help me?

**Bob Pluntz:** I am retired from the CP RR, started out as a telegraph operator in 1957, ended my railroad career as a yard clerk using computers. I have a desk top computer and a laptop, compaq 1240. We use the laptop when we go to Florida in Jan for 3 months. The software we mostly use is Quicken and MS Works.

The problems I have is how to transfer my data files from the laptop to the desktop and the reverse. Also when I connect to AOL the desktop works great. Desktop uses a 28k modem. When I connect with the laptop, when I can, I continually get punked off. The laptop has a 56k modem. Thanks for the email, see ya.

**Robert and Delanie Stolpha:** In reply to your message, I will answer for both of us, since Robert is really a novice

I am retired from the Circulation Dept. of the LaCrosse Tribune and Robert is retired from the Milwaukee/Soo/CP railroad.

I have a 90 Mhz Pionex and Robert uses my OLD Packard-Bell (*since their flagship machine in a P90, try to imagine what the*

*P-B is, an 8086? -ed.*). I have a Microtek scanner that I don't use much and a Canon BJC-2000 printer and also a Panasonic dot matrix printer that I do not use at present. Robert has an old Panasonic printer that he uses once in a while. I have upgraded to Windows 98 and use the Norton AV software all the time. Robert uses Windows 95 and we both use AOL.

I have installed several different softwares, but Robert just uses his for e-mail and playing solitaire. I have also installed Ultimate Family Tree but haven't really gotten into it yet. I am planning on getting a new computer by the end of the year, preferably an HP. I also have two different softwares for creating cards, etc., and am looking into PGP, but haven't gotten far with that as of yet.

I want to learn how to correct more problems if they occur and Robert wants to learn how to use the computer better instead of relying on me for the answers (which I don't always have).

**Leon Wolfe:** In the past I have been an electronics tech (Navy), machinist, structural steel fabricator, and truck driver. Now semi-retired. I have a Gateway P5-166 computer with a Mustek 600 scanner and an HP-693 printer. I'm using Windows 95, Norton Utilities and AntiVirus, PaintShop Pro, Access, Excel, and Profili (an airplane wing airfoil plotter). I'm also am trying to learn HTML.

Most of my "work" is with graphics. Once in a while, I run into some quirk in a program, and hope the combined knowledge of the club can help me understand it. Maybe I can be of help to someone else,

**Bob Guggenbuehl, Sr.:** I retired from The Trane Company in 1993 after 41-1/2 years. I did some part-time work since then but called it quits in December of 1999. I purchased a TI-99 Computer in 1982. About 1984 I purchased a Commodore Plus 4 (*what is that? -ed.*). Then a Commodore 64. In 1991 I purchased my first PC. I have a Basics PC at home which I have been using for about 2 to 3 years. I purchased this at a computer store in Onalaska, kind of like 'we will build it the way you want it' type of thing. Basically, I use any kind of software on my computer that will do what I want it to do.

Most often and I believe the biggest reason I purchased a computer to begin with is

to keep track of my finances. Everything that I have that is concerned with money is in my "Quicken" program. I've been using that program since 1991 when I purchased my first PC. Of course, I've upgraded a few times since then. I rely immensely on my computer to keep track of these things for me. I usually come of with a computer problem now and then and really didn't have too many people to turn to. Then I saw the article in the Technology section of the La Crosse Tribune and decided that maybe this is what I'm looking for. So I decided to check it out. And here I am. I'm sure now that if a situation does come up where I need some assistance, I will know who to turn to.

No technical problems at the present time. Sometimes trying to explain some of the problems that I may be having at the time is a bigger problem then the problem that I'm having in the first place.

**La Vonne Buchner:** I am a retired RN. I worked with Marion a short time many years ago. We also worked on other activities during the years. While I worked at a full time job I didn't have much time to work on my computer. Since I retired I have traveled a lot to see the world. Also moved and did a lot of remodeling. I hope to get to it now in earnest.

My computer is a Compaq Presario 1410. Most of the time I use it for E-mail, look up things on the Internet that interest me and type up papers for my records. The first meeting that I attended I was very impressed with the way everybody was willing to help other members.

I have the problem of my E-mail coming with the end showing instead of the beginning. One tip I received was to download AOL 6.0 when it comes out in October. This I decided to do. I think I can learn from your speakers and also other problems that members have.

**Barb and Keith Barghahn:** Keith is the Operations Manager at Croell Redi-Mix. Barb has an in-home child care business, does the newsletter for Lancer Youth Hockey in La Crescent, eBay, plus does as many graphic design "favors" she can do for friends/teachers. They have a Quantex 450Mhz pentium III, HP laptop, 550Mhz AMD. They use

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Quicken, Corel 8.0, Auction Assistant (eBay), AOL 4.0, MS Office, and W98.

"We want to learn what ever general info we can, plus have questions answered. Our Win98 questions were answered at last meeting...I'm SURE we'll think of more questions!"

**Dick Dahlby:** "I retired a year ago from Trane after almost 44 years of service. Almost all of that time was involved with some aspect of computer-related data processing, information & technical services.

About a year ago, we acquired a Hewlett Packard Pavilion 4550 433Mhz Personal Computer, which has 64MB of memory, a 10GB harddrive, and a built-in 100MB Zip Drive. The system came pre-loaded with MS Windows 98 and accompanying software. We also acquired a 15 inch HP Monitor and HP 612C Deskjet Printer.

We are using CompuServe 2000 as our ISP for email and internet access. We use MSWorks for word processing, database, and spreadsheet applications.

I am interested in hearing how others are using their "home" computers, and certainly any problems others are having, and of course possible solutions to those problems. As a result I hope to expand my knowledge in the use of my PC, associated software, and the internet.

**Welcome ALL New Members!**

## Membership Info and Treasurers Report

*Gary Stelzig, Treasurer*

The club checking balance as of 09/13/2000 is \$500.63. August transactions include a \$120 deposit, bills of \$10.00 for a state filing fee, 12.66 for photocopies, \$19.80 for stamps, and \$48.08 for a La Crosse Tribune Ad.

At our August meeting six new members joined the club. They include: 1) Leon Wolfe, 2) Dennis Graves, 3) Bob Gueggenbuehl, 4) Dick Dahlby, 5) La Vonne Buchner, 6) Keith and Barb Barghahn.

Welcome new members.

Renewals due in September include: May Borgedahl, John Kuschel, and Arlene Wiese.

Past due include: George Frisch and Darrell Garner. Our club currently has 39 members. A husband and wife are recorded as one(1) membership

*Reprinted from User Friendly, Journal of the Los Angeles computer society, August 2000*

# Handy, Hidden Windows 98 Utilities

*Compiled by Greg Lenihan, Pikes Peak Computer Apps. Society*

Just before the new year, when Y2K concerns were still being hyped, I decided to make the switch from Win95 to Win98 (2nd Edition). Windows 95 still did everything I needed, but I kept reading and hearing about new utilities that were built into the new operating system that looked like good trouble-shooting aids. Each of these utilities can be accessed by typing the commands below into the Start-Run box.

## System Information

Command: msinfo32.exe

You can get there the long way by going to Start->Programs->Accessories->System Tools->System Information. What you get is information about the hardware and resources used, software components installed as part of Windows, and software currently loaded and running (called the Software Environment). To view any of these areas, click on a plus sign next to the heading shown in outline form. If you look under the Tools menu, you can launch other Win98 utilities, such as the System Configuration Utility, System File Checker, Registry Checker, and Dr. Watson. Want to know how long your system has been running since turned on? Look for the Uptime value in the right panel.

## System Configuration Utility

Command: msconfig .exe

This is a handy utility used to modify many of the settings for Win 98. Individual lines can be turned on or off in your config.sys, autoexec.bat, system.ini, or win .ini files. You can use it to turn off the annoying Scandisk function if you are forced to shut off your system, and can turn off any program starting at boot up. The command msconfig.exe is found in the C:\Windows\System directory where you can create an icon for it on your desktop. It's a very handy tool for troubleshooting startup problems.

## System File Checker

Command: sfc.exe

The System File Checker verifies the integrity of your system files in Win 98. Run-

ning this file will determine if any of your system files have been replaced or corrupted. It will then prompt you to replace them from your install CD. A nice feature of the utility is that by running it after installing new applications, you can find out what system files that application has installed or changed.

## Version Conflict Manager

Command: vcmui.exe

This utility enables you to revert to newer versions of certain files that are replaced when you install or reinstall Win 98. An install of Win 98 will overwrite DLL and other files even if they were newer than those installed by Windows. Launching the Version Conflict Manager will display a list of possibly troublesome files that you may then fix with the click of a button.

## Dr. Watson

Command: drwatson.exe

This tool can provide clues to software-related problems. Typing drwatson into the Run command box won't launch to a main screen or dialog box like the other utilities. Instead an icon will appear in your system tray. Right clicking on it will display the user interface. To be effective in troubleshooting, Dr. Watson should be running in the background when you are testing problems. That way you can look at log files generated and maybe get some meaningful error messages about what occurred to your system. This may mean loading it at startup so it can try to interpret why a problem or crash occurred.

## Hardware Diagnostic Tool

Command: hwindo.exe /ui

The Hardware Diagnostic Tool provides the same information as the Microsoft System Information Tool, except it is color coded to display problem areas and potential problems. Bright red displays problems and blue is for potential problems. Open the Run box in the start menu and type it with the /ui switch. It will not run without the switch.

## Automatic Skip Driver Agent

Command: asd.exe

When a software driver prevents the system from booting properly, this tool can help determine which driver is having problems, and how to fix it. Make sure two consecutive restarts were attempted where the same driver doesn't load. After typing in the command, a listing of all drivers not loaded should appear along with advice on what to do.

## Link Check Wizard

Command: chklnks.exe

This wizard is found on the Windows 98 install CD in the directory \Tools\Reskit\Desktop. It scans all of the shortcut files on your system, and checks to see if the link points to an existing application or document. If the associated application or document is not found, it lists that file as a dead link, giving you the option to remove it. Copy

Chklinks.exe to your Windows directory and create an icon on your desktop to use it.

## IP configuration tool

Command: winipcfg.exe

This tool provides the current information about your IP address assigned when you connect to your Internet Service Provider. It includes your subnet mask and the gateway your ISP is using. This information can be helpful in connecting your system to other computers on the Internet. IP Config is found in your C:\Windows directory.

*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. .*

## Safe Mode

Helen Gallagher

Reprinted from *Hard-Copy*, Journal of the Chicago Computer Society, August 2000

*[This is sound and basic advice from a fine source. Best to memorize it or earmark it or copy and file, or copy and post it so when/if you need it you can find it. You've been warned.]*

Typical of the misnomers continually developed at Microsoft, it sounds good, but it actually portends problems.

A Windows 95 or 98 computer boots up in Safe Mode when something is wrong. Because of a problem, the system is not able to load everything, so it boots with the minimum amount of devices and drivers. Usually, the keyboard will function, and maybe the mouse, but not much else. You'll find you have no access to the CD-ROM. No sound, no modem, no Zip disk, and no printer, all because there is a problem with one of these devices.

The blue Safe Mode screen has the word SAFE in all four corners. Its menu prompts you to choose: a Normal start-up, to go back to DOS, or to choose Safe Mode and let it load all devices, one at a time, so you can see which one fails.

The task is then to step through the boot process, note where it fails, and try to remedy the problem.

### Three steps to safety

- 1 From the Safe Mode menu, if you choose "Normal" the system will attempt to boot but likely to fail again.
- 2 Choose "Step-by-Step" so you can answer "Yes" to load each device and each driver. That's one way to find out which device is failing to load.
- 3 Choose "Command Prompt Only" if you need to get to the DOS prompt (C:). In a panic, this will allow you to access files on the hard disk and perhaps quickly copy them off to floppy disks for safety.

Once you get Windows to load again, you call search for conflicts by going to Start/Settings/Control Panel. Choose System and click on Device Manager. As you scroll down the list of devices, you will see an exclamation mark inside of a yellow triangle for any device that is not working correctly.

Most often, if you retrace your steps, you'll find that the last thing you loaded or

## Coming (very slowly) Reviews!

Ahem.

Most of these members took software at the Holiday meeting in exchange for reviewing it.

Unless you are deceased, please submit your articles, it's been ten months.

If you are deceased, please direct your survivors to submit their own reviews.

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

Kathy Gallagher ..... *Star Office*

Bill Brockmiller ..... *Go Back*

Marian Havlik ..... *Inkjet refill*

Darrell Garner ..... *Final Data*

Chuck Whalen ..... *Adobe ImageStyler*

Earl Heartt ..... *MS PhotoDraw*

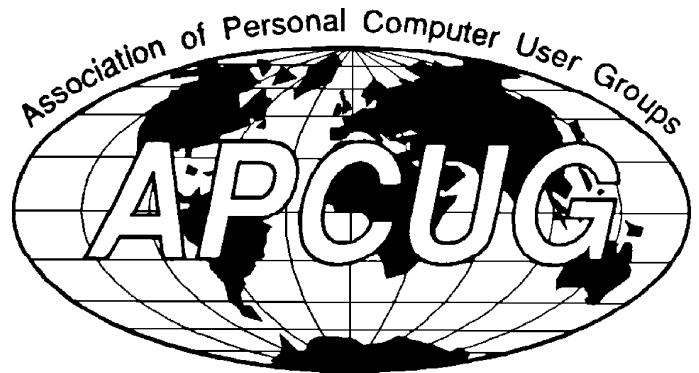
Lisa Doherty ..... *Via Page*

altered is in conflict with other devices. In our experience, the No. 1 problem that causes a computer to boot in Safe Mode is bad drivers (Drivers are software programs that load when the computer boots up). They are part of every device, printer, CD-ROM, games, mouse, etc. Sometimes drivers conflict with one another or become corrupt. That's when it is time to delete and reload the offending program, or obtain an updated driver from the manufacturer. Most hardware and software vendors now offer access to drivers, patches, and bug fixes on their Web sites.

*Helen Gallagher is a writer and owner of Computer Clarity, a Glenview, IL software consulting firm. She acts as the local scribe for CCS North Shore Chapter meetings the third Tuesday of each month, at the Skokie Public Library.*

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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](mailto: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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