

# New Style



Newsletter of the La Crosse PC Users Group

Volume 23 Number 10

October 2003

## What's Inside

- ❏ Treasurer's Report
- ❏ Power Desk Replacement
- ❏ New Member Bio
- ❏ Grandma's On The Net
- ❏ Attack of the Worms

## September Meeting

*By David Donskey*

The presentation was on how to deal with SPAM presented by Scott Finch, IST Computer Specialist with City of Lacrosse. Scott explained that SPAM is a generic term for unsolicited commercial e-mail.

Spam can be seen as "Postage due marketing" in that you pay for the services that they use to send it to you. SPAMer's collect e-mail addresses from Chat rooms, Newsgroups, user profiles and the selling of e-mail addresses by anyone you give it to such as for shareware downloads and Web sites that request this information.

Therefore Scott recommended that you use a second or third e-mail address for these purposes. Web-based e-mail such as is offered though yahoo or hotmail are ideal for this purpose. Also review web sites privacy policy before giving out personal information.

Outlook has a junk mail feature under "tools" menu, rules wizard can be set to filter by address, subject line, Forward by rule, by sender, by subject etc can also be used to control incoming mail. Putting messages into separate folders for easy viewing. AOL has "mail controls" for these purposes.

Some other programs that can be used to block/filter SPAM are Mailwasher, and GFI mail essentials. Most of these programs and others SPAM killer use blacklists of know spammers to block messages from their sites.

Also reporting spammers to sites such as [www.spamabuse.net](http://www.spamabuse.net), or [www.cauce.org](http://www.cauce.org) can help to detour SPAM on the Internet. We all need to do our part to reduce this problem.

And recently on CNN:

(CNN) — Sometimes when I'm busy mass-deleting huge chunks of "spam" — those unsolicited "junk" e-mails — I like to ponder on what's really important in this world. If I could rearrange my life with different priorities, how would I do it?

[Read the whole story - Click Here](#)

## October Meeting

October 29th, 7:00pm

Lutheran Hospital Overholt Auditorium

## "Double Click and Call Me in the Morning"

*Use and Misuse of Medical Web Sites*

Dr. Ernesto Brauer

Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center

## Bad Memory?

*By Shane Lambert*

It was 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 22nd and after a long day of work I resolved to sit down and work on this issue of the newsletter. I sit down, turn on the computer and get the terrible news that something is wrong in the system. The machine powers up, give me four beeps (1-1-1-1) and powers down. I used to know the beep codes for this computer but haven't heard them in so long I don't know anymore.

After opening the hood and checking all of the connections I decided to call it a night and look up the problem at the office. I was able to quickly find the information at [www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com) and learned that four beeps indicates that the first 64 Kb of memory are bad leading me to believe the SIMM chip in the system is bad. I have three of them so I took the first one out and moved some around and had the same problem.

I took all the memory out and booted the computer and got a different beep code (1-3-1-1). I checked this and the documentation says that means there is 0 kb installed. I did this to determine if there was any memory on the main board that might cause the problem. I was at a loss and didn't know what to do.

A call was made to a certified HP technician I knew and the answer was so incredibly simple. He told me to wipe the contacts on the memory chips with a lint free cloth and reinstall them. It worked - and I was ready to finish the newsletter!

## La Crosse PC Users Group (LCPC)

### Treasurer's and Membership Report

September 2003

*Dick Dahlby, Treasurer and Membership Chairman  
ddahlby@cs.com*

**October 15th, 2003**

Income received in September was \$120.00 from five membership renewals and one new membership. The renewals were: Paul Pfaff, Arlene Wiese, Eileen Temte, Betty Mullenbach, and David Donskey. Thank you all for your continued interest and support. Our new member is Walter Altus, Jr. Please see the Meet the New Member column for a brief "bio" from Walter.

September expenses were: \$14.80 for stamps, and \$13.19 for 25 copies of our September Newsletter.

The LCPC checking account balance as of 10/15/2003 is \$1,312.15.

We presently have 51 enrolled members in LCPC.

Members whose annual membership renewal fees (dues) are presently past due are: (May) Stub Johnson, (August) Barb and Keith Barghahn, and Leon Wolfe, (September) John Benton, and May Parnow.

Membership renewals due in October are: Lita Bower, and Arthur Osborn.

Annual dues are \$20 (individual or couple), and checks should be made payable to La Crosse PC Users Group. Dues may be mailed to either of the following addresses, or paid to me at the October 29 meeting.

La Crosse PC Users Group	Dick Dahlby
P.O. Box 2991	501 Olivet St
La Crosse, WI 54601-2991	La Crosse, WI 54603-1318

Reminder to all members:

If you become more than three (3) months delinquent in paying your membership dues, you will be subject to removal from the ListServ, and from LCPC. So please, be prompt with your renewal fees.

Also, if you change your email address, it is very important to inform LCPC of the change, so that the Membership ListServ (membersonly@lcpconline.com) can be changed accordingly. To do so, please send me an email with your new email address and I will make the change to the ListServ. If you haven't received an email from the ListServ within the last two weeks, please let me know that also, so that I can check on it. Thank you.

## Remember PowerDesk? It's history.

The replacement is Explorer Plus and it's a brilliant make over of PowerDesk. That's because it was created by Mike Kronenberg and the team who wrote the original product.

If you want to just head for the discount pricing, jump here:

**<http://snipurl.com/ExPlus>**

More About Explorer Plus

=====

Explorer Plus is a file manager, something you'd use instead of Windows Explorer. It has innumerable cool features:

\* Mutli-panes: I always have it open to side-to-side panels, but you can set it up with top/bottom panels or no panels, just like Windows Explorer.

\* Layouts: This has been a wish for years. I set up dual panes for two folders I use often--the files I use for the PCW online newsletter and Home Office column. Then I save it as a layout. I have another layout for the user group folder, another for the annoyance book, and about eight other layouts. I can instantly switch among the layouts by clicking a tab near EP's toolbar. This, folks, is VERY cool.

\* Viewers: The built-in viewer lets you preview practically any file, document, multimedia or image.

Even if you're familiar with PowerDesk, Explorer Plus has tons more to get excited about. Read the details here:

**[http://snurl.com/ExPlus\\_whatIs](http://snurl.com/ExPlus_whatIs)**

BTW, unlike PowerDesk and its multitude of problems, Explorer Plus was thoroughly beta tested by many PIBMUG members and it's 99% bug free.

Discount Pricing

=====

Okay, folks, here are the details. Novatix's Mike Kronenberg put together a special offer for people on the PIBMUG and stevebass lists. Instead of paying \$39.95 for the download (or \$44.95 for Physical Shipment CD which includes an option for a free download), you get 25% off the retail price and pay only \$29.95 (or \$34.95).

This way you <don't> have to deal with a separate mail-in rebate and get best price instantly. You can also take advantage of similar discounts for SendPhotos.

(Remember, this special pricing cannot be combined with any other offers, rebates, or special discounts.)

Order page:

**<http://snipurl.com/ExPlus>**

## Meet a New Member, Walter Altus

*Dick Dahlby, Membership*

Following is a brief "bio" from Walter Altus (altusnorth@aol.com). Walt joined LCPC at the September meeting. Welcome Walt, and thanks for sharing a little about yourself with us.

=====

I will try to relate here some of my past and present experiences with the Personal Computer.

My earliest experience with computers goes back a little farther than the advent of the IBM PC. My first computer was a kit that I assembled (I can't remember the name now.) It worked, but was extremely cumbersome and didn't do much to encourage its use. Then came the TRS-80 Model I which was far superior. It had 4K of memory and an audio tape recorder for storage. I didn't learn to use machine language, but I became fairly proficient in BASIC using it and its follower, the TRS-80 Model III. I even wrote some software that computed a nearby village's Police Department payroll, using GW Basic.

I abandoned writing software shortly after that and haven't written anything of consequence since.

I purchased one of the first PC machines that Tandy offered and have watched the physical size (capacity) of hard disks get progressively larger ever since. The first one I bought had a 10 meg capacity which looked monstrous at that time. A few months ago I bought a new unit for my granddaughter's use; it has a 40 Gig drive, still not large by today's standards but what a difference.

I now use a Gateway with an 8 Gig drive, and I expect that it will soon need to be replaced by a larger one and am debating if I should go to high speed digital or not. It may soon be inevitable since my granddaughter lives with me and the high speed will buy me a larger portion of the ISP time.

I was happy to have had the opportunity to meet with several LCPC members at the September meeting, and to find acquaintances from other places among the membership. I am pleased to become a member of LCPC and I look forward to the association with its members and to continue learning.

*Walt*

---

## The Linux Files

*By Shane Lambert*

Looking for the Linux column? Sorry, I have been so busy with work and preparations to move to our new office that I just did not have time to write the column this month. I am still active in the La Crosse Linux Users Group and will return to writing the column once we get settled into our new office and things get back to normal. As always, if you have Linux questions feel free to visit <http://www.lclug.org> and ask!

## Grandma's on the Net!

Grandma used to make us cherry pies and call us on the phone.

She would talk to us for hours; now she leaves us all alone.

We miss her homemade biscuits and I'll make this little bet -

If you want to contact Grandma, you'll have to surf the net.

Grandma's surfin' the net, yes, she's surfin' the net.

We've been calling her all morning and we haven't got her yet.

She's on her e-mail network with all her electronic friends.

If you want to talk to Grandma, you'll have to surf the net.

Grandma's never surfed at Malibu or caught a wave at Waikiki.

She's never seen a surf board; hang ten doesn't mean a thing, you see.

She's never met a beach bum; to her Moon Doggie is just a pup. But when she heads to her computer, you know the surf is up.

Grandma's getting older and her eyes are getting dim.

Her random access memory is half of what it's been.

When St. Peter comes to call, she'll say I can't go yet.

He'll have to wait on Grandma, 'cause Grandma's surfin' the net.

## MrExcel's Tips of the Month

### Preventing Duplicate Entries.

When you set up a worksheet to collect data, you may often wish to prevent someone from entering a duplicate entry. For example, you may wish that an invoice number or a customer name is entered only once in a list. You can use **Validation** to enter a formula to catch entry of duplicate data.

1. Select a range of cells where data will be entered. For this example, select cells A2:A20.

2. Choose **Data, Validation**.

3. Select the **Settings** tab.

4. In the **Allow** box, select **Custom**.

**Note** – After selecting Custom, the title of the third box in the dialog box has changed to **Formula**.

5. Enter the following formula into the **Formula** box: =COUNTIF(\$A\$2:\$A\$20,A2)=1

6. Select the **Error Alert** tab.

7. In the **Title** box, enter **Duplicate**.

8. In the **Error message** box, enter **The value you entered already appears in the list**.

This technique relies on the COUNTIF function. The COUNTIF function will count how many entries in the input range A2:A20 match the cell that was just entered. We will always expect this number to be 1. If the result of the CountIf is higher, this means that the recently entered cell already exists elsewhere in the list. In this case, the Data Validation will take over and alert the user that the value has already been entered.

### Keep the User in a Range.

Sometimes you may want to keep the user restricted to viewing only certain cells in your spreadsheet. You might try using hidden rows or columns, but many Excel users can unhide these rows.

There is a ScrollArea property which will effectively keep the user from poking around in hidden formulas. The ScrollArea property is not accessible from the main Excel window – someone would have to venture into the VBA window to change this setting.

1. Press Alt+F11 to open the VBA window

2. Press Ctrl+R to display the Project Explorer Pane

3. In the Project – VBA Project pane, click on the + icon next to your workbook and then on the + icon next to Microsoft Excel Object.

4. Still in the Project – VBA Project pane, click on the worksheet name. Press F4 to display the properties window for the worksheet.

5. There are 11 properties that you can adjust for the worksheet. The 9<sup>th</sup> one is ScrollArea. Click to the right of the words ScrollArea and enter a range such as \$A\$1:\$E\$10.

6. Press Alt+q to close the VBA Window and return to Excel. Now, the user will not be able to navigate to any cells outside of the range A1:E10.

### Add a Comment to a Formula.

Excel allows for some very powerful formulas to be created. You may find that you have worked a while to perfect a formula. Then, when you return to the spreadsheet weeks or months later, you have to spend just as long to remember how the formula works and what it does. This tip lets you add a note to yourself about the formula.

Many are aware that you can add comments to a cell using Insert > Comment. Cell comments are great for notes to the user of the spreadsheet. An indicator shows up in cell, alerting the user that there is a note attached to the cell. This trick, however, allows you to add a comment to a formula. This is better for notes to yourself – the comment will show up in the formula box when you select a cell.

Use this trick to add a comment to a formula: at the end of the formula, add a + (plus) sign, the N function, and an open parentheses; then type your comment in quotation marks, and close the parentheses. You can view the comment in the formula bar when you select the cell.

**Example:** =(A1+A2)\*4.71+N("Total Sales for January and February \* Rate of Exchange")

How it works

The N function is rarely-used in Excel and is provided for backwards compatibility with other spreadsheet programs. It can be used to convert a date to a serial number or a number to a number. However, whenever the argument of the N function is text, it will always return a 0. Thus, we can add the N("text") function to any formula without affecting the formula's result.

These tips are from "Mr Excel ON EXCEL" (ISBN 0-9724258-3-7) by Bill Jelen and Joseph Rubin. Reprinted with permission. See more tips online at [www.MrExcel.com](http://www.MrExcel.com)

**Editor's Note:** These tips were sent to me for use here and from what I understand will be a monthly thing. I hope to see more from Mr. Excel and I will keep in touch with him to make sure these tips keep coming.

If you know of other monthly tips about computer topics that might work in this newsletter, please forward the information or web site address to me. It would be nice to have a steady supply of tips, tricks or stories for this newsletter.

Of course, I always appreciate member articles and will drop all other information in favor of user articles. If you have a topic you'd like to write on, send it to me at [lcpc@shanelambert.com](mailto:lcpc@shanelambert.com).

## Attack of the WORMS

### Did We Learn Anything?

*By Ira Wilsker*

Recent weeks have seen the most prolific spread of computer viruses and worms in history. While computer viruses and worms have been around for years, the recent attacks of Blaster and Sobig-F, broke all records for the speed of dissemination and the numbers of computers infected. Fortunately, the payloads carried by these programs was quickly identified and neutralized before they could wreak more havoc on our cyber infrastructure.

While annoying and troublesome, they apparently did not carry a very dangerous payload.

My first indication of the Blaster attack was a cryptic call I received asking about some bizarre error statement that appeared in a window that popped up; she had opened no suspicious emails, and had updated antivirus software installed. A quick search turned up a warning from Microsoft dated mid-July that there was an identified vulnerability in Windows NT, 2000, and XP, and that Microsoft had released a "Critical Update" patch. Users were advised to download and install this patch immediately. Other references, also from mid-July, were news stories on computer security that there was this vulnerability in some version of Windows, and that Microsoft had released a patch to eliminate the threat. Some pundits also speculated that it was only a matter of time until someone took illicit advantage of the vulnerability. I told her to download and install the patch, to see if that resolved the problem. Minutes later my daughter called from Miami and said that she just had this weird window open on her computer, and a cryptic statement appeared, identical to the other caller's. Likewise, she had opened no email attachments, and had updated antivirus software installed.

Two strange but identical symptoms within a matter of minutes, on two XP computers, hundreds of miles apart, seemed to be more than a coincidence, but was likely some type of new virus. I posted a request on the restricted "High Tech Cybercrime Consortium" mail list to see if anyone else had encountered such a strange occurrence. Within minutes I received several replies indicating that others had similar inquiries, but other than a suspicion that it was some type of new virus, no one had any other information. A search of the major antivirus sites turned up no new alerts. Within the next hour, I had received several more phone calls and emails appealing for help. By that time the first security alerts traversed the net that a new computer worm, named "Blaster" or "LoveSan" had been identified. Blaster was transmitted directly from computer to computer over the internet or networks without the traditional vector of email, by using a sophisticated utility that searched for other vulnerable computers to infect, and then infected them. The victim had no warning other than to find that his computer was compromised. Carrying a de-

nial-of-service payload, Blaster would have all infected computers attack the Microsoft

Windows Update server at predetermined times, in a coordinated attack. Most of the antivirus software publishers promptly updated their detection files, and provided a free downloadable utility to detect and remove Blaster from infected computers. Microsoft launched a media blitz encouraging users to download and install the security patch which had been released a month earlier, and published instructions on removing the worm. Microsoft took down the server that was the target of the attack. While there are many computers still infected with Blaster, it can no longer shut down Microsoft.

Before we had a chance to catch our breath following the Blaster attack, inboxes were flooded with a variety of emails with the topics "Details", "Thank You", "Your Application", "Approved", "That Movie", "Wicked Screensaver", or some variation, possibly using "Re:" as a prefix. That first morning of the Sobig-F assault, I turned on my computer, updated my antivirus software, and was greeted with an over-filled email box containing over 700 emails with suspicious topics. I use a free program, Mailwasher ([www.mailwasher.net](http://www.mailwasher.net)), to screen my email, and allow me to delete spam and viruses before they can get on my computer. Even though I was then not aware of Sobig-F, I knew better than to open suspicious emails, and to delete them. As with the Blaster attack, a similar sequence of notifications, antivirus updates, patches, and other fixes were made available in the hours following the onslaught. By that evening, I had received over 1200 copies of Sobig-F; the following day, I turned on my computer and found over 2000 infected emails, with additional emails arriving at the rate of several per minute; by the time I shutdown that evening, I deleted several thousand more emails. Sobig-F hijacks the address books of infected computers and repeatedly sends out emails with randomly selected "From:" lines concealing the source. Many servers automatically bounced infected emails, contributing to the avalanche.

Containing a payload that could launch a denial of service attack on multiple servers, as well as connect to a porn site, Sobig-F is scheduled to self-destruct on September 10.

So, what have we learned from this double-barreled attack? First, no matter how good it is, antivirus software may not protect us from rapidly spreading viruses and worms that become endemic before the publishers can respond; still, there is no excuse for not having frequently updated antivirus software installed. While Blaster spread through stealth, Sobig-F was a suspicious email attachment that often came from an acquaintance.

Practicing "safe hex" would prevent Sobig-F infections. Also, we had better pay attention when Microsoft announces critical security updates, and install them. We must frequently check for these patches at [windowsupdate.microsoft.com](http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com), and install them. It was bad enough to become a victim of the insidious attacks. It will be even worse if we do not learn from them, and act appropriately. More such attacks will inevitably follow.

## LCPC Board and Officers

**Marian Havlik**—President ..... 782-7958  
**HAVLIKME@aol.com**

**Chuck Walen**—Vice-President ..... 787-6678  
**cw@centurytel.net**

**Dick Dahlby**—Treasurer ..... 781-9356  
**Ddahlby@cs.com**

**Secretary** — Office Open

**Jack Storlie**—Programs ..... 788-6355  
**JStorlie@charter.net**

**Shane Lambert**—Newsletter Editor ..... 780-2356  
**shane@shanelambert.com**



**WWW.APCUG.ORG**

**LCPC is a member of APCUG**

---

New Style is published eleven times a year, monthly January through October with a combined Nov-Dec issue. General meetings are held in the Overholt Auditorium at the Lutheran Hospital on the last Wednesday of January through October with a combined November-December meeting on the second Wednesday in December. A list of our upcoming meeting topics is available at our web site at <http://www.lcpconline.com>. 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.

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

The monthly newsletter is printed the Wednesday before the meeting, please submit advertisements and articles by the 13th of the month to [editor@lcpconline.com](mailto:editor@lcpconline.com). Unsigned articles are written by the editor. Other user groups are welcome to reprint with proper credit to the La Crosse PC Users Group and must include our web page address. Please contact the Newsletter Editor for commercial advertising rates. There is no fee for non-commercial advertisements placed by members.

**LCPC**  
**P.O. Box 2991**  
**LaCrosse, WI 54602-2991**