



NEWS JOURNAL

March 2010

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

Volume 26, Issue 11



Story by MC1 Joe Garza

In the age of tweeting, texting and terabytes, staying “plugged in” has taken on a different meaning. Accessing social networks and staying up to date on information can be done quickly and conveniently with tiny, pocket-sized cell phones and computers.

That palm-sized cell phone with built in camera, keyboard and kitchen sink is costing you more than just angry glances from your fellow movie theater patrons, boss or spouse when your fingers blaze over the keyboard during a poorly-timed text. The case in question come not when the device is in use, but when it sits idly charging while connected to a wall socket.

Commonly referred to as vampire power, phantom load or idle current, the energy used by charging or simple plugging in cell phone, desktop computers, microwave ovens and your favorite electric toothbrush takes a toll on your pocketbook. They are continuously consuming energy even when operating in the off mode. The cost of idle current can be significant for the average consumer. Consider the impact this massive drain on energy has on the United States. While a Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in Berkley, Calif., energy analyst Alan Metter estimated that residential consumers in the United States spend more than \$5 billion annually on standby power. Products that commonly consume standby power because they contain a battery charger or have a soft-touch key-pad include; remote controls, external power supplies, digital displays, light-emitting diode status light or digital clocks.

It's hard to believe that items in standby mode consume so much energy until you consider that power strips and wall sockets energize not just the television and personal computers but all of their peripherals. The computer will be accompanied by a monitor and printer, and the TV by a digital video recorder and Blu-Ray player.

But lets' not forget that standby mode is often a necessity and contributes to many conveniences that we enjoy in modern, everyday life. A simple yet often impartial approach to save money on vampire power is to unplug the devices from the wall socket. While the removal of the cord from the wall may work for the third television set in the guest room, this power-saving tactic will not work for the refrigerator or VCR that will remind you when a flashing 1200 that is in midnight or noon no matter what time of day it is.

Energy analysts recommend consumers cluster their products together with a smart power strip that detects when a main appliance is turned off and cuts off power to peripherals. The smart strip separates itself from regular power supplying strips with this detection capability.

When you shut off your computer for the evening the smart power strip will cut the power to the printer, speakers and other gadgets attached to your computer. There will be no more vampire power to keep the dials spinning on the energy meter outside of your house.

A smart energy consumer should also know that the difference between standby and sleep mode. Standby power, which is the lowest amount of power a device can use without shutting off, requires the user to switch the device or appliance into standby mode and then manually switch it back on. Sleep mode, which uses more power than standby power, will switch a device into a lower power “sleep” mode after a specific period of non-use. Most computers can be placed in sleep mode and switched back to full power with a tap of the space bar on the keyboard. In order to get a better understanding of how much power an item used in standby mode, consumers can purchase a handheld

(Continued on page 3)



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**Lake County Area
Computer Enthusiasts
LCACE**
c/o Group Ambassador
"J.J." Johnson

Membership

Membership in 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 *LCACE 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 Saturdays 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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JACK HALLEY



Found: 12-inch butcher knife, white plastic handles, on the table at the Holiday Party.

Contact: Dorothy Sutherland (Mom)



Time to clean out your closet. Bring it to the meeting and place it on the **FOR SALE** or **FREEBIE** tables. All items placed on the FOR SALE table **MUST** have your name and asking price attached to it. If you just want to get it out of your closet, then place it on the **FREEBIE** table and hope one of your club members has a better home for it. All items not sold or taken must be reclaimed by the end of the meeting.



Shut Off the Vampires

(Continued from page 1)

watt meter to measure the electricity usage on each appliance. Now that you know that power vampires aren't lacking energy in their blood with the many appliances that don't actually turn "off" when they indicated they have, keep these energy drainers in line and your energy bill down.



Garza is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

ALL HANDS

Magazine of the U.S Navy
September 2009

Photography

Tips of the Month



Don't leave your camera

You never know what opportunities will present themselves to you if your camera is always at your side. It may be a bit of extra hassle, but you will develop a greater sense of observation by being aware of your camera constantly.

Smile: Photos in your daily life

Most New Years resolutions include spending more time with friends and family. Take a photographer's spin on this one, and make it a priority to take casual photos of your friends and family on a day-to-day basis. Capturing memories for others is commendable, but capturing memories for yourself is priceless.



Robin's RAMblings

LCACE was happy to welcome *Smart Computing* representative Thippy Nguyen to our February meeting. She showed us how the magazine and its website work and presented samples of its sister Sandhills publications. Club founder J.J. Johnson and guru Fred Barnett helped with technical issues.

Lew Seidenberg and guest Gary Hesse were the happy winners of one year subscriptions to *Smart Computing Magazine*. Our March door prize will be another subscription to *Smart Computing Magazine*. Remember that you have to attend the meeting in order to win.

Donna Kalinoski opened the nomination process for our 2010-2011 officers. Linda Busch, Sherry Florian, Winnie Frost, Bobby Jacobs, Lester Larkin, Julio Rivera, and Robin Seidenberg accepted nominations. Nominations will continue at the March and April meetings.

We elect our board at the April meeting, and then choose our president from the people elected to serve on the board. Please think of people you would like to nominate. Remember that you can nominate yourself.

We have exciting programs scheduled for 2010:

COMPUTER FUN FACT



Nolan Bushnell and Ted Dabney founded Atari in 1972 to create and market games. Their first product, Pong, was an instant success and by 1974 they were releasing a new game every six weeks.

By 1977 they found themselves deep in debt and were saved by a partnership with Warner Communications. From that point on financial problems, internal squabbles and missed sales figures kept them on a roller coaster ride. Despite this they were a force in the game industry and, in 1979, produced the Atari line of home computers.

In 1994 Warner Communications and Time Life Inc. merged to form Time-Warner and Atari simply became one of the assets. Various attempts at reviving the Atari name have not proved particularly successful.

VuPoint Solutions

"Magic Wand" Portable Scanner

by Nova Thee Katz



Hand scanners aren't something new. In fact I had one for my Atari Computer back in the 80's. Some of you might remember those 40-column hand scan-

ners we struggled with to produce an image back then. But after twenty years, the technology has gotten a lot better, and this new hand scanner won't run on my Atari, in fact, I don't think my Atari still runs J I should really blame mom for this purchase, after all, she was the one who left the TV on the Home Shopping Network (HSN) channel, therefore when I turned it on, I become somewhat mesmerized by the scanner commercial, leading me to this purchase. No, I did not order from HSN, but searched the internet for a better price. Well enough of why I purchase this new toy, so let me tell you more about it.

This scanner can be used on virtually any flat surface! This amazingly compact tool lets you scan color and monochromatic images, documents or magazines with the just the touch of a button. The scanner is capable of scanning a letter size pages up to 600 x 600 dpi in around 28 seconds and a low resolution scan in black-and-white in less than four seconds. Turn stacks of documents into organized digital files, all with the wave of your hand allowing you to pretty much scan any document without the need to be connected to a PC. The LCD shows the Scanning status display. The Auto Power Off turns off in 3 or 5 minutes to conserve battery life. Once you have scanned your documents they are saved to the internal SD card and saved as a JPEG format for transfer via USB. With a simple connection of the USB to your computer, the images can be instantly viewed and uploaded. The scanner comes with OCR (optical character recognition) software which will help you convert and export scanned files to your computer for editing.

The VuPoint Magic Wand Scanner it's powered by two AA batteries which are said to have a battery life of about 200 minutes. The microSD card slot which allows you to increase its internal memory up to 32 GB (microSD card sold separately)

Included with the scanner is a USB Cable, 2xAA alkaline batteries, a nice carrying pouch, and user's manual. The VuPoint PDS-ST410-VP Magic Wand scanner has a retail price of \$99.



DIGITAL CORNER

Feeding the Squirrels

By Dorothy Sutherland

My son has given me an assignment to use my camera and take at least one picture every day. I've taken so many of my cats and they have become so photogenic, that when I pick up my camera and point it in their direction, they stop whatever they are doing and just smile. Reminds me of Terri! I've taken J.J.'s advice and I now leave my camera on the counter next to the door, so I can take daily pictures of my squirrels while they are eating and playing along the fence.

I get up every morning to feed my squirrels. I had one then two, and now three and they are so cute to watch after I feed them. They eat one at a time but never eat together. I feed them French fries, cornbread and any old bread that I've broken up, and something sweets for

a treat. Also I give them nuts that they take and hide in their nest I guess where they sleep.

After eating all their food they clean up and push the plate into the snow on the ground. J.J. says they will have high cholesterol and with sweets they will need to go to the dentist .

As you can see from the photos, my camera skills and composition is getting better, but it just hard to get them to stand still and pose like the cats. I can't wait till the weather gets better so I might be able to get better photos of the squirrels in the yard and in the trees. But for now, they are having fun playing in the snow and eating all the high cholesterol food I'm giving them. Hey, they need the extra fat to keep them warm till winter is over.

Here's to the fun I have photographing and feeding my three squirrels....sign off.



February 2010, The Space Coast PC Journal
By Ron Broadhurst, Member of the Space Coast PC Users Group, Inc., Florida
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Dear friends,

These ideas are compiled from years of accumulations from various magazines, books, on-line sites and my own personal experience. I claim neither originality nor ownership to any of its contents. My only intent is to share the various "tips," "tricks" & "hints" in hopes of helping & maybe enhancing your computing experiences. They are all intended for anyone who uses a PC. It is for beginners as well as advanced users.

Enjoy and use as you will.

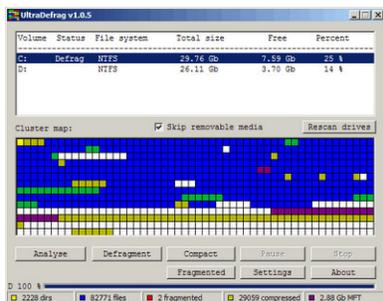
Defragmentation Explained

Fragmentation is caused by creating and deleting files and folders, installing new software, and downloading files from the Internet. Computers do not necessarily save an entire file or folder in a single space on a disk;

(Continued on page 6)

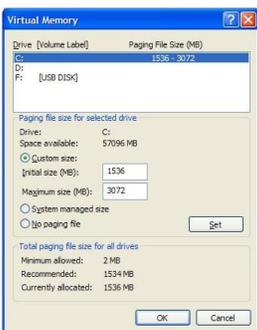
they're saved in the first available space. After a large portion of a disk has been used, most of the subsequent files and folders are saved in pieces across the volume.

When you delete files or folders, the empty spaces left behind are filled in randomly as you store new ones. This is how fragmentation occurs. The more fragmented the volume is, the slower the computer's file input and output performance will be, and there will be a significant degradation in performance.



Defragmentation is the process of rewriting non-contiguous parts of a file to contiguous sectors on a disk for the purpose of increasing data access and retrieval speeds. Because FAT and NTFS disks can deteriorate and become badly fragmented over time, defragmentation is vital for optimal system performance.

In June 1999 the ABR Corporation of Irvine, California, performed a fragmentation analysis and found that, out of 100 corporate offices that were not using a defragmenter, 50 percent of the respondents had server files with 2,000 to 10,000 fragments. In all cases the results were the same: Servers and workstations experienced a significant degradation in performance.



Fix Virtual Memory

You receive the following error message.....Your system is low on virtual memory. To ensure that Windows runs properly, increase the size of your virtual memory paging file.

1. Click Start, right-click My Computer, and then click Properties.
2. In the System Properties dialog box, click the advanced tab.
3. In the Performance pane, click Settings.
4. In the Performance Options dialog box, click the advanced tab.
5. In the Virtual memory pane, click Change.
6. Change the Initial size value and the Maximum size value to a higher value, click Set, and then click OK.

Click OK to close the Performance Options dialog box, and then click OK to close the System Properties dialog box

How to Remove SP3

There are a couple of ways to do it. The easiest is to use the Add/Remove Programs item in Control Panel, but if that doesn't work, try this:

1. Click Start | Run
2. Type :
c:\windows\\$\NtServicePackUninstall\$\spuninst.exe
3. Click OK
4. This should start the Service Pack 3 Removal Wizard, which walks you through the steps of uninstalling the SP

If these methods don't work, first restart the computer and then use System Restore to roll back to a restore point that was prior to the time you installed the service pack (this will also undo any other changes that you've made since that time).

Can't Use The XP Theme

The most probable reason for this is that the Themes service isn't running. If it's not running, XP reverts to the classic style. Do this:

1. Click Start | Run and type services.msc to open the Services console.
2. In the right pane, find the Themes service and Click the Start Service button.

If that doesn't work, try this: right click My Computer | Properties. In the System Properties dialog box, click the advanced tab. Under Performance, click Settings. Click the Visual Effects tab. Select "Use Visual Styles on Windows and Buttons" in the Custom box.

How to Set XP to Display the Shutdown Menu When You Press the Power Button

By default, when you press your computer's power button, the system shuts down. That can be a problem if it sometimes gets pressed accidentally. You can configure XP to instead display the shutdown menu, giving you the option to choose whether to shut down, restart, etc. Here's how:

1. Right click an empty spot on the desktop
2. Select Properties
3. In the display properties dialog box, click the Screen Saver tab

(Continued on page 8)

Neat Things You can do with a

Flash Drive

By Vinny La Bash, vlabash@comcast.net, Member and Regular Columnist, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida
www.spcug.org

By now you're probably tired of reading about how much better Windows 7 is than Vista. me too, so let's spend some time examining some of the things you can do with a flash drive other than mere data storage. A USB flash drive consists of a flash memory data storage device integrated with a USB (Universal Serial Bus) interface. USB flash drives are easily removable, and much smaller than a floppy disk. They are rewritable, and usually weigh less than an ounce. There is a wide range of storage capacities with the most common being from 2 GB to 32 GB. Higher capacities up to 256 GB tend to be pricey.

One of the most useful things you can do with a flash drive is to run portable applications. Open Office, for example, is a free suite of programs that includes a word processor, spreadsheet, data manager, presentation tool, and drawing package. You can store the suite as a portable application, and run it on any computer that supports Windows. Firefox and Thunderbird are also available as mobile applications.

Having office applications, email, and an internet browser all pooled in a portable drive you can carry on a key chain is a powerful combination. If you want more go to www.portableapps.com for an open source platform that works with iPods and portable hard drives in addition to flash drives. The platform is not only free, but it's a full function site. You are not limited to a trial period or a limited function subset. There is no sign in requirement, and no necessity to provide even an email address. Go for it.

Everyone wants a faster system. With either Windows Vista or Windows 7, the built-in ReadyBoost feature can speed up your computer with a USB flash drive. ReadyBoost takes the storage space on a USB flash drive and converts it into an additional memory cache that supplements the main memory cache on your primary disk drive. It can do this because flash memory is faster than regular disk drives. It's faster because it has

no moving parts, and you can get a noticeable improvement in response time. Implementing ReadyBoost is simplicity itself. Insert the USB flash drive into the USB slot on your computer and follow the configuration prompts.

If you work or live in an environment where other folks have physical access to your computer you can use your flash drive to lock everyone else out of your PC. There is no built-in utility like ReadyBoost for this, but you can download a free tool called Predator from www.brothersoft.com that provides this function. Predator uses a standard USB flash drive as an access control device. After performing a short installation and configuration process, your flash disk becomes a key that will lock and unlock your PC. When you leave your PC remove the USB flash drive. This causes the screen to go blank while disabling the mouse and keyboard. When you ready to resume, put the flash drive back, and everything returns to normal. Move over, Mr. Bond, Predator is here.

All the preceding capabilities are very convenient, but how would you like to carry around a portable operating system? If you are willing to expend a little time and energy you can configure a USB flash drive to be a bootable *Windows 7* drive. You will need a flash drive with a capacity of at least 8 gigabytes, and of course a *Windows 7* installation disk. Start out by inserting your flash drive into its USB socket and inserting the *Windows 7* installation disk in the optical drive. Please make a note of the drive letters. This is essential for successful installation.



Preparing the flash drive is the next step. Click on the Start orb and type: Diskpart

Pressing Enter opens a command window. (After typing a command at the command prompt always press Enter to execute the command.) At the prompt type: List Disk

You will see a list of all your hard drives, partitions, optical drives, card reader drives, and flash drives. Identify the optical drive that contains the Windows 7 installation disk and the flash drive you're working with. For this example we'll assume the flash drive is disk #4, also designated as G and the optical drive is disk #2, also designated as D.

At the command prompt type: Select Disk 4

Run the following commands:

```
Clean  
Create  
Primary  
Partition Select Partition 1  
Active Format FS=FAT32  
Assign  
Exit
```

This series of commands erased extraneous material from the flash drive, created an active primary partition, and formatted it with the FAT32 file system. The next step is to copy the *Windows 7* installation files to the flash drive.

At the command prompt type: Xcopy D:*.* /S/E/F G

In this example D is the drive housing the *Windows 7* installation disk and G is the USB flash drive. The command copies the installation files to the flash drive, and when it finishes you have a bootable *Windows 7* flash drive. The last thing you need to do to make this work is go into the BIOS and make the first bootable device the flash drive.

Carrying a flash drive around is obviously far more convenient than carrying a DVD, and has the additional advantage of being faster than a DVD. This procedure also works for *Windows Vista*, but why bother when *Windows 7* is here?

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To be human is to be creative. You don't have to go outside yourself to find creativity-You already have it. It lives in your heart and mind in every moment of every day.

SANDRA MAGASAMEN

Readers' Tips

Smart Computing, March 2010



Users Manual Folder

When I buy a new gadget, I make sure to download a PDF (Portable Document Format) file of the user manual from the manufacture's Web site and save to my Desktop folder. Rather than hunting through the paperwork for an item when I have a problem, I just open the folder and search for the necessary instructions. For my one notes, I open Notepad and type directions for myself using the item or software.

Ports

Your desktop or laptop computer may have a number of extra ports that you may never use, such as microphone input, dual display output, or FireWire port. The ports are one way that dirt and dust can enter your system. One way to seal the PC from contaminants is to neatly apply small pieces of electrical tape over the unused ports. Note that you'll want to leave any vents or air intakes clear of obstructions because they help remove heat from your computer. As an added bonus, you know that the input and output port will be from of grim when you want to connect peripheral in the future.

Member of the Month



Lester Larkin

Lester is from Mundelein and joined us in 1986 when the club was still known as *Lake County Atari Users Group*. He has served on the board as Program Chair, Public Relations, Webmaster, and various standing committees. Besides computer, Lester has a love for fast cars and motorcycles.

Broadside

(Continued from page 6)

4. Near the bottom of the dialog box, click the Power button
5. In the Power Options Properties dialog box, click the Advanced tab
6. At the bottom of the page, under "When I press the power button on my computer," select "Ask me what to do."

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**Take a good
 look, you just
 might see
 yourself.**

LCACE CLUB PICTURES @:
<http://lcace.org/PhotoAlbums.htm>

TIME TO RENEW

All memberships are now renewable annually on April 1st. This change in the payment of annual dues will allow the treasurer to budget our money more closely. If you have not already renewed your membership, please see Sherry Florian or Winnie Frost.

Serving Lake County, Illinois



Visit us @ <http://www.lcace.org>

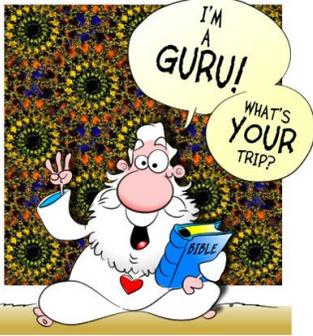
NEXT MEETING

April 17, 2010

Elections 2010

&

LCACE 27th Anniversary



March 13 Meeting

Ask The Gurus

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**POSTAGE
REQUIRED**

