

NEWS JOURNAL

September 2005

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

Volume 22, Issue 4



ASK THE GURU!

Our resident guru(s) will be available at our quarterly **Q&A** Roundtable to answer your questions.

- Virus protection
- Internet
- Networking
- Windows XP
- Email
- Graphic
- Software
- Hardware
- CD/DVD Burning
- Digital Cameras
- MP3 Music
- Scanning

What questions do you have???

LCACE Meeting Dates 2005

10 September - Ask the Guru's

15 October - Jimmy's Wireless

19 November - Ghost 9.0

04 December—Holiday Party/Raffle

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Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts LCACE c/o Group Ambassador 409 S. Elmwood Ave. Waukegan, Illinois 60085-5219

Membership

Membership for LCACE is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are \$20.00 per individual/family. Associate membership is only \$10.00 (out of state, unable to attend meetings). Membership includes a one year subscription to the L.C.A.C.E. News Journal and access to all club libraries and functions. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club Hotline, and are now available on our WEB site at -http://www.lcace.org.

Meetings

LCACE meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of each month at the Grayslake Area Public Library, 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting room opens at noon and the formal meeting begins at 12:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

Advertising

Ad rates per issue: Full page - \$25, Half page - \$15, Quarter page - \$10, Business Card - \$5. Discounts are available on advance purchase of multiple issues. Please send camera-ready copy and payment to the club address by the 21st of the month preceding publication. For more information on ad pricing, please call our Hotline. Ads are FREE to all paid members.

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Dwight "J.J." Johnson President Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

"The Holiday Party committee met after the August meeting and decided on the raffle prizes for this year. To keep the stakes high and not let anyone down, we will be raffling off another laptop computer this year as the first prize".

President's Notes

It was good to see so many people at

the August meeting, especially Donna. We rarely see her at meetings during the summer. I guess she was able to entice her friends Gerri and Zee from the campground into accompanying her. Other guests were Edward and David whom we hope to see at future meetings.

My 3D Album was somewhat successful; as much as I enjoy doing these presentations, I really enjoy doing the research and learning more about the program. Although I purchased the program over a year ago, until I started putting together my presentation, I was unaware of many of its features. Many times, because you do not use all the features a program offers, you never know its true power. Now that I'm aware of some of them, I will be using this program more. I plan to show you how I use some of the features of 3D Album in other applications at future Digital Corner presentations.

I hope those winners of the free copies of Smart Computing enjoy reading their August issues. Remember, if you decide to subscribe to Smart Computing, please use the order form in the newsletter. The club will benefit from your subscription by receiving a free subscription that we can raffle to our members. The program directors will be in contact with Smart Computing and attempt to schedule a presentation at our club meeting the next time a representative is in the Chicago area. During the Smart Computing presentation we also learned of their extensive online database. As a subscriber, you will get access to the database, which has every article ever published in their magazine. The best feature is that you can create your own online library

so you can retrieve this information at any time from any computer without having to do another search. Neat, huh!

The Holiday Party committee met after the August meeting and decided on the raffle prizes for this year. To keep the stakes high and not let anyone down, we will be raffling off another laptop computer this year as the first prize. Second prize is a Kodak EasyShare camera with docking station printer. The third prize will be a 160 GB External Hard Drive. The most important prize (fourth prize) will be a 1-year membership to the club. Raffle tickets should be available for distribution and sale at the September meeting. Yes, Robin, I'm bringing the ham!

We have a program change in September because the presenter will be unavailable; bring all your questions, and our geek squad will answer them. Our last Q&A Roundtable was very successful, and we plan to schedule more in the upcoming months by dividing the meeting room and holding individual Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Robin reminded me about the Photoshop Elements SIG, which we will be conducting at the September meeting. There is a new Photoshop Elements Techniques newsletter; the website recently hosted 21-days of step-by-step tutorials in full motion videos, and we will cover some of these during our next session. If you want to get a jumpstart, check out: http:// www.photoshopelementsuser.com/.

There is a new way to view the LCACE newsletter on our website. Macromedia recently released a new program called FlashPaper 2, which creates Flash (SWF) and Acrobat (PDF) document files. The

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President's NOTES

biggest advantage is the files are smaller, therefore, they load faster without needing *Acrobat Reader* installed on your computer. The 2005 newsletter page is still under construction, but you will find this new feature at the bottom of the page.

How did you like those BIG club posters in the library lobby? We can thank Robin for those. People walking into the library on our meeting days should have no problem finding us now.

It's always good to see how other clubs conduct their meetings, so Mike and I attended a Chicago Computer Society (CSS) meeting in Deerfield last month. What else did we have to do on a Thursday evening? Unaware that this was not their general meeting, but just a Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting, and then to my surprise it was a digital camera SIG somewhat like my Digital Corner. The SIG began with a Q&A and then the presenter telling us about his new digital camera. But the main topic of the evening was the program called Picasa which he used to download, edit, and present his photos. Picasa is a FREE download from Google or @ www.picasa.com. Look for a demonstration of this program at a future Digital Corner. The meeting ended with a raffle of an origami butterfly and again, NOT to Mike's surprise, I was the winner.

Mike's Beginner's SIG

Windows

have been asked several times to facilitate a Beginners <u>Special Interest Group</u> and decided to take on the challenge. I plan to start the SIG at the February meeting. I also will be adding some simple tips and tricks for Windows XP operating system to our *News Journal*. Suggestions to what you, the members, would like covered at these meetings are always welcome.

Here is a tip received from ChanNel Islands PC Users Group BEGINNERS SIG dated May 3, 2003.

Do you know exactly what is inside your computer?

Your computer setup consists of various hardware components and software programs. If something goes wrong,

it could be for a number of reasons. That's why you should know what is inside the casing.

The time to get this information is now, when all is working properly. Windows 98, Windows ME and Windows XP include a tool called "System Information" made precisely for this job. It captures a wealth of diagnostic information about your entire system. From the Start menu, open Programs, Accessories, and then the System Tools folder. Double-click System Information. To get a printout of the details, select Print off the File menu.

I would suggest that you do this every time you add a piece of hardware.

Well, that's all for this month. I will not be able to make it to the September meeting as I will be out of town. If you have any suggestions on what you would like to see or discuss at the Beginners SIG, please e-mail me at vice-president@lcace.org

Until next time,

Mike McEnery

WINDOWS XP-USERS

Microsoft PowerToys or Windows XP

They're back! PowerToys are additional programs that developers work on after a product has been released to manufacturing. They add fun and functionality to the Windows experience.

Note We've taken great care to ensure that Power-Toys operate as they



should, but they are not part of Windows and are not supported by Microsoft. For this reason, Microsoft Technical Support is unable to answer questions about PowerToys. PowerToys are for Windows XP only.

Places4Aces

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If Ever Our Group's Slogan Came Alive

It Was At Our June Meeting

Shucks, our members even helped folks who weren't members. That slogan, of course, is "Members Helping Members" and certainly evident both in our program "Round Our Table" and afterwards when a guest was stumped by "Read Only Files."

Robin Seidenberg led us off with what to do when your cat got your mouse, that is using directional keys, arrows and keyboard shortcuts. Many were unaware that the Windows key (in lower left on your keyboard) can start your computer. (On sub-zero days if only your old car had this button on the dash).

Of the many keyboard shortcuts the following rate best with Robin:

Alt+F4 ends a program or closes a window; Alt+Tab switches between two windows or programs, for more than two hold down Alt & strike Tab until desired page arrives; Ctrl+A selects all, that is everything is highlighted; To copy it's Ctrl+C, to paste Ctrl+V.

Alt+an underlined letter in menu opens the menu. Click on Alt in Windows or Internet Explorer & all letters will be underlined. Alt, F, P your print menu appears while Alt, F, V summons print preview.

To cancel just click *Esc* (the uppermost left hand key).

You don't have to be an Indian to use the arrow

keys. *Up arrow* scrolls up one line at a time while *Down arrow* does the opposite. *Page Up* scrolls up a screen page, *Page Down* does the opposite. To get to the beginning it's *Ctrl-Home*, *Ctrl-End* takes you to bottom or end.

OK, so you knew all this. How come you're still using your mouse?

DISC-ROT

It begins when you take the disc out of the case, then exposing it to the humidity.

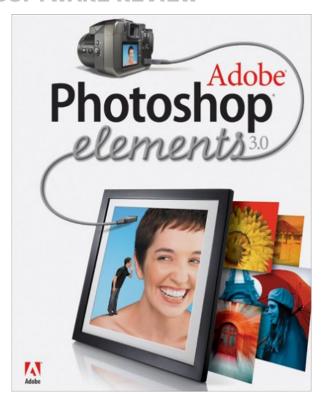
By Dr. I. Luv Irata

We have been told that preserving our valuable photos and data on CD or DVD would last decades. Now they are saying that disc rot is eating our data. Although CD manufacturers claim their products are expected to last as long as 50 to 100 years, lately it has been proven that this is not the case.

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SOFTWARE REVIEW



Adobe Photoshop Elements 3.0 (Part 1)

By Sharon Rump

Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

oday it seems that digital is the name of the game and Adobe continues to be one of the forerunners who always comes in first at the finish line. I have been using their software products for a number of years and continue to upgrade as new versions are created and am always impressed on how they can improve on an already good product.

While I have been using the full version of Photoshop since version 5.5, I have also had the Elements versions on my computer also. With the latest release of Photoshop Elements 3.0 there is less reason for the average person to need the power of Photoshop CS as there are so many features included in 3.0 and the program is a lot more user friendly than CS.

Upon opening the box I was a bit disappointed with what I found. I have been impressed for many years at the quality of the user manual that Adobe had continued to include with their software while other companies had scaled back to a small booklet to get you started. Unfortu-

nately, Adobe has taken a step backward at this time and included a small Getting Started booklet of 65 pages. There is no way that you can effectively learn how to use a program of this strength with such a small guide.

It is correctly called "Getting Started" as it will give you a head start to learning but then lets you sit there on your own. You do have access to their help menus but I always find them harder to work with. I like to have a manual in front of me so that I can follow along as I learn. Fortunately for me, I was able to obtain some aftermarket books which are reviewed separately from this article.

The program was easy to install as is the case with most software these days. In no time I was ready to jump in and begin.

Elements 3.0 is really a combination of two programs. Adobe had created a Photoshop Album that was separate from their Photoshop Elements program. Now both programs are together which gives you a complete solution from the beginning where you transfer the images to your computer until you are ready with the finished image for printing, sharing or creating one of many projects that are included.

When you first open the program you will see the Welcome Screen which allows you access to the different areas of Elements. As you hover over each icon you will see a screen which fully explains what you do in that area.

The program is divided into to two modules with different functions. The first one is the Organizer which is the area that helps you get the images loaded on your system and organizes them for easy access in the future. You create a catalog of all of the images on your hard drive and then view them with different options. The easiest for me was the date view. All of the images are in the Photo Browser by the date they were taken and a timeline appears across the top of the screen with a bar graph to indicate how many photos were taken each month. You can also switch to a calendar view which will show the days of the month and indicate which days had photos taken. You can click on an individual date and see all of the photos associated with it.

You can add "tags" to the images which will allow you to further organize your images. There are a number of tags included in the program but you can create as many of your own as you would like and even add a personalized thumbnail to the tag to make it easier to identify. This is a long process if you have a lot of images already on your hard drive, but well worth the effort. After you have accomplished this, when images are added you can add tags at

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http://www.chicagofmclub.org

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Photoshop Elements 3.0

that time so they are all organized. You can add multiple tags to images also. You can then do a search on your files to find images with a particular tag on it. It is important to remember that when this catalog is created, only information relating to the location of the image is stored. There is not a duplicate image created for the organizing process. This is important to consider if you need to move images from their original location after they have been put in the catalog.

There are many different ways to get images on to your computer and Elements helps make this easier for you. You can import photos from your camera, a memory card, a scanner or a mobile phone camera. You can also import audio and video clips to include in the organizer.

Another feature of the organizer is the ability to create stacks, versions and collections. Stacks literally stack the thumbnail of images that are similar on top of each other to save space and eliminate having a lot of almost identical images in the organizer. Versions are created when you edit an image and have several different files of the same image with different edits. Collections allow you to group photos for a particular purpose. You can combine many different photos of an individual or an event that you want to work with for a particular project. The original photos are not moved from their location of your hard drive, you just view them together in the photo browser.

You can also add captions and notes to photos in the browser which are then associated with the individual photo and are an aid when searching for images. There is also a compare feature which will let you compare two photos next to each other which can be very useful when you are trying to choose the best image of several photos.

While most editing is done in the Editor module, there is also an Auto Fix window which will allow you to make some quick adjustments from within the Organizer module.

Part 2 of this review will continue in the October issue and will feature the editor module of Photoshop Elements 3. 0

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DISC ROT

Unless your data is totally protected from heat, humidity, and direct light, rough handling and chemical solvent (including ink from markers and pens) the aging process will eventually destroy your data.

You can slow this aging by CD-R and DVD-R/DVD+R media for your backups rather than using RW (rewriteable media). Either way, it would be advisable to back them up every several years. We don't know what the next greatest storage media will be, and who knows if

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nkjet printers have become the new digital darkroom allowing us to create wonderful prints to reflect the richness and wonder of those captured moments in our lives. Inkjet technology has changed tremendously especially when it comes to its inks. Inkjet have evolved from the single color cartridges to six or seven cartridges with separates colors. The printers have become faster, and deliver improved color accuracy and longer fadresistance photos. But is there a better photo printer out there? Dye-sublimination is not a new phrase, but a method of producing better color accurate and longer lasting printer. Look forward to my review of this new line of printers.

Keep your camera lens clean with the **LensPen**. They won't tell us what the secret compound is, but it works remarkably for removing smudges and fingerprints from you camera lens. One end houses a retractable brush to swoosh away larger particles. The other end has a circular pad that wipes smudges from your lens. A must have accessory for only \$8.95. www.lenspen.com

If you have an older card reader, you might consider getting one of the new Hi-Speed USB 12-in-1 readers from *Crucial Technology's*. With only four slots for 12 cards, and all for just \$15.99. www.crucial.com

Black and White paper RIP. Kodak will stop selling blackand-white proto paper by the end of the year. The digital tsunami is the blame for the demise of the paper. We all know you can print black-and-white photos on color paper.

Get a new or updated digital camera with a firmware update. For the point-and-shoot camera, this may involve sending your camera back to the service center, but for dSLR owners, this can be as easy as a download. So check your manufactures website for updates.

Backups are one of the most important aspects of digital photography. A few minutes of work can save you a lot of heartaches. Before you start editing any of your photos, backup all your photos to CD. Create some sort of index and number (serial number and date) all your CDs. I recommend that you back up to DVD/CD as soon as you pick your favorites. And it's not a bad to make sure your images

are safely in more places than just your computers hard driver before you reformat you memory card. Leaving the DVD/CDs backups on the spindle they come on to save you money and space, and keep them in a safe place in case of disaster befalls your original DVD/CDs and index print.

Photo filter effects, lighting and color adjustments, and a search function make **Picasa v2.0** editor a cut above the rest. Picasa is a FREE download from

Google. www.picasa.com

If you are looking for some photography classes, the camera companies have resources you need to check out. Try these: Cannon Digital Learning Center:

www.photoworkshop.com , Epson Print Lab Series: www.printlabeseries.com , HP Digital Photography: www.hp.com/united-states/com/sumer/dpc, Nikon SLR Learning Center: www.slrlearningcenter.com, Pentax Learning Studio: www.penteximaging.com/learn, Photoflex Lighting School: www.photoflexlightingschool.com, Tiffen guide to filters: www.tiffen.com/camera filters.htm, Photoshop Elements Techniques: www.photoshopelementsuser.com, Nikon Web Photo

School: <u>www.webphotoschool.com</u>. Olympus Digital

School: http://olympusdigitalschool.com

In closing for this month, stay cool, and in respect consider your camera equipment too. Don't leave your camera in a hot locked car. Humidity causes condensation to form inside your camera and on the optical system which in turn can cause short circuits, decrease in battery life. If you must leave your camera in your car throw a few desiccant packets in to help keep the humidity down.

-Randy D.

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DISC ROT

devices of the future will be able to read our storage media of today.

It's all about care, therefore, don't bend or flex the disc when removing from their case, store them vertically in a cool, dry space to prevent warping. Marking pen can damage your disc, so the safest place to write is on the hub. If you need to put more information on your disc, looking into dedicated label printers and or the new Light-Scribe Direct Disc labeling technology. Clean your disc with a lens cloth by wiping out from the center, not in a circular motion. If you want them to last longer, use premium scratch-resistance disc.

But in any case; back them up every several years, and keep a duplicate of vital data and photo is a safe off site location.

Belkin TuneCast II

Mobile FM Transmitter

Pop in the batteries; set the channel on car radio and it works!

By Gypsy D. Katz

xtremely simple to use, this unit is superbly engineered, compact, and delivers a clear signal of good fidelity anywhere on an FM band not already taken by a local station. I am a subscriber to Audible and listen to books as I drive on a rather lengthy commute. With the memory for selecting up to four different frequencies as may be necessary in going from city to city, it is a perfect answer to my problem since my new car has a CD player and my old cassette transfer device was no longer the answer. No need to worry about battery consumption, it can operate from the cigarette lighter with the supplied cord. Also turns itself off when not in use for 1 minute even when it's on external power.

The reception will depend a lot on the car. I have found some cars work great with it, where others get static while

it's setting on the dash. I have found that if you touch the unit, or allow it to touch something metal in the car; it works MUCH better in problem cars.

I used through my home Bose system and it works perfectly. Great to use with my ScanDisk MP3 player or more expensive iPods, if you own one.

If you live in the city, bleeding FM stations cause havoc. I can see where "bleeding" from FM stations could make the device useless. I found little to no problem driving through mostly rural northern Illinois areas.

This device is well worth the \$29 I paid for it from www.buy.com. Although, before purchasing, I priced the unit at Circuit City at \$51. So, if you want a real deal, don't go to Jerk Off City, shop around on the internet.



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TIME TO RENEW

If it is time for you to renew your membership, please fill out a new Application and a Member's Profile Sheet. These forms can be obtained at the meetings or downloaded from our WEB site.

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Sign the Guest Book and tell us what you think

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- ♦ LCACE history and pictures
- ♦ LCACE meeting, location, and map

NEXT MEETING

September 10, 2005

Grayslake Public Library

12:30pm—3:00pm

Meeting Room Opens at Noon

This month:

ASK THE GURU'S



ROUNDTABLE

LCACE

Lake County Area Compuer Enthusiasts 409 S. Elmwood Ave. Waukegan, IL 60085-5219

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