

New Style



Newsletter of the LaCrosse PC Users' Group

volume 21 number 5

May 2001

This Month: May 30 at 7 PM

Overholt Auditorium, Gundersen Lutheran

Well, you almost ended up with me two months in a row, demonstrating DeLorme's excellent Street Atlas and Topo USA programs, and IBM's ViaVoice speech recognition software.

Instead, we are pleased to welcome Jason Rohweder of the Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center, United States Geological Service. Jason will discuss Resource Management Decision Support Systems for the Upper Mississippi River.

Let's see where our tax dollars are going.

program review: Delorme's Topo USA

Don Atkinson

Loyal readers of this newsletter will recall that about three years ago I reviewed *DeLorme's Topo USA version 1*, finding it to be lacking in the detail and with an absolutely horrible user interface, it was not worth the \$20 charged for it.

The new version is an entirely different animal. It comes on not one, but on six CDs, these are divided into different areas of the country. The program lists for \$99. Unlike it's Street Atlas companion, Topo USA installs easily and without fuss, consuming 15 meg of hard disk space.

While TopoUSA has mapping functions it is not really a substitute for DeLorme's Street Atlas companion program. Topo USA does not have the points of interest included in Street Atlas and lacks the routing function.

What it does have is detailed topographic maps of the entire country, well the 48 contiguous states. I have read reviews which

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April 2001 meeting

Carol Frank, secretary

Karen Kessilring started out the meeting with a question about anti-virus programs. Shane said that most new computers come with either a MacAfee or Norton anti-virus program. Dick Dahlby mentioned that on his computer the MacAfee Virus Scan can be found under Programs-accessories-systems. Generally, most computers with an anti-virus program turned on has a screen showing up when booting up the computer. If you don't have a anti-virus program, get one.

Dave Madsen uses Juno for his Internet, he also has Internet Explorer on his desktop. He can't seem to use Internet Explorer instead of Juno. Shane remembered that Juno and IE needed different TCIP protocols. Paul Pfaff and May Borgedahl said that Juno v. 5

can run at the same time as IE. Juno just needs to be minimized before starting IE. Don Atkinson says that he uses AOL to connect but IE to browse since IE supports multiple windows and AOL's browser doesn't.

Even if you don't want to use IE for your internet browsing don't remove it from your computer. Some Windows functions need it to work.

Mark Henderson asked if temporary internet files need to be deleted. Shane explained that web page files are stored on the HD to make reloading faster thenext time you access that site. You can make adjustments on how much HD space is used through either the Start menu—control

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Shane, Don and the little camera without a driver



Visit our homepage at <http://www.lcpconline.com>

My Tale of Woe

Richard Robusto, *Las Vegas PC User Group*

On Monday, February 26, I turned on my computer and got a message before it would boot up saying that my stack in the config.sys file was not correct. I tried repeatedly to open the *config.sys* file, but I could not get past the initial message. Well, I said, "No Problem, I'll use my trusty ole *Go Back Program*." Sure enough, it allowed me to go back 2 days and I booted up into Windows. Guess I took care of that. Now, I'll arrange the stack in the *config.sys* file.

The first keystroke and the system froze up. So I reboot. No luck. Then I try to get to *Go Back* again. No luck. It would not even begin to start the configuration so that the *Go Back* screen would come up.

After some serious thinking and using a few choice words, I hit upon the idea of using the emergency discs, which Utilities had me make when I first installed the Utilities Program. Ok, I guess I got this problem licked. I went through the procedures that it lead me through. Insert disc 2, then disc 3, then insert Emergency Utilities disc. Then there was a flashing of lights, programs were running and eventually, everything stopped. Well, what could it be? Then I went looking again and I got a message that the C drive did not have any fat clusters and could not be recognized. When I asked one of my knowledgeable friends what that meant, he told me that I had blown out all my fat clus-

ters on the C drive. I said, "How bad is that?" I got a loud groan and a bad message. That dreaded word REFORMAT! That meant all my files and anything else I had would be gone. So I took the computer to the Windows workshop on Saturday. A few members who were quite knowledgeable helped me out to get started in reformatting my hard drive.

I finally formatted the C drive. Had to do it twice. The first time something went wrong. Ultimately, I got it formatted and got ready to install *Windows ME*. I had been running *Windows 98* but when this problem happened I procured a copy of *Windows ME*. I was not ready to install ME but with this reformatting and being able to make a clean install instead of an upgrade, I used the ME program.

Ok, everything is done and I'm ready to roll. I had my genealogy program on my removable hard drive, so I was able to remove it while formatting and save it. However, after Windows ME was installed and running, I could not access the removable hard drive D. I got a lot of suggestions, such as I needed specific software to let my C drive recognize my D drive, etc, etc.

Well, when I got home and set up, I tried to get on line and get my mail. I found that the modem was not working. Great. That meant that I probably needed new drivers to make it work, which I couldn't download cause I couldn't get on-line. So I went down to Apex where I bought the computer and Eldon, the guy who puts these things together, put in the new driver for the modem and then it worked. Then I asked him about the software for the removable hard drive. He took a look and said that the drive could not be accessed cause it was a non-dos drive.

Non-dos? What is non-dos and how did it happen? How that happened is a mystery. Probably when I first used the Utilities rescue discs. He said I had to reformat it in order to make it work. (I started to shake) He said, "No way out. It must be done" So he reformatted it and sure enough he got it to work.

Of course I lost the entire genealogy program. I remembered that I had made a backup of the data file about a week before, so I figured I could get it back. When I finally got it back home and working, I rein-

stalled all the necessary programs including the Genealogy. Then I went looking for my backup disc. I found that I had made that 2 days before all this happened. Talk about LUCK! There must have been about 3 months work in there.

I transferred the data files into the program and it gave me a series of warning messages that the files weren't working properly and would not save any-

thing. At that point I started to sweat. With my pulse rate rapidly approaching top speed, I gingerly went in and changed the attributes in the properties windows. Finally, it started to work the way it should. Talk about RELIEF!!! At that point I had to go get a cup of that strong Starbucks coffee. It just reinforces that old saying, Backup! Backup! It's not IF you have a major crash, it's WHEN!

Now, if you want to acquire this set of rescue discs, I'd be very happy to send them to you. I don't anticipate using them again as I have forgotten how to spell the name of the company. Are you sure you don't want to blow your fat clusters out on your C drive?

I am now back on-line with a nice clean registry, which I am going to tackle next so that when I come over to your house I can fine tune your registry. Of course, that's after I utilize the Utilities rescue discs to get your computer in shape. And if by chance, it happens to blow out the fat clusters in the C drive, never fear, I know the procedure to fix it.

Cheers

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Richard Robusto is a member of the *Las Vegas PC User Group* as well the *Southern Nevada User Group*. You generally find him at most meetings and he is willing to share and help whenever possible.

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.

**Backup! Backup! It's not
IF you have a major
crash, it's WHEN!**

Membership and Treasurers Report

Gary Stelzig, *Treasurer*

The club checking balance as of 5/13/2001 was \$667.90. We had income of \$120.00. There were six renewals that paid last month: 1) Kathleen Gallagher, 2) Joseph Doucet, 3) Chuck Whalen, 4) Bill Brockmiller, 5) Jim and Sandy Wheat, 6) Shane Lambert. - thank you. Expenses paid in April are \$11.08 for newsletter copies, \$38.00 for our PO Lock Box renewal, \$48.08 for a Tribune ad.

Renewals due for May include: Dr Ernesto Brauer, Chuck Hosler, and Mike Larson

Our modest \$20 renewal fee for LCPC can be mailed to our lock box 2991 or to my address at 2032 South 30th LaCrosse, WI 54601 OR bring to next meeting.

Is Your Win98 CD Worn Out? Dont Fret!

COMPUTER GURU ROD REAM COMES TO THE RESCUE!

Rod Ream, Pasadena IBM Users Group

"Hey Rod," the e-mail started, "have you any suggestions how to get the original Windows 98 CD replaced? The darn thing no longer will install because of an `error' caused by corrupted CAB file."

"I've had to reinstall Win98 too many times to count in the last year," the e-mail continued, "and the CD seems to have a scratch or fault on it. I tried to clean it with a little rubbing alcohol. I would try Old Crow but I have consumed all that in the endless struggles (in lieu of pulling my hair out—cause there ain't any left anyhow...). Thanks."

Rod's reply is the sort of thing you need to cut out and paste on the side of your monitor. It has vital information you'll need if you bump into the same dilemma.

What's the CD Problem?

The message about corrupted CAB files can have several meanings; none of them mean the files are corrupted.

* **The CD is damaged.** Not likely unless it's badly scratched, cracked or someone wrote on the face with a ballpoint pen.

* **A timing issue.** Some CD players may be too fast and the data is being corrupted as it's unpacked. You can work around this in a couple ways: From the DOS prompt type setup /?. You'll see an option to run Setup without using SmartDrive. Turning this off prevents file caching for the CD and although considerably slower, may provide a more reliable file transfer. Disabling L2 and perhaps even L1 caching in the BIOS will slow things down even more.

* **AntiVirus software running.** Turn it off! If you are using McAfee, you may have to uninstall it to kill it.

* **An out of balance CD.** Just like a new tire. Rotate it 1/4 and put back into the drive. You'll hear or feel the vibration if this is the case.

The Cab Folder

If the original installation of Windows 98 (or any other version of windows) was performed by a manufacturer, you should already have the CAB files on the hard drive. The usual location would be \windows\options\cabs. If these files exist, you can run setup from that folder, either from Windows or by booting to the command prompt and changing to that folder.

If the contents of the CD \WIN98 folder are not on the hard drive, I'd certainly want to put them there. Aside from not having to hunt for the CD at times like this, Windows will automatically look there whenever it needs a file and will stop asking you to insert the CD.

The best way to copy the files is to boot to the DOS prompt and then use XCOPY, because it has the ability to "retry" difficult files. In your Windows folder, create another folder names CAB. Copy all the files (not the subfolders) from the CD from within the Win98 folder.

Here's How

Since the normal DOS prompt doesn't access the CDROM, you'll have to either re-enable the CD drivers in both config.sys and autoexec.bat or use the W98 boot disk.

Here's the process if you use the boot disk - C: is assumed to be the drive where W98 is installed and we'll assume that the folder named above does not exist: Use the boot disk and select "with CD support." Note the drive letter that's assigned (I'll use "E" here) E:

DIR WIN98 (This checks to see if the CD is readable C:)

```
CD WINDOWS
MD OPTIONS
CD OPTIONS
MD CABS
CD \WINDOWS\COMMAND
(next two lines are a single command line)
XCOPY E:\WIN98\*. *[space]
C:\WINDOWS\OPTIONS\CABS /S /E /V
```

When the file copy process is finished, remove the boot disk and CD, then reboot to the command prompt again. You can then run the SETUP from the cabs folder. If you still receive "corrupted" messages, it may be due to bus mastering and you'll need to slow the machine down with one or more of the steps above.

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Topo USA from page 1

have criticized this program for inaccuracy. Unless you were planning on using the program to go hiking in pitch blackness, using a GPS I don't see the importance of absolute accuracy in such a program.

How will the average consumer use this program? For travelers, hikers and hunters it allows you to get a view of the area you will be traveling in. Plan your route and anticipate scenic spots and tough areas along the way. As a motorist this program allows you to decide which route to take. Go around the mountain or over it? Possibly a much longer route is more fuel and time efficient because you're not going over just one mountain but three, climbing 2,000 feet from the valley to the pass of each mountain.

Also, it is just a fun thing to have as you're traveling along. When we went to Las Vegas last October, Jack Storlie kindly lent us his laptop. I installed Street Atlas and Topo USA on it. When were in the Valley of Fire Park, I simply brought out the laptop and was able to answer Carol's question of how much higher the surrounding peaks were.

Let's assume that you're driving toward Jackson Hole, Wyoming from Yellowstone National Park. As you drive along Highway 26 you notice the large mountains to the North-West. You recognize them as "The Giant Breasts" or, if you prefer the French version, "Le Grand Tetons". Using Topo USA's drawing function you can draw a line from your current location on Hwy 26 to Disappointment Peak, noting that it is over a mile above you and 6.59 miles distant at an bearing of 284.3 degrees. Lines can have multiple legs, the program will determine the bearing, leg length and total length.

The program instantly supplies the latitude and longitude of any point in degrees and minutes to three decimal places.

The search function returns information about various landmarks, it finds Old Faithful Geyser as easily as it finds Tensleep, WY.

The program can draw a 3-D representation of the current map, much easier for our minds to understand. (see page 5) You select the direction you are looking (full 360 degrees) and the vertical angle (lookdown) between 15 and 90 degrees. Depending on the map, changing the lookdown angle can yield dramatically different looking maps.

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The Internet Explosion!

It's everywhere-and it's terrific

By Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

Wherever you look—the newspaper, radio, even *The New Yorker* for goodness sake—you'll find someone pitching a new dot.com. For the most part, these sites contain useful, if not spectacularly valuable content. And it's just the tip of the iceberg. Because as we break through into 2000, you'll see thousands of new and exciting sites.

Not more than a year ago, industry pundits (nope, not me) suggested we'd watch television and movies on the Internet. And we wouldn't have to buy software in the future. Everything you needed would be on the Internet, available either for rent, on a per-use basis, or free if you'd look at some advertising.

I was the first on my block to disagree.

I remember arguing with a guy pitching a Web site that lets you share your schedule with others. I explained to him how much more comfortable it was having my contact database here on my PC, safe and sound. *Why in the world I said would anyone in his right mind stick vital data-name, addresses, phone numbers—on the Internet?* (The guy went on his way, ignored my advice, and probably sold his site for millions.)

I still get that feeling of well-being loading my contact manager from my hard drive. But I've also become enamored with a handful of sites. Some have cool applications that let me collaborate with others. Others give me massive amounts of free data storage. Some help me while a few offer entertainment.

Entertain Me!

Movies: MovieHead is loaded with free movies. With Microsoft's viewer or RealPlayer, you can view a movie while pretending to be hard at work. (I have the black and white classic *Bride of the Gorilla* playing while I write this column. It's a hoot! www.moviehead.com/cinema/horror/bride_of_the_gorilla.html.)

TV: iCraveTV is an outfit that broadcasts Canadian TV, much to the dismay of the networks. ABC, CBS, NBC, and others are readily available, along with plenty of commercials. Try it, if for no other reason than you can do it.

You'll need RealPlayer. When the site asks you for an area code, use 905. Then lie and say you're in Canada and accept their agreement. Depending on your bandwidth, the picture and sound can be exceptionally good.

Lets Collaborate!

AnyList: If you want to create and share next years holiday wish list so friends and relatives far and wide know exactly what you want, try AnyList. Among other tricks, AnyList lets you collect and collaborate information using surveys, by keeping track of dates and events (say, a project or scores for a sporting event), or by creating a shared journal to keep track of special events. www.anylist.com.

Give Me Some Help!

Keen and Expert City: Even the most hardened, technology-fearing Luddites will be amazed with these two sites.

My favorite is Expert City because of its interactivity. Log onto the site, ask the question, and one of a dozen experts will bid on your job. (You can still try it for free.)

What's the most intriguing is their ability to remotely access my computer and show me, step-by-step, how to resolve a computing problem. Better, I can grab their BuddyHelp applet (www.buddyhelp.com) and help someone else using the same type of software.

Keen provides advice on hundreds of subjects by old-fashioned means—the phone. Find a subject and click the button. In seconds, your phone rings and you're talking to the "expert." The cost? It ranges from free to 25-cents a minutes. The expertise? Hey, I don't know but I'm sure dazzled by the technology, folks <<smile>> (www.keen.com and www.expertcity.com)

While the Keen and Expert sites are fun, I also have a few favorite help sites, none of which are interactive. But they supply free, solid support:

- **32bit.com forums**
<http://www.32bit.com/forums/>

- **NoWonder SupportBoard**
<http://www.nowonder.com/>

- **Support City** (This is a terrific site! It tells you where to get help, provides manufacturers' site help policy, and links to third party support. <http://www.supportcity.com/>)

- **Experts Exchange**
<http://experts-exchange.com/>

Storage? We've Got Some

i-drive: Last year I looked at Freedrive, a web site that lets me share files with others. Two problems: A kludgy interface and limited space. But I recently found i-drive, a substantially better site that does tons more than freedrive.

I use i-drive in two ways. If I have a large file to share with others (like that Alien Song MPEG you saw at a recent PIBMUG meeting), I send it to i-drive. You head for my i-drive and pick up the file at your leisure. Why not use e-mail? Because most ISPs limit the size of an e-mail attachment to 2- or 3MBs.

i-drive has other terrific advantages over similar sites. It interacts with my PC: Uploading files is a snap because a small java applet pops on screen with a directory of my hard drive. Click a button and the file's on the way to the i-drive secure server.

The other way I use i-drive is to synchronize my hard disks files onto their server. A small application-i-driveSynch-sends entire directories to i-drive at regularly scheduled intervals. Right, a free backup program for critical files.

I use it when I'm working on a PC World column or the PIBMUG newsletter. Files are saved quickly and efficiently offline.

Another i-drive *big* deal is storage—if you play your cards right, you can have 70MBs.

Start by going to www.mp3.com and head for any music category. Find something appealing (there's lots and most of them have free samples) and click on a specific title. (If you're struggling, try this one: http://artists.mp3.com/artists/63/liona_boyd.html.)

Then look for the link that says *Save to i-drive* and click it. Once on the i-drive site, register and the music will automatically be sent to your account. By first visiting the MP3 site, i-drive boosts your storage size.

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I-drive's InfiniteDrive tab can hook you to another music site—*Epitonic.com*. Do a sideload (essentially a transfer from Epitonic to your i-drive site) and you get a 30MB reward.

One concern I have is security. The site has two privacy statements. They say (look in *Corporate* and then *About Us*) that my data is encrypted using 128-bit SSL before it's sent from my web browser and their servers. Files are stored on i-drive database servers that aren't reachable directly from the Internet. Data is stored on systems that are fully redundant with fully mirrored drives, and locked in a datacenter that's protected 24 hours a day by security personnel, surveillance cameras, and biometric door locks. Sounds good.

At the same time, they also say, *although information that you submit may be password-protected, i-drive does not guarantee the security of any information transmitted to or from this web site. You agree to assume the security risk for any information you provide using the Services.*

Can a hacker (worse, an unhappy tech support or engineer from i-drive) get access to my personal and private data? I don't think so but I just can't be sure.

So for now, everything I upload that I consider important gets encrypted. (Here's a quick and dirty way to do it: Zip the file using PKZIP and password protect the Zipped file.)

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World Magazine, frequently writes for Forbes ASAP, and is the president of the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He often writes with his tongue in his cheek. Write to him at stevebass@earthlink.net 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.

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You can customize the map display. Choose statute or nautical miles, or kilometers. Bearings can be true or magnetic north. Select to include or exclude transportation, geographic, or parks and recreation features. Display contour lines, latitude/longitude map grids, placenames, or exclude them as you wish.

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panel—internet—temporary files or in IE View—Internet Options—Temporary Internet files. When this allotted space is full, temporary files are dumped to make room for more.

Cookies can be deleted as well. Cookies are needed by certain sites in order to work on your computer. If you delete those cookies, the next time at that site the cookies are put back in.

Mark H. wants to be able to print web pages without having to copy and paste the text into a word processor. Shane explained that web pages can be printed from the browser with graphics. If the graphics aren't wanted the text does need to be cut and pasted. If this is a lot of work, check Shareware.com for any programs that automatically strip the graphics and print the page.

Jack Storlie talked some about the proposed merging City and County computer services. There was by letter by him in the previous Sunday's LaCrosse Tribune.

There was some talk about computer technical support. It seems that only IBM has good tech support. Shane recommend that with a new computer purchase, to pay for one year of on site technical support. Otherwise, if the com-

puter needs work it is gone for a minimum of three weeks while it is sent to the Twin Cities.

Don Atkinson had bought a small USB camera from a remainder bin at last year's computer show. He has no driver for it. Don had looked in *Dogpile.com* without success. Shane recommend searching *Windrivers.com* for a driver. Without a driver the camera is just a computer top decoration.

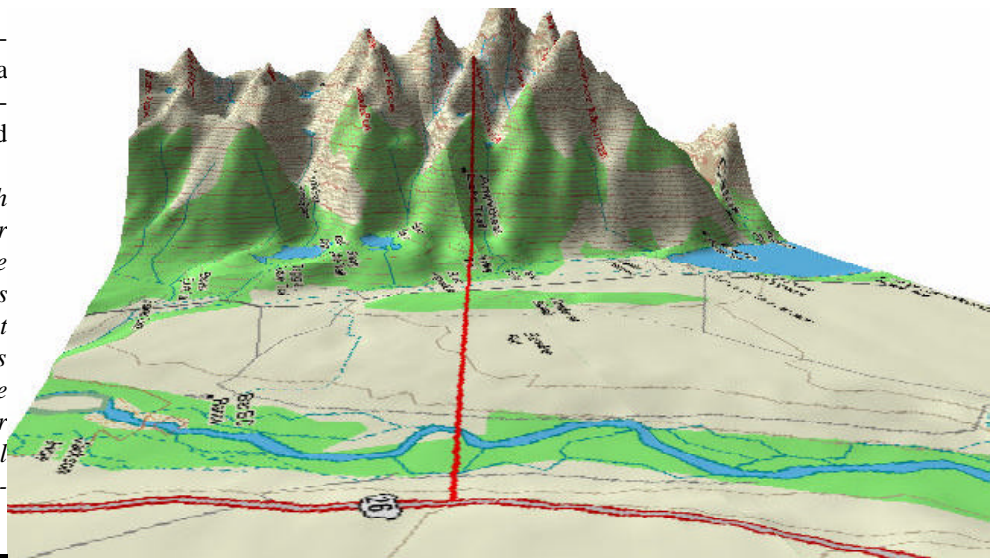
The presentation was given by Carol Frank and Don Atkinson on scanning. A flatbed scanner was brought and Alvin Fritz contributed two photographs to scan for demonstration purposes. Photos can be adjusted before and after scanning. However, preadjusting before scanning can give better quality results.

Film scanning was discussed. Film scanners are rather specialized and best for those who are serious about their photography and have lots of negatives and slides.

Optical Character Recognition was demonstrated using Textbridge Pro. The most important tip about OCR is to have the copy as straight as possible on the scanner. Any crookedness can distort the letters and make OCR almost impossible to do. It is better to rescan if the first scan is unsatisfactory.

No video is available of this presentation.

The drawn chart line from Hwy 26 to Disappointment Peak on the 3-D map. Notice that the contour lines and map legends appear on the 3-D representation.



If you have any interest in topography or may be travelling, Topo USA contains an incredible wealth of information in a small box.

Fifteen years ago, we bought some local topo maps so Carol could scout locations for her landscape painting. At that time USGS maps were \$3 each (which I don't

believe came anywhere close to their cost of production). This program contains the data from hundreds of thousands of these maps.

Think of the storage space you'll save.

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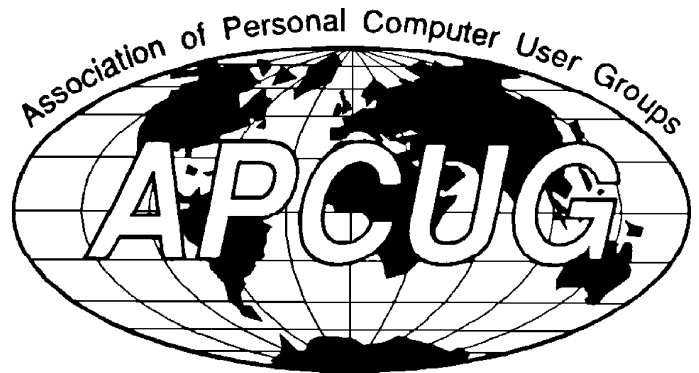
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LCPC is a member of APCUG

New Style is published eleven times a year, monthly Jan-Oct and a combined Nov-Dec issue

General meetings are held the last Wednesday of Jan-Oct in the Overholt Auditorium at the Lutheran Hospital. The combined November-December meeting is held the second Wednesday in December.

Thank you, Gundersen-Lutheran, for making this wonderful facility available.

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, please submit articles by the 13th of the month. Upload to:

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

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