

Interface

Lorain County Computer Users Group
www.LCCUG.com info@LCCUG.com
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Urgent!!
Be Sure To
Read
Newsletter
Dilemma
Article On
Pages 2 & 3

Tuesday
September 11, 2007

Rescheduled From Last Month

Answers.com™

Presented by

Lou Koch



Tuesday
September 25, 2007

Virtual Credit Cards

Presented by

Micky Knickman

&

priceline.com®

Presented by

Edie Lewandowski



Monthly Meetings Held At Gould Auditorium
2nd Floor, St. Joseph Community Center, Lorain, OH
5:30 PM Doors Open With Outer Lobby Q & A Sessions
6:45 PM Meeting & Presentation Begins

NEWSLETTER

Dilemma



by Edie Lewandowski

Surprise, surprise, this is not a mistake. All members are getting a printed copy of the newsletter along with the opportunity of downloading it from the webpage.

After **NO response** from the majority of the members, generally a **split response** from those who did respond, and very **negative feelings** from some members who definitely wanted a printed copy MAILED to them; the board held a lengthy discussion on the dilemma. **They decided to still post the newsletter online and also mail the newsletter to all members through December and then reevaluate the situation at that time.**

To make a long story short, I personally am against mailing to ALL members **including those who are very happy getting the newsletter** online, particularly when we have had NO response from so many.

I currently have only **44 members** who have indicated that they prefer having a printed copy and, even then, many are happy just picking it up at the last meeting of the month at Gould.

Before I continue, I suppose I should give some background on the subject. It seems that many people did not see or chose not to read the original article in the June newsletter. Then of course they didn't get the additional information on the situation in the July or August newsletters, because those newsletters were only online for those 2 months. I have been told that is the reason many have not indicated a preference. They don't know why they haven't been getting a newsletter and they are not happy.

So here is the story:

- For quite a few years, many members of the board have wanted us to follow the trend of most computer clubs and put the newsletter online rather than having it printed and mailed to the membership.
- I have always fought this idea as I have always thought that the newsletter was our main selling tool and, if given a choice, they would definitely want a printed copy mailed to them.
- Since I was going on a lengthy vacation in June of this year, I suggested giving the idea of having it online a test and have the membership respond via an online survey as to their choice.
- There was an in-depth article on page 13 of the June 2007 newsletter giving the pros and cons of the 2 choices and explaining that the **newsletter**

would not be printed/mailed, but only available online. The link was part of the article and also posted on our website - www.lccug.com.

- The July 2007 newsletter was only posted online. On page 6 of that newsletter was another article giving more information on the situation, particularly the **increase in postal rates** and the **decline in membership**.
- At the end of that article was a link to the online survey and a **NEED** for the membership to voice an opinion on which option they preferred. It also indicated that **unless we get a significant response from the membership, then next month's newsletter (AUGUST) will also only be available online.**
- At the time of the officers meeting in July, where a decision had to be made as to what we would do regarding the printing or not printing of the newsletter, there were very few responses - less than 30. The result was that the August newsletter was not mailed to the general membership, instead it was again posted online.
- At the July 10th general meeting, there was a discussion on the situation and the lack of response from the membership. During that discussion, there were a number of members who indicated they would like a printed copy of both the July & August newsletters.
- Again, trying to please those members and possibly more, I sent out an Ediegram explaining that I would have printed copies available at not only the July 24th meeting, but would also have newsletters available for anyone who would like to meet me at the Golden Corral where the Lunch Bunch used to meet.
- Again, not that many responses, but quite a few people showing up who wanted a printed copy. Of course I did not have enough and I ran out.
- By the time the August 2007 newsletter went to print, there were quite a few more responses to our survey, still less than a 1/3 of the membership.. There was another article on page 18 with the results. We still did not have enough information from the membership to make a defining decision. So the board decided to do both for the next few months and then reevaluate the situation.

Now for my position on why I don't think we should print to all:

1. Number 1 is the cost, starting with the Postal costs which have changed dramatically in the last few months. Currently I have 44 people who have indicated that they want a printed copy. At the higher regular postal rate of \$.97 that is a total of \$42.68. If we use our non profit postage rates and mail to 208 (440..addreses) at \$.30 and 19 (non 440..addreses) at \$.39, that is a total of \$70.00. We must mail at least 200 items in order to get the non profit rate. Also

the annual fee for the non profit rate is an additional \$175. All in all, the postal cost would be less if we paid the higher rate for the fewer number (44).

2. Other costs involved are the printing and putting together of the newsletters. It costs \$.35 for printer toner and \$.09 for paper for a total cost of **\$.44 to print each newsletter**. Add to that the cost for Murray Ridge to collate, fold and staple each newsletter. This costs \$.08 per newsletter.
3. **The total cost for mailing the club newsletter to all 227 memberships will be \$202.62, as compared to \$65.56 for the 44 requested newsletters, or a difference of \$137.06 per month. For the 4 months trial period, this extra cost will be a total of \$548.24.**
4. Now, the difference in the amount of work for my husband Stan and me: I print all the newsletters at my house, which takes about 5 hours to check and print around 227 copies. Then Stan takes the boxes of printed sheets over to Murray Ridge to have them do their job. Of course they have to be picked up after that, before we can start labeling in numerical order according to the zip code, packing for the various towns, etc which is all required for the non-profit postage rate. Finally, they have to be taken over to the post office to be mailed. Obviously only doing 44 copies would be less work than doing 227 copies. Since I have done it for years, **I would not mind, if there was a need.** But right now only 44 people have shown a request for this service. Why am I working my fool tail off to do 227 when only 44 members have requested this service?

The problem now is we don't know for sure how many members really want a printed copy. We have heard from a little over 1/3 of the membership. Do the others not know that we want to hear from them? Are they happy with it online and figure if they don't respond, that we should assume that they don't want a printed copy? Do they really care?

Sorry to say, but this lack of response from the membership is a continuation of the lack of other inputs the board has requested from them:

- ◆ What would you like at the general meetings?
- ◆ What classes would you like?
- ◆ Could you teach a class?
- ◆ Could you tell others about our club?

That brings me to **membership numbers**. I have been very concerned for some time about the steady decline in the number of members and even ran a membership drive for 2 months with what I thought was an excellent incentive to get the members involved. We offered a 6 months extension to the current member's membership for each new member they signed up. The final results

of that drive was a negative 13 members. We only had 6 new members signed up by current members while 19 regular members choose not to renew their memberships. **At this rate of decline, the non profit postage rates will be a moot point as you need to have a minimum number of 200 to get the non profit rate.** Even though all members are now getting a printed newsletter, this issue will have to be addressed again if membership continues to decline.

Can we afford to mail to everyone? Yes, we can. We have a nice balance in our treasury. But that is only because Micky has been very diligent in managing the club's finances. Our club members receive better than average services, because he doesn't spend money foolishly. He asks that we always have a reason that will benefit most of the membership. Because of our healthy financial status, we are always able to pay for:

- ◆ printing supplies for our newsletter
- ◆ up-to-date software for our classes
- ◆ rent and equipment for our meetings at Gould
- ◆ extras for our social activities such as the picnic and pizza parties, etc.

Sorry to say but even those costs are going up.

With all of this said, after 4 months, this issue will be reevaluated.. Though the rest of the board feels another survey is a waste of time, I still feel it is important to know what the membership wants. I intend to place a printed survey form in the November newsletter and would hope that ALL members fill it in and send it back.

While I am on my soapbox, I guess I will also address another of my concerns....

Even though this is only September, elections are just around the corner. In keeping with their financial responsibility, the Officers are also deeply concerned with their succession. For our club to continue successfully we desperately need "new blood".

A major issue of concern to the Officers is their age and durability. We currently have 11 Officer positions filled by 7 people plus a "snow bird" who lives down south for half the year. These Officers have all served a minimum of more than 5 years, many of them forever. Also, three of the Officers are almost 80 years old.

If printing/mailling the newsletter or not, created such a flack, what would the reaction be if:

- the newsletter was not written/composed at all?
- or no one was available to schedule or deliver a presentation at our meetings?
- or we did not have teachers for our classes?
- or no one could be called to answer your questions?

We realize that organizations run by volunteers are constantly looking for help from the members but without them the organization will cease to exist. It's up to you!!

A Word From Our President



Again, I find myself talking about change. The officers of this club continually talk about keeping our membership numbers from dropping more, finding the right training classes to offer that people will attend and what presentations at meetings people will want to come to. I think a lot of the difficulty in keeping these numbers up is the same that is found by clubs around the country and that is because things are changing.

When cars first came out at the turn of the century, people needed to understand what they were and how they could be useful and if they could afford one. Most people didn't want to actually know how the engine works (and still don't) but just what they needed to know to drive one. I remember my father telling how often they had to stop and change a tire on an early car because tires were not as developed as they are now. The windshield wipers didn't work as well as they do now, and just starting the car was more complicated.

As cars got more sophisticated, drivers didn't need to know how to cope with as many little issues. Perhaps that is where we have come with computers. When home computers first started to become accessible (and I do remember this)... we had to know all kinds of things to make it run a program and do what we wanted. Computers in this day and age are much more mature and user friendly. Sure, we need to know how to update it and protect it (an issue we didn't need to worry about at first), but computers today are much easier to use.

So I think that fewer computer users need to seek out clubs such as ours to learn about using their computer. More and more users have either grown up with computers or been using them long enough to be comfortable. Lots of savvy folks are just going online to find out what they need to know to troubleshoot their computer or find tips and tricks to make things work better. I know I almost always find what I want about solving a computer problem by "googling" it. To be honest, over and over again I have found the answer to my computer problem online – even as pertained to my exact computer model that none of our users would have been able to answer. Much of this kind of help is posted online by other users helping users (sound familiar?). Not that we still can't give a quick answer on the usual computer questions to each other, as time goes by the next generation will be getting their information in these other ways.

So what are we doing to meet the needs of today's members? I think part of it is the socializing that we offer in face-to-face gatherings. In July besides our two regular meetings, we held a picnic and a play, and an opportunity to tour a computer software company in LaGrange. These were all successful activities and enjoyed by those who attended. I have come to think that our members appreciate these social opportunities as much as anything.

LCCUG Officers For 2007

President	Sandee Ruth president@lccug.com
Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	Don Hall secretary@lccug.com
Treasurer	Micky Knickman treasurer@lccug.com
Newsletter Editor	Pam Rihel newsletter@lccug.com
Web Page Editor	Kaye Coller webpage@lccug.com
Statutory Agent	Sandra Ruth statutory_agent@lccug.com
Director of Membership	Edie Lewandowski membership@lccug.com
Director of Advertising	Temporarily Filled by Peter Bateman
Director of Public Relations	Lou Koch public_relations@lccug.com
Director of Education	Vince Traina education@lccug.com

I think students today are growing up with computers and they don't think about learning to use a computer. They won't need to gather with a group of others "offline" to find out what they need to know (especially with so many demands on our free time). Many of our users still appreciate having someone to call with a question or to ask face to face... but I don't see the next generation needing to do that.

We have heard that the software and hardware companies have come to this realization as well. They find it more cost effective to reach out to their users, even for meeting. They now offer presentations, by sending a "canned program" or offering to meet with us "online". They are working to reach their future and current customers in the online environment.

Having said all that, I know how much I still enjoy our meetings and continue to learn something new **every time**. If you enjoy taking every opportunity to learn about computers **like I do**, please, continue to attend our presentations and programs and bring a friend!

As we try to meet the needs of our members in this changing world, we have decided to continue to print and mail the club newsletter. This will get it in the hands of all members for sure each month. But we will also be posting it online for those of us who live in the virtual world and expect to find it there. LCCUG will continue to look for our place in both worlds and see where it takes us.

Sandee

TUESDAY
September 11, 2007
Gould Auditorium

Answers.com™

Presented by
Lou Koch

In tonight's program, we will explore
Answers.com - the world's greatest
ENCYCLOPEDIA.

The internet is a wonderful resource from which to obtain information ... but how reliable are the facts and explanations that you get. Answers.com is an online resource containing information on more than 4,000,000 topics from up-to-date and reliable sources. You won't have to surf multiple websites screening information for errors and consolidating facts when you use Answers.com as your preferred research tool

In addition to the search engine itself, we will explore additional features of the Answers.com website including 1-click answers and AnswerTips which can be integrated with your browser for easy access.

Be sure to come to the meeting to learn about this great, FREE, research and information tool.

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**Following Micky on Sept 25**, Edie will be discussing her excellent experiences with Priceline for Stan's and her lengthy trip this summer. Since she is cautious with her purchases online, Edie had never used travel sites to book motel/hotel rooms. She always checked rates through various motel chains, then booked through the motel's website that fit her needs and price using AAA and Senior discounts.

While preparing for the long trip that included a family reunion, she was amazed to hear that 8 family groups had booked at the Marriott in Denver for a

**TUESDAY**  
**September 25 2007**  
Gould Auditorium

**#1 Virtual Credit Cards**

Presented by

**Micky Knickman**

**# 2 PRICELINE.COM**

Presented by

**Edie Lewandowski**

Micky will start the evening by explaining Virtual or Secure online Credit Cards. Secure online account numbers are a free online shopping tool that offers you maximum security for online shopping by substituting a secure number for your actual Account number. The use of Virtual Account numbers for online or over-the-phone credit card purchases can be beneficial as you don't have to divulge your actual credit card number to make purchases (your actual Credit Card Account number is not revealed on the Internet or stored in an online retailer's files). You also have control over the dollar amount and the expiration date of the transaction.

A secure account number can only be used at the retailer where it was first used—it can't be used anywhere else. If the secure account number is lost or stolen, you can deactivate it without canceling your actual Credit Card Account. A link to an article comparing two Virtual Credit Cards is on: <http://www.lccug.com/nlinks.html#misc>

cost of \$50 for rooms priced at \$194. Finding that it was so easy to do, she also booked through Priceline for the same fee.

This led her to try it for other stops. Not all were such good deals, so she did not use Priceline. Also, once you make a bid and it is accepted, it is purchased with NO chance of a cancellation with a refund.

For more on the Pros & Cons she found about Priceline, or if you have more to add about other Travel Websites, please attend and add your knowledge to the evening.

There will be time for questions to be answered at the end of the presentations.

**Special Raffles will be held at both of these meetings.**





## Executive Board Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2007

Attending were Sandee Ruth, Don Hall, Pam Rihel, Kaye Collier, Edie Lewandowski and Vince Traina.

Lou will not be available for the 8/14 , Answers.com, presentation. Sandee, instead, will do a program on Favorite Web Sites. She proposed members suggest their favorite web site whereupon they will be given a free ticket for a special raffle. Lou will present his program at a later date.

Carole submitted her picnic expenditures of \$85.63. The board appreciates and thanks Carole for her work in organizing the picnic.

Discussion of the plays to be presented by the Workshop Players in the coming year was held. Edie will contact the group and finalize the date and play selection.

The board approved our participation on Lorain County.com in the free version only.

After considerable discussion, Vince proposed we print / mail and have available online the newsletter through December 31, 2007. Printing / mailing will be reevaluated at that time. Kaye seconded, motion passed.

Vince moved, Pam seconded that the meeting be adjourned.



**Newsletter Editor:** Pam Rihel using Microsoft Publisher, Coral Paint Shop Pro X & American Greetings CreatoCard

**This Month's contributors:** Micky Knickman, Lou Koch, Edie Lewandowski, Sandra Ruth, Kaye Collier, Vince Traina, Don Hall, Cathy Ratcliff, Gregory Anderson, Vinny LaBash, Steve G., Ronnie Ugulano, Smart Computing Magazine, APCUG, and Microsoft Office art online.

Printing Done In House  
Assembly Done By:  
Murray Ridge Production Center of Lorain, OH.



## General Meeting Minutes

August 14, 2007

President Sandee Ruth called the meeting to order. A motion to accept the minutes as shown in the August issue of INTERFACE was made by Ken Koler, seconded by Jean Griffith, Motion passed.

Pam Rihel announced she will be happy to host a CreatoCard SIG, however, members must contact her to show an interest.

Sandee presented a program of "Favorite Web Sites" wherein she explored the web sites suggested by 13 members. In addition to those suggested, she did have time to present several of her own favorite sites.

Of the 13 members suggesting web sites, Ann Livingston was the raffle winner of the 1GB thumb drive. Ken Richey won the money raffle, Don Savinsky won the hardware/software raffle.

Don Hall moved, Don Gilbert seconded that the meeting be adjourned.



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**LCCUG Web Site Provider**

## Lou Koch Is Given An Award



In May, the officers of LCCUG nominated Lou Koch, our Public Relations Director, acting Vice President and frequent meeting presenter, for a community award. Although, he didn't win the top award, as one of six nominees, he was given a nice engraved, framed certificate and a Certificate of Recognition by U.S. Representative, Betty Sutton.

What follows is part of the letter nominating Lou.

"We, the Lorain County Computers Users Group, wish to present one of our members, Mr. Lou Koch, as our nominee for this esteemed award.

"As with all voluntary community service organizations, we also value those who are committed to the service of their community. Mr. Koch is an active, dedicated Officer of The Lorain County Computers Users Group, a 250+ volunteer organization providing computer skills to the community through meetings, presentations and classroom teaching. Mr. Koch has been actively engaged in all these activities for more than 5 years, and is a very valued member.

"Mr. Koch is also a Community Health Partners Volunteer affiliated with the Medical Library – Madeline Ventline

- Survey Computer courses for staff ... Excel, PowerPoint, Word, and Internet Searches
- Individual Project development and tutorials
- Microsoft Access projects with Lisa Schneider in Parish Nursing and Peggy Malone in New Life Hospice
- Numerous Excel and PowerPoint projects with various staff members in Library
- Various library activities ... check in/out material, shelf books, copy research material, etc

"Additional community service works that Mr. Koch has volunteered for are:

- Amherst Office on Aging – Nina Lorandeanu
- Develop and maintain Microsoft Access Database for scheduling, ordering and delivery history for MEALS ON WHEELS.
- Deliver Meals on Wheel
- "Cleveland Botanical Gardens – Ann McCulloh
- Plant Documentation Volunteer – investigate and document taxonomy and horticultural information about plant collection
- Microsoft Access Database to help gardeners locate plants
- Microsoft Access Database in lending library to switch from paper to electronic tracking of loans.

"We appreciate this opportunity to participate in this prestigious community award. We believe our nominee is worthy of the high standards that Ruth Calta embodied in her devotion to community service."

## Our Annual LCCUG **PICNIC**

Our annual picnic was held on July 22, 2007 at the Mill Hollow Reservation. The day was sunny and the picnickers were plenty.

Many thanks go to Carole Doerr for making our picnic a great success. She does a great job getting the donations from retailers and sports facilities.

Thanks to all those volunteers who came and helped set up the picnic area and those who stayed and cleaned up afterwards.

There were games played and prizes won.

- ♦ The horseshoe game was won by Ken Ritchy & Micky Knickman.
- ♦ The Corn toss was won by Ken Ritchy & Keith Kuhn
- ♦ Kids game (dropping the cloths pins in the milk bottle) was won by Paul Casper age 7.

There were many who donated their time and prizes:

1. The Cleveland Indians, Community Outreach Department.
2. Jenner W. Tekancic, Manager, Community Relations, C/O The Cleveland Browns.
3. Coordinator, Community Relations, C/O Cleveland Browns.
4. M. Stefano, Vermilion Family YMCA.
5. Lorain Public Library.
6. Kathy Doerr.
7. Lindsay Doerr, C/O Western Reserve Historical Society.
8. Aubrey & Karen Arbaugh.
9. Staples.

Members Donations:

1. Ken Ritchy-fishing poles, coins, and Browns mug.
2. Jean Griffith-Framed Lighthouse picture.

Micky Knickman the Chef, Alex Elek, Paul Casper and Alizabeth Elek blowing bubbles.

Paul Casper  
1st place winner in the drop the cloths pin in the bottle.  
More photo's on pg. 11





Kaye Collier casey@erienet.net

## WeRelate - Post your Genealogy Online

Do you have a genealogy program? There are a lot of them out there -- Family Tree Maker, Legacy Family Tree, RootsMagic, as well as a lot of shareware programs. If you have your information on one of these programs that will produce a gedcom, there are several places online where you can upload your information. Why would you want to do this? I suppose if you plan to write and sell a book of your family history, you'd want to keep your information private, but if you haven't found all of your ancestors (have any of us?), making your tree online is a way for others who may be related to find you.

Last month I wrote about **WeRelate**, a free genealogy wiki at <http://www.werelate.org/wiki>. If you are familiar with wikis and how they work, this is a great site. If you're not, you may get a bit confused - I did, and still do. But there is a lot of help there and when you have a problem, that help comes quickly.

To check out WeRelate, the first thing you should do is take the tour. It will explain how to register, some of the features, and choices of actions. For example, you would first open your account. Then you can click on **Search** and enter a name to find if someone else has created a page for one of your ancestors. If that name is there, you can go to the page and check it out. You can even leave a message for the person who created the page and that person will be notified by email and may respond by clicking on **Edit**.

To start creating your own pages, click on **My Relate**. From here you can create your own profile, as well as manage other features. **Research** goes to articles and pages about places, names, timelines, and sources. There are several ways to input your own information. If you already have your information in a genealogy program, uploading a gedcom\* is the quickest. However, you can also enter one person at a time. There are tutorials that will explain how to create a tree, upload a gedcom, add people once your tree has been created, and more. If you get confused, there is a help index, FAQs, and more. Actual humans will go over whatever you enter and notify you if anything is changed and why. Don't worry, they're very tactful and friendly - believe me, I know!



There are so many features at this site, I've only scratched the surface. One really neat one is the Pedi-Map, a 5-generation pedigree chart and a map that shows the birthplaces of everyone in that chart.



\***GEDCOM**, an acronym for **GE**nealogical **DA**ta **COM**munication. A gedcom is plain text that can be read by most, if not all, genealogy programs. You export your database as a gedcom and then import it into another one. This is helpful for sharing information with someone who doesn't have the same genealogy program as you do. Below is an example:

```
0 HEAD
1 SOUR RootsMagic
2 NAME RootsMagic
2 VERS 3.2.4
2 CORP RootsMagic, Inc.
3 ADDR PO Box 495
4 CONT Springville, UT 84663
4 CONT USA
3 PHON 1-800-ROOTSMAGIC
3 WWW www.RootsMagic.com
1 DEST RootsMagic
1 DATE 11 AUG 2007
1 FILE moore.ged
1 GEDC
2 VERS 5.5
2 FORM LINEAGE-LINKED
1 CHAR ANSI
0 @I1@ INDI
1 NAME Living //
2 GIVN Living
1 SEX F
1 _UID
80C9398297BBD71197294445535400002EAB
1 CHAN
2 DATE 20 Apr 2007
1 FAMS @F2@
1 FAMC @F1@
0 @I2@ INDI
1 NAME Walter Denton /Moore/
2 GIVN Walter Denton
2 SURN Moore
1 SEX M
1 _UID 81C9398297BBD71197294445535400002FBB
1 CHAN
2 DATE 20 Jul 2007
```

The gedcom may not make sense to you, but it does to the program that imports it—and this is only a part of a gedcom.

I'll explain a little more next month and also show a few other free sites to upload your genealogy.



# NEED HELP?—

## Here's Who to Contact:

### Neil Higgins

440-967-9061 - higgins.neil@gmail.com  
Evenings 6 p.m. - 10 p.m. + Weekends  
Hardware, Windows Operating Systems, Tweaking your system

### Micky Knickman

440-967-3118 - micky@knickman.com  
Evenings 6 p.m. - 10 p.m. + Weekends  
General Software Configuration, Hardware Installation,  
Basic to Advanced Windows

### Lou Koch

440-985-1585 - lkoch@centurytel.net  
Microsoft Office: Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Publisher, Access, &  
Outlook, Basic to Advanced Windows

### Edie Lewandowski

440-282-4188 - elew@erienet.net  
daytime – midnight  
Desktop Publishing, General File Management, Eudora Email,  
MSWorks Tools,

### Richard Barnett

440-365-9442 - Richard216@aol.com  
Evenings & Weekends  
General Software Configuration, Hardware Installation, Basic to  
Advanced Windows & Web Page Design

### Sandee Ruth

440-984-2692 - sruth172@ohrr.com  
6 p.m. - 10 p.m. except when at work  
Basic Word Processing, Windows, & Web Design  
Advanced Internet

### Jeff Kasler

440-967-7142 - jeffy@roadrunner.com  
10 a.m. - 7 p.m.  
Burning CDs using Record Now

### David Kennett

440-327-8624 - david.kennett@ohrr.com  
9 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Video Editing & DVD Burning

### Pam Rihel

440-277-6076 - LadyGeneo@roadrunner.com  
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily  
CreatCard

### Cathy Ratcliff

therats1@verizon.net  
Paint Shop Pro, other Photo Editing programs,  
Microsoft Office programs

## Free Beginners Classes

*Periodically Offered  
Check Page 11 for Availability*

### Beginners PC

Shortened 2 hour overview of Computer 1 class. Those wishing more instruction should take the 6 hour Computer 1 class also.

### Computer 1

This six hour class will help you understand how to use a computer, from turning it on to saving and printing out your information. It will include using a mouse, cut and paste, making shortcuts, and working with text.

### Computer 2

This six hour class will review and extend the various basic functions learned in Computer 1 Beginning (cut/paste, highlighting text, scroll, changing font sizes/styles, deleting and moving text, saving and printing etc.) It will also include more advanced word processing and other related program skills. **Computer 1 is required**

### Basic Word Processing

This is a two hour class. Practice the basics of word processing: Create a document and learn how to change its appearance by utilizing margins, font style and size, color, centering, etc. Also learn how to save and retrieve the document. **Computer 1 class is required.**

### Internet / Google

This is a two hour class. A wealth of information is available to those who learn to dig for it, computer style. Learn how to access and search the Internet using Google. **Computer 1 class is required.**

### Intermediate

This is a six hour class. Using Wordpad to show how to move around in a document using arrow keys. Format and copy to a floppy. Change the screen saver & the speed of the mouse. Do computer maintenance: (ScanDisk, Disk Cleanup, Disk Defragmenter) and printer maintenance. **Computer 1 class is required.**

### Learning the Keyboard

This six hour class helps you understand and use the keyboard with its many functions. It incorporates typing skills for the beginner or for those who simply want to increase their speed. **Computer 1 class is required.**

### Computer Maintenance

This is a two hour class. To keep your computer running at its best. Learn how to do Disk Cleanup, Scan Disk, Defrag, Windows & Virus Updates. **Computer 1 class is required.**

*We have lost more of our members willing to take calls. If you would like to help us out, add your name to this list by contacting the Newsletter Editor newsletter@LCCUG.com*

Director of Education: Vince Traina (education@lccug.com)



Vermilion Family YMCA



Learning Center  
St. Joseph Community Center



LORAIN  
SENIOR CENTER



# LCCUG ONGOING CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

## ALL ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

### LCCC Learning Center

In cooperation with the LCCC, LCCUG provides a Free Class held on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of each month from 3 to 5 pm in the Learning Center Computer Lab, Room 106 at St. Joseph Community Center.

#### Beginner's Class

**Tuesday, September 11, 2007 3-5 pm**

#### Word Processing

**Tuesday, September 25, 2007 3-5 pm**

#### Pre-Registration Is Required

Call Dina Ferrer 366-4507 to register  
Dial 0 if you can not get through on her number.

### DO YOU WANT TO

#### LEARN TO BURN

#### CDs AND DVDs HANDS-ON ?

#### MEET WITH OTHERS WHO ALSO WANT TO.

#### LET US KNOW:

Vince Traina, education@lccug.com or any Officer

### Computer I Class

#### Richard Long is back again!

Offering a 6 hr class in two sessions  
LCCC Learning Center - St Joe's Community Center  
On Wednesday, September 21 & 28, 2007 from 3-6pm

Call Dina Ferrer 366-4507 to register  
Dial 0 if you can not get through on her number.

### Microsoft Digital Image

After many enjoyable get-togethers, the group is taking a vacation. There will be no meetings in September. Meetings hope resume in the October. Stay tuned.

For Info contact Don Hall  
secretary@lccug.com

### Beginners Corel Paint Shop Pro

Date: Thursday September 20, 2007  
Place: LCCC Learning Center,  
St. Joe's Community Center  
Time: 7 - 9 pm Instructor: Kaye Coller

This is a graphics class that will not only explore graphic design but also allow Photographic enhancement, manipulation and composition.

Registration Required  
Call 440-244-9654  
Or email Kaye at caseycatnip@gmail.com

### Problem Solving Workshop

#### Try This New Place

Amherst Church of the Nazarene  
South side of Cooper Foster Park Rd.  
0.7 mi west of Leavitt Rd., 0.1 mi. East of Kolbe Rd.

**Date:** Tuesday, September 18, 2007

**Time:** 5:30 - 8:20 pm **Instructor:** Micky Knickman et al

**Place:** Amherst Church of the Nazarene  
210 Cooper Foster Park Rd, Amherst

Learn how to repair or update your computer by changing hard drives, memory, CD ROMs, etc.

Members are encouraged to bring their computers anytime before 7:30 pm for assistance from Micky, Neil or other knowledgeable members.

### Digital Photography SIG

**Date:** Monday, September 17, 2007

**Time:** 7 - 8:20 pm **Leader:** Sandee Ruth

**Place:** Lorain Public Library, 6th & Reid

Interested in Digital Photography? Check our weblog to see what we have been doing and what we plan on doing this month: <http://lccugphotosig.blogspot.com>.

### Interested in "OpenOffice"

It's Free! Everybody uses the same version !

Although NO One has signed up

We'll STILL teach it.

Find out more about it at

<http://www.openoffice.org/product/>

Let Us Know If You're Interested

Vince Traina, education@lccug.com



LCCUG AGAIN  
BUYS OUT  
THE HOUSE  
FOR TWO SHOWS  
THIS SEASON

### NUNSENSE

Sunday, November 18, 2007 3:00 PM  
Order Information will be in the October newsletter.

### OVER THE RIVER

Thursday, February 21, 2008 8:00 PM  
Order Information will be in the December newsletter.

Costs will only be \$10 per ticket, \$2 less than regular cost.

# September 2007 Classes

| Class Type                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Location                                                            | Registration                               | August                             | Time        | More Info  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Beginners Classes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                     |                                            |                                    |             |            |
| <b>Beginners PC</b><br><b>Cathy Benson</b>                                                                                                                                                                     | LCCC Learning Center<br>St. Joe's Com. Center<br>21st & Broadway    | 440-366-4507                               | Tuesday<br>Sept 11th               | 3 - 5 pm    | Page<br>9  |
| <b>Computer I</b><br><b>Richard Long</b>                                                                                                                                                                       | LCCC Learning Center<br>At St. Joe's Com. Center<br>21st & Broadway | 440-366-4507                               | Fridays<br>Sept 21st<br>& 28th     | 3 - 6 pm    | Page<br>10 |
| <b>Intermediate Classes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                     |                                            |                                    |             |            |
| <b>Word Processing</b><br><b>Jean Griffith</b>                                                                                                                                                                 | LCCC Learning Center<br>At St. Joe's Com. Center<br>21st & Broadway | 440-366-4507                               | Tuesday<br>Sept 25th               | 3 - 5 pm    | Page<br>10 |
| <b>Computer II</b><br><b>Sandy Strong</b><br><b>Mavle Green</b>                                                                                                                                                | Lorain Senior Center<br>3360 Garfield Blvd.                         | 440-366-4507<br>Computer I<br>Required     | Tues & Fri.<br>Sept 25th<br>& 28th | 9am to Noon | Page<br>9  |
| <b>Non-Beginner Classes / Workshops</b>                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                     |                                            |                                    |             |            |
| <b>Digital Photos</b><br>& <b>Graphics SIG</b><br><b>Sandee Ruth</b>                                                                                                                                           | Lorain Public Library<br>6th & Reid                                 | 440-244-1192 or<br>1-800-322-<br>READ x272 | Monday<br>Sept 17th                | 7 - 8:30 pm | Page<br>10 |
| <b>Problem Solving</b><br><b>Micky Knickman</b>                                                                                                                                                                | Amherst Church of the<br>Nazarene<br>210 Cooper Foster Park         | Not Required                               | Tuesday<br>Sept 18th               | 5:30 - 8 pm | Page<br>10 |
| <b>Paint Shop Pro</b><br><b>Beginners</b><br><b>Kaye Coller</b>                                                                                                                                                | LCCC Learning Center<br>St. Joe's Com. Center<br>21st & Broadway    | 440-244-9654<br>Caseycatnip<br>@gmail.com  | Thursday<br>Sept 20st              | 7 - 9 pm    | Page<br>10 |
| <p style="text-align: center;">All Classes, Workshops &amp; SIGs are FREE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Classes held at the Lorain Senior Center requires yearly \$7.00 dues and 55 years &amp; older</p> |                                                                     |                                            |                                    |             |            |

Eddie & Pam Rihel, Carole Doerr, our great picnic coordinator and other members and guests.



Bob & Flo Jaworski and Jean Griffith



# Dumb Things to Avoid While Using Your Computer



by Vinny La Bash, a member and regular columnist of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida, vlabash(at)comcast.net or [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org)

To paraphrase a recent TV commercial, we all do dumb things, but doing them with your computer doesn't have to be one of them.

Most of us know that our computers work better when they are plugged into an active electrical outlet, but ask any service technician how many times he or she has encountered that situation, and you may be surprised at the answer. Every one of us, no matter how experienced, has done at least one dumb thing with our computers. Maybe you pressed a wrong combination of keys and changed a setting you didn't mean to disturb. Maybe nothing much happened or you ended up crashing your system.

Whatever does or doesn't happen, paying attention to what you're doing combined with a dash of forethought can prevent most dumb mistakes.

David Letterman has his top ten lists. I offer my top six. My list will do little to entertain you, but it will help you to be smarter about using your system.

**Dumb Computer Mistake # 6:** Failing to install or keep your anti-virus and anti-spyware programs up-to-date.

Some people think that keeping these programs current is too much trouble. Others quibble because sometimes they have to disable their anti-virus program to install another application.

Don't be misguided. Viruses and spyware can gum up your system to a point where your machine can be rendered useless and inoperable. You could be a victim of fraud or risk turning your machine into a "zombie" where a third party can use your computer for criminal activities. Innocent people have been arrested and charged with downloading child pornography. They had no idea that their machines were compromised for illegal purposes, yet they found themselves in deep trouble.

**Dumb Computer Mistake # 5:** Indiscriminately installing freeware and shareware you find on the internet.

If you are guilty of this it's only a matter of time before you get infected with a piece of sloppily written software that will cause your system to behave erratically or crash. If you follow dumb with dumber by installing pirated software,

don't ask me for help.

**Dumb Computer Mistake # 4:** Share your files and peripherals with the immediate world.

Turn off file and printer sharing. Unless you do this you could open your computer to access by using a public wireless hotspot with your laptop. Even if you don't use a laptop be aware that Windows, by default, has administrative sharing for the root of each drive. You can turn this feature off in the Systems Administration portion of the Control Panel.

**Dumb Computer Mistake # 3:** Browse through the internet without a firewall.

People new to computers are most likely to make this mistake. They tend to be entirely unaware that they need a firewall because nobody told them what a firewall is or why they need one. This lack of knowledge exposes them to every virus, worm or malicious hacker in the computer universe. Fortunately, this exposure can be easily corrected. Many modems and routers have built-in firewall protection.

Personal firewalls can easily be downloaded from the web. Go to [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com) and download one of the best all around network security programs in existence. The best part is that this excellent program is free to the general public.

**Dumb Computer Mistake # 2:** Picking weak passwords.

Every hacker in the known universe understands that many people use their children's or grandchildren's name as a password. Cracking that kind of security is as easy as breathing. Don't use a family member's birthday or social security number as a password either. It's the kind of information that is all too easy to obtain. Don't create passwords from a dictionary. Hackers have programs which automatically compare passwords against dictionary entries.

Passwords should be at least 8 characters long, and be a combination of upper and lower case characters and numbers. The common objection is that they are hard to remember. That also makes them hard to crack. Create a phrase that you can easily remember and use the first letter of each word along with logical numbers. For example, "Our vacation in Jamaica begins on the fifth day of August" becomes Ovi-Jbot5do8. A password like that is impossible to guess and is not found in any dictionary.

**Dumb Computer Mistake # 1:** Never backing up your data or system files.

Even if you never do any other dumb thing while computing, failure to back up your data can negate everything else if you lose important information. There are too many things that can go wrong for you not to be backing up your data. Hard disk crashes, fire or water damage, tornados, hurricanes, magnetic interference, and theft are just a few of the many

*(Continued on page 13)*





(Continued from page 12) **Dumb Things To Avoid....**  
things that can damage or destroy data.

Backing up data can be time consuming and inconvenient, but losing your data could be catastrophic. There are many strategies you can use to protect your data, but any strategy is better than none. Don't think that merely copying your data files to an external disk constitutes backing up. Make copies of your essential data to three CDs or three sets of CDs. Keep one set at home, but in a different room than where the computer is housed. Keep another set at the office if you work for a living. If you're retired ask a friend to keep a set for you. Do the same for your friend. The third set of disks should be kept in a secure place like a safe deposit box.

Data is the only irreplaceable thing on your computer. You can replace hardware, operating systems and application software, but you can't go to a store and buy a replacement copy of your data.

The dumbest thing I can remember doing is backing up my data files to a RAM disk.

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## Special Thanks

to those at the Murray Ridge Production Center in Lorain, a worksite of the Lorain County Board of Mental Retardation, for collating, folding, and stapling our newsletter. If any other organizations or businesses would like to acquire their help, contact them at (440) 284-2720 or [www.mrpcinc.com](http://www.mrpcinc.com).

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## Smart Computing

In Plain English

### Readers' Tips

General Computing

September 2007 • Vol.18 Issue 9

Many of our readers come across fast, easy ways to solve a problem or accomplish a task. Well, we'd like to hear about it! If you have a great tip you'd like to share, email us at [reader-tips@smartcomputing.com](mailto:reader-tips@smartcomputing.com). If we print your tip, we'll send you a free Smart Computing T-shirt. You'll be the envy of all (well, some) of your friends. Please include your first name, last name, and address, so that we can give you credit if we print your tip. (And so that we can send your T-shirt to you, of course.) Please limit your tip to 200 words or fewer. Not all tips received will be printed, and tips may be edited for length and clarity.



### Don't Attract Thieves

As camera repair shop owners, we've always recommended keeping cameras, film, etc., in the car in a Styrofoam cooler or other ice chest (sans ice, of course). The coolers would moderate temperature even without ice and, being ubiquitous, were less of a burglary target. Another good option is an insulated diaper bag—that's even less attractive to a would-be thief!

*Sandra S., Santa Rosa, Calif.*

### Don't Be Gullible — Check With Snopes.com

Aren't you just a little tired of those emails claiming various critical alerts or warnings which you simply must forward to everyone you care about or live with the guilt? Do you ever simply want to know if that outlandish picture or story is completely false or edited?



Well, Snopes.com ([www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)) has most likely already researched it and found information about these issues and determined that they're either exaggeration, embellishment, or just a load of . . . well, just completely untrue.

*Steve G., Laughlin, Nev.*

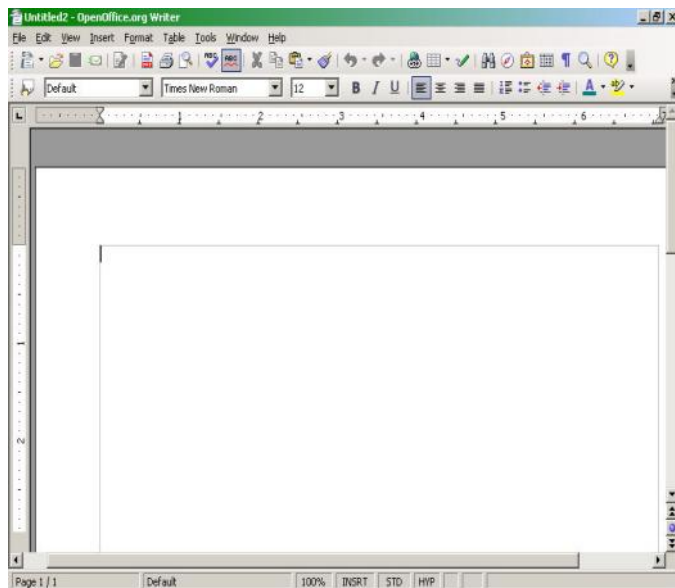
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# Software Review: OpenOffice



By Ronnie Ugulano, Fresno PC Users Group, California, newsletter editor  
<http://fresnocomputerusers.org>  
[ronnieuggie\(at\)mail.com](mailto:ronnieuggie(at)mail.com)

I didn't have time to monkey around. It *had* to work out of the box. I got an email from the FPCUG Board saying that they would like to be able to offer the newsletter in PDF for easy printing, pretty please. To be honest, I knew this was coming, but it now was time to implement. OK, what are my options? What do I *already* have that I can use to do this? I could copy and layout the text and graphics in *Microsoft Word*, but I'd still need to convert it to PDF. I've been working with Linux lately, and it has Scribus available, a lovely Desktop Publishing program, but I already have everything for the newsletter set up on my Windows computer, and wasn't ready to flit back and forth with that, yet.



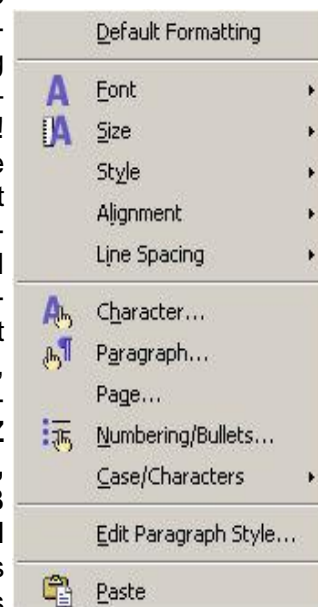
Oh, yeah, I remembered! OpenOffice, the available-free office suite program has a PDF converter built into it's word processing program, and there's a Windows version! The big questions are: "Can I use what I know about *MS Word* enough to make it work as fast as I need it to?" I hope so. So, I rummage through my collection of downloaded, saved utilities and programs, and find it right where I left it. Double click, install and

open the program.

Well, the tools appear familiar. I just may get this to work, after all.

I want the printed newsletter to look as much like the html version as much as possible, so the first order of business is to convert some of the CSS "graphics" to jpgs or gifs, which I do using *Paint Shop Pro 9*. The next job is placement. How do I insert a graphic file? .ah, there it is, similar to *MS Word*, under **Insert > Picture > From File**. OK, place them where I want them, size them to proper dimensions, and it's good.

Next, every newsletter has certain features that appear in every issue, such as *The Fine Print*, the *Sanity Savers* and the list of board members/officers. All that is specially formatted with tables. How will I migrate that? I try clicking, dragging, and pasting thinking "I'll just have to fix the formatting later", and *bam!* Much to my surprise, the formatting holds up. Not only that, but the specialized shading does too. I mentally throw a little confetti in celebration. What about rather standardized, simple keyboard commands like **Ctrl + Z (undo)**, **Ctrl + C (copy)**, **Ctrl + V (paste)**, **Ctrl + B (bold)** and **Ctrl + I (italics)**? No surprises there, things work as usual.



Then of course, you never know what you'll get when you right click on something, right? Hmm. Right click gives you the tools menu seen above, and double clicking on the graphic itself (In OpenOffice Writer - in the html version, you'll get the full sized graphic) once it's placed, allows you to set how much space you want around the graphic, among other things.

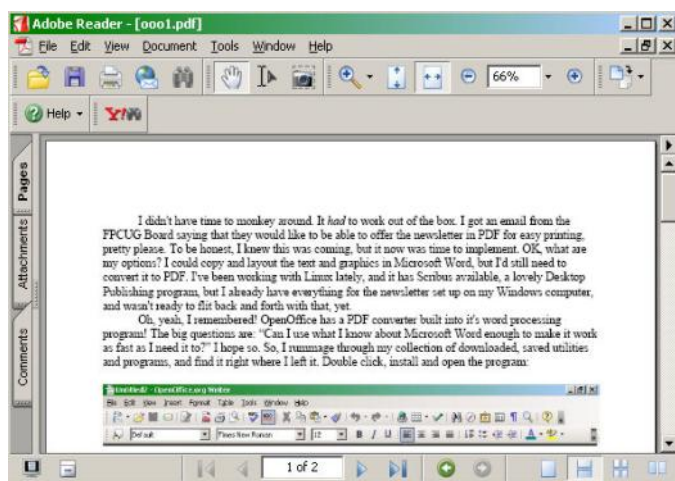
The newsletter has colored headers, and font color is in almost exactly the same place as *MS Word*, so finding that is a no-brainer. There are about 100 colors to choose from there, and I

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14) Software Review: Open Office

choose the one closest to the color I use on the html version of the newsletter.

Next, was page numbers. The html version doesn't need them, but the printed edition will. In *MS Word*, choosing to add page numbers will almost automatically place those numbers in the margin as you specify. With *Writer*, you choose to create the footer first, by going **Format > Page > Click Footer Tab > OK**, click in the created footer and then click **Insert > Fields > Page Number**. Doing this automatically places the page number consecutively on each page.



There are plenty of other word processing tools, including *columns*, *mail merge*, *macros* and so forth, and they are outside what I need for this first time around, but they are there, and findable, when I need them.

The last tool I'll need, and the whole purpose of this exercise, is the PDF conversion tool. For this, I initially created this document in a separate file so I can test drive this option before I use it on the newsletter itself. It's time to click that button now, and just like magic, a PDF is created!

You know, I've never progressed past my copy of *Office 97*. I've just never bothered to upgrade – probably because I'm too cheap. Every new computer I've built, I've just reloaded the old *Office 97* as part of my setup ritual. It may be that on my next computer, I'll be loading OpenOffice.org instead.

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## Smart Computing

In Plain English

### Don't Let The Airlines Raise Your Fare

**Problem:** I get so frustrated when I book a plane ticket months before my trip only to watch the fare drop.

**Solution:** The old adage of buying an airline ticket 30 days out to get a good price is no guarantee you'll get the best price. Or is it? Many carriers, while not legally obligated to, will offer refunds in the form of travel voucher or travel credits—even on nonrefundable tickets. The catch is you must call them when the fare dips below what you paid. This is where Yapta



**Don't let the airlines raise the price of a ticket you already purchased.**

(www.yapta.com) comes to the rescue. Once you enter your itinerary, this site checks the Web multiple times a day for a lower fare and then emails you when it finds one. It's still up to you to call the airlines for your refund, and keep in mind that service charges may apply, decreasing the actual refund.

*Fun Facts & Stats Of The Day: August 23, 2007*

### Happy Poll

A Harris Poll of more than 1,000 people suggests that Americans are reasonably happy with their lives. 94% of Americans reported that they are either very or somewhat satisfied with their lives, up from 90%. But of the folks in the eastern United States, only 42% said things had improved since 2002. Alternately, 60% of those who live in the southern United States and 62% of those in the western United States think they are better off now.

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By Cathy Ratcliff

Several months ago I purchased a new HP laptop with the new Microsoft Windows Vista operating system. Among other things, it came loaded with LightScribe System software, a program that burns a laser image/text onto the top side of your CD or DVD disc. Until now the home user had 2 options. Paper printed stick on labels which can cause serious damage to your CD/DVD drive, or the use of permanent markers to write disc content on burned discs.

I really didn't pay too much attention to it until recently. With my husband's family reunion coming up, I put together a DVD movie of 6 previous reunions. I planned to burn copies for all the family members as gifts. Thinking how best to label them, I decided to check out what LightScribe could do.

The process requires some special discs, software, and hardware, so don't stop reading and run to your computer and start designing.

First, and most importantly, you need a LightScribe-enabled CD/DVD-R disc burning drive. Look on the front of your internal or external drive for the LightScribe logo. Would you believe HP installed LightScribe System Software but did not install a compatible drive on my new laptop. Unless you have a new computer or CD/DVD-R drive, chances are you will have to purchase a compatible drive. I know that will deter some, but by now I was on a mission, so off to town I went. I purchased an external drive so that I could use it on both my desktop XP and Vista laptop.

Regular CD and DVD discs will *not* work. You will need to purchase compatible specially coated CD or DVD discs for the laser to work.

If you are burning CD's they come in 6 colors. DVD's only come in gold. I found the gold to be very appealing.



All disks burn a grayscale image no matter what color you purchase. The cost, about \$1.00 each.

In addition to label-making software, you'll need LightScribe System Software. Each hardware manufacturer will provide the optimal version for their systems, but universal versions are also available from the Downloads section for Windows, Mac, and Linux platforms at [www.lightscribe.com](http://www.lightscribe.com). In some cases, the LightScribe System Software is included in the labeling application. Otherwise, it needs to be installed separately.

### Supported Label Making Software:

#### \*indicates the software I tried

- LightScribe Simple Labeler \*
- Acoustica CD/DVD Label Maker
- Droppix Label Maker
- Nero Cover Designer \*
- Rosio Easy Media Creator \*
- Sonic Express Labeler
- SureThing CD Labeler

You can also take advantage of the LightScribe Simple Labeler (available for Windows, Mac, and Linux). This easy-to-use tool allows you to design a label in just three simple steps and burns in 2 minutes. I found this to be limited to one size font and very small simple designs, but still impressive.



Want a more intricate design? The LightScribe web site has a multitude of free designs for special occasion you can download. A few of these include weddings, music, gifts and photography.



This Family Tree design is an example. You can add your own pictures and text to these designs as well.

The ability to burn your own designs is a great feature. I had an old picture of Tom's grandparents, which I used last year for the cover of a



family cookbook. With just a little more effort I was able to import the picture into Roxio Easy Media Creator and laser burn it onto the disc.

The down side, other than the special equipment I had to purchase, is the time involved. My design took 24 minutes for each disc and I burned 25. I just read a new disc is on the way cutting the time in half. This will require a download from the LightScribe web site to update your current LightScribe DVD burner.



Another example is the LCCUG logo. Again with the file on my computer, I was able to bring it over. this time using Nero Cover Design, software.



#### How It Works:

Place a specially coated disc (coated side up) and burn your data disc as you always have. When finished,

flip the disc over in the LightScribe DVD burner. With the appropriate supported software browse, your computer for designs or download one and LightScribe will do the rest.

The web site also has step by step instructions on how to import your design using 3 of the software supported programs - Roxio, Nero and SureThing. The FAQ section is straightforward and easy to understand.

Now with the creative ideas on the web site, combined with your input, the flip side of your CD/DVD project can be complemented with a very professional look.

I am looking forward to the faster burn speeds, but, until then, I am happy with my new toy and will have fun playing.

Oh yes, everybody at the reunion was impressed.

### If they only knew how easy it was!

Cathy Ratcliff is a long time LCCUG member, past VP/Program Director and President of LCCUG. She taught many classes, primarily Paint Shop Pro, plus other photo editing programs. She also did many presentations at our monthly meetings. We greatly missed her.

Since her husband Tom retired and they moved south, she has written a few articles for our newsletter. Currently if time allows, she plans on becoming a regular contributor writing articles on Paint Shop Pro or any other topic she finds interesting. Looking forward to hearing more from Coshocron.

## Smart Computing

In Plain English

### Online Photoshop Alternative?

**Problem:** I want to edit a photo, but the computer I'm on doesn't have Photoshop installed.

**Solution:** Hardcore Photoshoppers might claim there is no alternative to the mighty Adobe image application. And while Photoshop is not about to be dethroned, be prepared to be blown away by Fauxto ([www.fauxto.com](http://www.fauxto.com)). This site hosts an online-only app that can open JPEG, PNG, GIF, BMP, and TIFF images. From there you can add multiple layers, including text layers. There are even a number of common effect filters. There's almost no instruction or documentation, so beware. And the interface is so reminiscent of that other image editor, one wonders when Adobe's lawyers will shut it down.

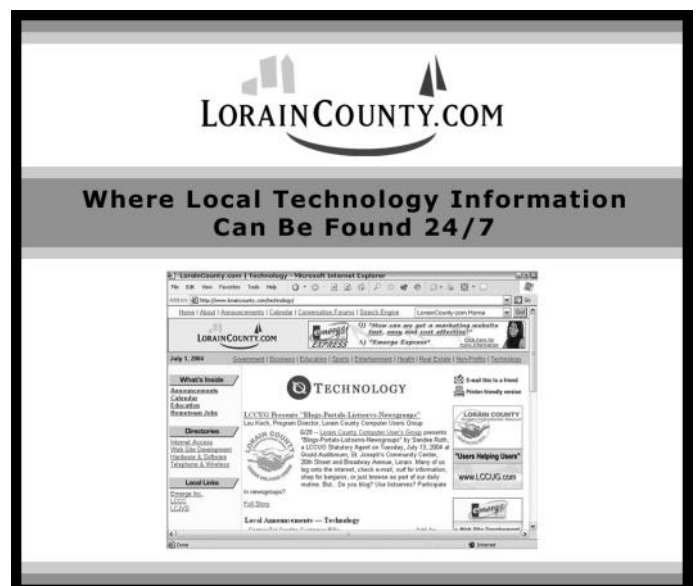


**A faux Photoshop or serious free online image editor competitor?**

### Free Directory Information

**Problem:** My cell phone bill is huge because I call 411 for numbers I don't know.

**Solution:** You should consider using 1-800-FREE-411 ([www.free411.com](http://www.free411.com)). The idea of looking up a phone number on the Internet isn't in any way new; this site breaks out of the virtual world, and with a real 800-number service. The caveat? You may have to listen to two 15-second ads, one at the beginning of the call and the other before you get your number. But the real catch is this service doesn't autodial the number for you. You can either have it read to you or texted to you. So don't try this when driving alone.



# Laying Down Murphy's Law

## An Overview Of Error Messages

by Gregory Anderson

September 2007 • Vol. 18 Issue 9, Page(s) 52-53 in print issue  
All page numbers refer to the printed article.

At our computer desks, as in life, things go wrong all the time. Computers are simply machines. And, as anyone with a British-made automobile can attest, machines break down. Unfortunately, technology manufacturers haven't always been very good about communicating when their products falter.



### Errors, Errors Everywhere

Unintentionally humorous or incomprehensible error messages are legendary, and they seem to pop up at the most inconvenient times. Error messages don't have to be unhelpful, however. Errors themselves come in several types, including good old user errors. Reading *Smart Computing* and the manuals that come with your programs and devices will help avoid the human variety. This month's feature package focuses on helping you understand your computer's cries for help when it experiences variations of the other types of errors.

**BSOD.** Few errors are as painful, for you or your system, as the infamous Windows BSOD (Blue Screen Of Death). BSODs usually occur at the most inopportune of times. A BSOD once caught Bill Gates red-faced at a big trade show as he tried to demonstrate Windows 98's Plug-and-Play capabilities. We're hoping you never have that type of experience, but we'll help you deal with BSODs when they do arrive. In "It's Big, It's Blue, It's Bad" on page 54, we'll show you that there is life after the Blue Screen Of Death.

**System errors.** Other system errors are rarely as dramatic but are frequently just as disruptive as BSODs. Whether the error message is a "Fatal Exception," an "Invalid Page Fault," or simply an "Error Accessing The System Registry," Windows occasionally throws up its hands and gives up the ghost. Managing these events tests both skill and patience. "System Showdown" on page 56 provides pointers for how to resolve some of the more common system errors.

**Hardware errors.** Hardware errors at least hold out hope of isolating the problem. If a nonessential peripheral (such as a printer or portable memory device)

throws an error, you can often simply try again and carry on. Errors with integral hardware (memory or hard drive errors, for instance) may not be so easy to handle. We cover both varieties in "Hold Out Hope" on page 59.

**Application errors.** There are so many applications on your computer interacting in so many ways, that their errors can be a little cryptic. They also often fail in ways that can make your next step unclear. You might need to reboot, you might need to close some programs, or you might just need to have some patience. In "Get With The Program" on page 62, we break down application errors and how to handle them.

**Internet and email errors.** Many of us spend more time surfing the Web and reading email than anything else computer-related. So we've dedicated a section to discussing Internet- and email-related errors. (Refer to "Is This Thing On?" on page 65.) Not every strange hiccup of the Internet has an easy solution, but you can at least venture out with a greater knowledge of how to handle the inevitable roadblocks thrown up by bad multimedia mixes, flaky connections, and poor programming.

### General Trends

Throughout our discussion of error messages, you'll notice several trends. First, catastrophic BSOD and other system-crashing errors have become dramatically less common in Windows XP and Vista. You'll also notice clearer, more helpful error messages as programmers deliver more intelligent error handling and more plain-English communication.

You've probably already noticed Windows' habit of asking whether you want to send detailed information to Microsoft when certain applications experience problems. These reports can help Microsoft point you toward troubleshooting resources and steps for fixing the problem. If you come across something new, in theory, the reports help provide Microsoft with a list of Windows problems to address in future updates. It usually won't hurt to go along with the process, though don't expect much by way of a response. Error details, however, can include information on any files or applications you were using when the error occurred, so you may not want to approve the report if you were doing anything confidential or sensitive.

Finally, simply searching Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) or Microsoft's Knowledge Base ([support.microsoft.com](http://support.microsoft.com)) will usually provide plenty of guidance. *Smart Computing's* site ([www.smartcomputing.com](http://www.smartcomputing.com)) even includes an error message database in the Tech Support Center.

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*Tip Of The Day: August 22, 2007*

## From A New Angle

You may learn after you've snapped a photo that things aren't always as they appear through the viewfinder. You can improve crooked photos or those zoomed out too far with rotation and cropping. Not every photo needs to follow the standard 4- x 6-inch size. Crop out the dead space, such as too much sky, ground, or anything that distracts from the photo's focal point. Photo rotation helps straighten off-kilter horizon lines and skewed perspectives. When you use the rotation tool, a small portion of the original photo's edge is cropped out, so be sure you save the original and work with a copy.

*Tip Of The Day: August 21, 2007*

## Mousetrap

A major benefit of modern operating systems is that you don't need to install any drivers to operate standard components such as two-button mice. But if your mouse doesn't work upon startup, the source of the problem typically stems from the mouse being disconnected, being connected incorrectly, or requiring the installation of the proprietary driver. Besides checking your mouse connection, you can resolve many mouse problems by installing the latest drivers and software. Before you visit the manufacturer's Web site, locate the make and model of your mouse to ensure you find the appropriate driver download. You can usually find the model, product, or serial number on the bottom of the mouse, and many wireless mice include this identification on the battery cover or inside the battery compartment. If the movements of your mouse seem erratic or sticky, it's more often the result of a poor surface choice.

*Tip Of The Day: August 20, 2007*

## Back Up Data

If your PC has a virus, back up your data. If your PC has any files you don't want to lose, resist the temptation to hunt for that virus right away. Although your antivirus software may be able to remove the problem without disturbing your OS (operating system), you can't predict the sorts of trouble you may run into. This is an especially important step if you haven't yet installed antivirus software. Although most program installations go smoothly, we've experienced more than our fair share of software and hardware installations that crippled our test PCs' operating systems. Back up your files to a CD, DVD, or other removable media—not to another PC. Some viruses infect documents and other popular file types, which means that your own files may carry the virus to the removable media. You'll need to scan your backup media with an antivirus program before you return the files to your computer or move them to another PC.

*Tip Of The Day: August 19, 2007*

## Add-ons Can Cause Problems

Add-ons are special programs that work inside of Internet Explorer and other browsers. Add-ons can include search toolbars, games, and programs that let you view Web sites offline. However, add-ons can also invade your privacy, especially when spyware or adware installs them without your knowledge or permission. The Internet Explorer Add-on Manager lists all add-ons installed on your computer that are used by Internet Explorer. You can use the Internet Explorer Add-on Manager to enable or disable each add-on individually. To access the Internet Explorer Add-on Manager in Internet Explorer 7, click Tools, Manage Add-ons and then select Enable Or Disable Add-ons. If you want to disable an add-on, click to select it and then click the radio button next to Disable in the Settings area of the Manage Add-ons window. When you're finished changing the add-on settings, click OK. You may need to restart Internet Explorer in order for the changes to take effect.

*Term Of The Day: August 22, 2007*

## Video card

A circuit board in a computer that controls display factors such as resolution, colors displayed, and speed of images displayed. A video card cannot bring an older monitor up to its standard. Both the monitor and the video card must support a resolution, such as 800 x 600, for that resolution to be possible on the system. Today's video cards typically contain some memory so that the PC's RAM (random-access memory) isn't bogged down with handling displays. Some cards, often called video accelerators or graphics accelerators, contain a graphics coprocessor that handles graphical computations, also called a video adapter, video board, or video controller.

*Fun Facts & Stats Of The Day: August 22, 2007*

## Happy With Your Car?

The University of Michigan's National Quality Research Center recently announced its updated American Customer Satisfaction Index, which shows that our satisfaction rate with our automobiles is—on average—higher than ever: 82 on a 100-point scale. Lexus leads the pack with a satisfaction rating of 87, while Toyota and Honda each dip 3% and 2% respectively to 84. Cadillac, Buick, and Lincoln-Mercury all made gains to 86. Ford and Dodge made modest gains to break 80 and Chevrolet managed a slightly improved 82. However, such rosy figures suggest that the study participants weren't asked how much they like filling those cars with gas.

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# Various LCCUG Meeting Locations

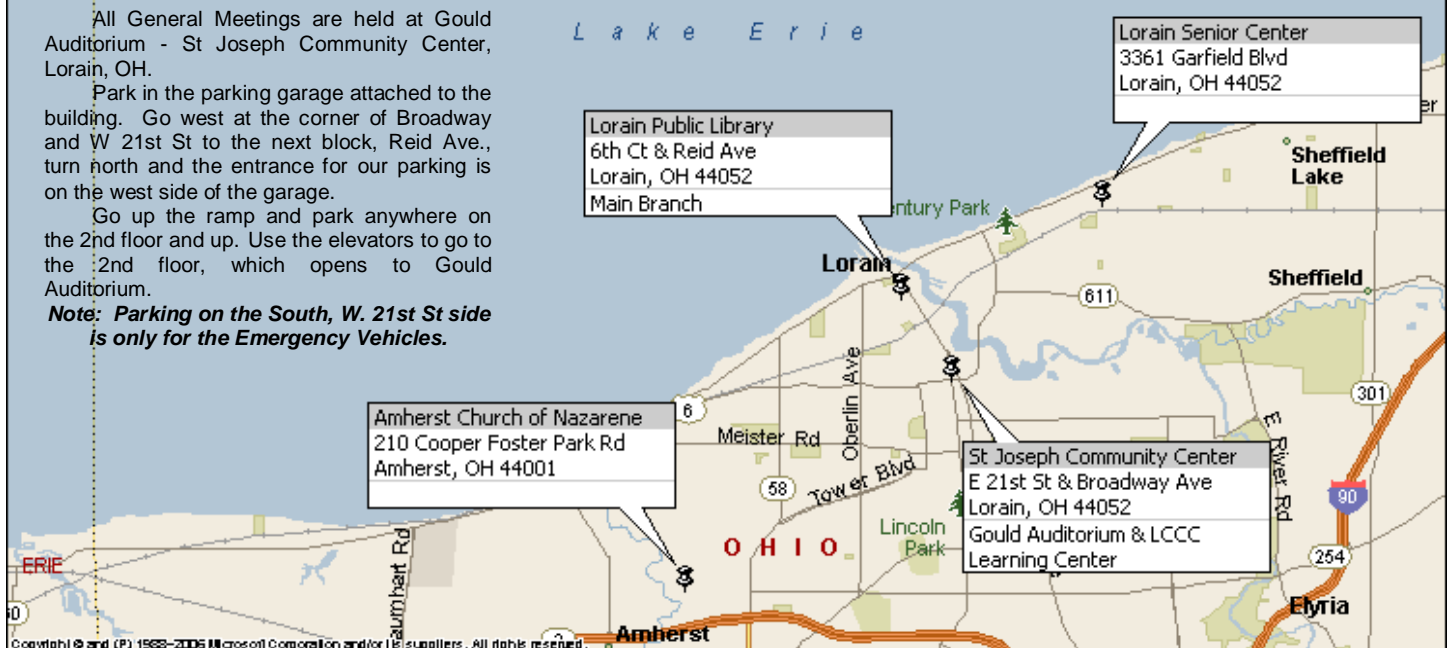
## Gould Auditorium

All General Meetings are held at Gould Auditorium - St Joseph Community Center, Lorain, OH.

Park in the parking garage attached to the building. Go west at the corner of Broadway and W 21st St to the next block, Reid Ave., turn north and the entrance for our parking is on the west side of the garage.

Go up the ramp and park anywhere on the 2nd floor and up. Use the elevators to go to the 2nd floor, which opens to Gould Auditorium.

**Note: Parking on the South, W. 21st St side is only for the Emergency Vehicles.**



## MEMBERSHIP WITH LCCUG

Yearly dues are \$25 for a single membership.

Family membership dues are \$25 annually for the first member, additional members in the same household are \$12.50 each. (Family memberships receive only 1 newsletter per household).

Interested persons wanting more information should contact:

Edie Lewandowski, Director of Membership,  
(440) 282-4188 or [membership@lccug.com](mailto:membership@lccug.com).



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