

News Journal

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

Freebies!

By Dave Bilcik, Program Committee, Southern Tier Personal Computing Club, NY

Summer is still here and still hot. Thunderstorms and chances of heat waves are all a part of August's end-game. It gets people to accept autumn more easily.

In last month's Freebie article I told you of DVD Flick and DVD Styler. Two free pieces of software that will allow you to take your finished movie clips and embed them into a DVD that is playable for everyone. What if your clips aren't finished? We have some help for you here as well... think free video editors. This software will allow you to tweak, edit and clip your digital movies so that even Spielberg might get a twinge of jealousy. If not high art, at least edit out the part where you caught Uncle Bob scratching his behind at the family reunion (no one needs to see that). A good Samaritan (Yogesh Mankani) posted, as part of his blog (at <http://bit.ly/cjHfMR>), a list of 18 different free software packages that you can experiment with. I will only deal with #1 on the list, Windows Movie Maker.

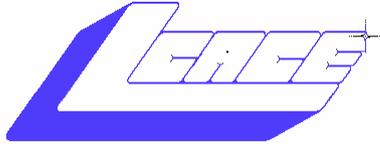
If you have XP as your operating system, you received Windows Movie Maker with your Service Pack 2 (SP2) updates. If you are using Vista (may the Lord have mercy on your soul), download it from <http://bit.ly/kXpG92> Or go to <http://bit.ly/qT4F8Z> if you're running Windows 7. The location gives you a download link and tells you how to find out if Windows Movie Maker is already installed on your system. Mr. Mankani has also kindly included a list of the top 10 free online editing software at <http://bit.ly/blGenR>, if you don't want to install any software on your PC. All you need is a browser and a broadband connection to the net and you are ready to go.

Speaking of YouTube (subtle transition here), by starting your account today you might avoid the DVD building entirely. Last month I suggested YouTube as a possible source of stock movie clips. If you post your immaculately edited movie to You Tube, just send your friends the web address of your video and let them watch it in their browser. Go to <http://www.youtube.com/> to get things started. Even radio shows are posting to You Tube. Check out <http://www.youtube.com/user/JRense?blend=6&ob=5> to hear (see?) some alternative radio. You may not agree with it but what a range of topics. YouTube content goes from stupid to sublime so be aware of your filtering options. YouTube is Google owned and operated.

Non-free warning! Do you want your YouTube posted podcast/rants sounding crisp and clear? Invest in a good microphone for your system. Don't depend on small built-in mics in your laptop or cheap gaming headphones. Blue Microphones has some highly rated USB microphones that you can check out at <http://www.bluemic.com/desktop/>. They may look a little funky but it is said their sound starts to get close (for the money) to the studio. I might suggest the Blue Yeti. Google "Blue Yeti" as key words, hit the Shopping button at the top of the screen and go from there.

Almost last words... the Barnes & Noble NOOKcolor at \$249 is the lowest price tablet disguised as an E-Book reader. You can read and browse as is. When the warranty runs out, root your NOOK and have a full Android tablet plus a well-regarded E-book reader. More details next month if I feel like it.

(Continued on page 3)



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News Journal

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Logo designed on an Atari Stacy Laptop in 1989 by Dwight Johnson Jr.

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

LCACE
c/o Group Ambassador

["J.J." Johnson](#)

Membership

LCACE membership is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are \$20.00 per individual/family. 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!

Newsletter Submissions

Club members are welcome to submit classified ads, reviews, tips and other articles for publication, to our newsletter editor in Microsoft Word format (.doc). **Publication deadline is the 20th of the month for all ads and articles.** Please do not use tabs or special formatting.

Newsletter 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 15th 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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Robin's RAMblings

Did you enjoy our September meeting? It marked a first for LCACE. Gene Barlow of the User Group Store presented a webinar on Acronis Disk Director, a partitioning utility, and Acronis True Image Home, a backup and imaging utility. Charles Mages who will present our October program on Skype phone service manned the Skype connection. Gene was in Provo, Utah; we were in Grayslake. Because Charles had an external camera and microphone, it was easy for Gene to see and hear us when we asked questions. Everyone seemed to feel this was a worthwhile program and that we should consider having other webinars.

Thank you to Charles and to Julie Bell who staffed the sales table.

If you enjoy our meetings, chances are that your family and friends will too. Plan to bring friends to our next meeting.

We have great programs scheduled:

October 15, 2011-Using Skype phone service by Charles Mages

November 12, 2011-Digital macro photography by Wendy Warden

December 10, 2011-Holiday party at State Bank of the Lakes

January 7, 2012-Show and tell and ask the gurus

February 11, 2012-

March 2, 2012-Staples of Mundelein with the latest in technology

Our holiday party will be Saturday, December 10th at State Bank of the Lakes in Grayslake.

This year's EXCITING prizes are:

1st prize-HP 17.3" Notebook with AMD Phenom II Processor, 4GB of RAM, 500GB hard drive, 8X DVD±R/RW with Double Layer Support, integrated digital media reader, HDMI output for connection to an HDTV and Windows 7.

2nd prize-Apple iPad 2 Wi-Fi-16GB-White Tablet with 1GHz dual-core Apple A5 chip, front and back cameras, built-in Wi-Fi (802.11a/b/g/n) and Bluetooth, up to 10 hours battery life.

3rd prize-HP Laserjet P2035 printer-30 pages per minute

4th prize-One year LCACE membership

Tickets are \$1 each; 6 for \$5, and 25 for \$20. The more tickets you buy, the better your chances of winning one of these fabulous prizes. Winners do not need to be present so plan to sell tickets to out of town family and friends.

Raffle tickets will be available for sale at our October meeting. In addition to buying tickets for yourself, please plan to pick up tickets to sell. The person who sells the winning first prize ticket and also the person who sells the most tickets will receive prizes at the holiday party.

If you haven't already done so, please pay your dues.

Happy computing!

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My personal email address is dbilcik@yahoo.com if you want to send me comments, questions or cash. Please put "Freebies" somewhere on the subject line so I will have some idea about its contents. Tell me about your best free software experience or your our best bargain (...ever!) and I will pass it on.

August 2011 issue, Rare Bits

www.stpcc.org

Dbilcik (at) yahoo.com



Historian Commentary

L.C.A.C.E. Club Historian
History Report, 9/10/11 meeting
By Les Larkin programs@lcace.org

The September meeting was conducted by our fearless leader (and president), Robin Seidenberg in her usual efficient and enthusiastic manner. Thus, business was taken care of



quickly so we could get to the much anticipated Acronis presentation. But WAIT! First, the booty that goes to a couple of fortunate attendees! Lois Brondy won \$10.50

in the 50/50 drawing.

And Jay Bitterman won the door prize, a copy of Acronis True Image Home 2012.



Now, for the main event. With the very competent help of Charles Mages, who handled the Skype communication setup, we were able to participate in a webinar (seminar over the web) that was conducted by Gene Barlow **way out in Utah**. That kind of long distance presentation is a first

for our club. This wasn't just a TV show. There was 2 way communication between Gene and any member who had a question at the end of the program. We could see and hear him, and he could see and hear us! Did I mention that Gene was in **Utah** at the time?

After the great webinar, Julie Bell sold 12 copies of Acronis True Image Home 2012, 2 of those being back ordered, and 5 copies of "Acronis Disk Director 11 home", 1 of which had to be back ordered. They will have to be shipped conventionally because Skype hasn't got all the bugs worked out of their teleportation feature yet. However, all attendees were given a handout with a link to download (it's almost teleporting!) a **free** copy of "Acronis Drive Monitor". <http://www.acronis.com/homecomputing/download/drive-monitor/>
See you all next meeting!



The Tip Corner

By Bill Sheff, Novice SIG Coordinator, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA
August 2011 issue, The LVCG Journal
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Windows 7

Just got Windows 7? Notice something missing? Well if you want to see a list of what happened to those programs you liked in XP or Vista here is a simple way to find out. Open Help and Support then type "What happened" in the search box. Windows will give you lots of results for the query, such as: What happened to the NetBEUI protocol?, What happened to ActiveSync?, What happened to Sticky Notes?, What happened to Windows Calendar?, What happened to the Run as command?, What happened to the Quick Launch toolbar?" and many more.

Say you picked the "What happened to the Run command?" This is what you get: "The Run command no longer appears on the Start menu in this version of Windows. The search box that appears on the Start menu provides much of the same functionality as the Run command. However, the Run command is still available if you prefer to use it. You can even add it to the Start menu for easier access.

To add the Run command to the Start menu Click to open Taskbar and Start Menu Properties. Click the Start Menu tab, and then click Customize. In the list of Start menu options, select the Run command check box, and then click OK. The Run command will be displayed on the right side of the Start menu.

Tip: You can also access the Run command by pressing the Windows logo key +R. Check it out."

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Google Images

A while ago Google switched over to a different display method for their images. If you want to turn it off and go back to the original, here's what you do: Scroll to the very bottom of your Google image search and click on Switch to basic version. If you want to go back to the regular way, simply scroll back to the bottom and click Switch to standard version.

System Tools

Just for a little review, there are a bunch of very useful programs in the System Tools folder. To get to them you access the System Tools by going to All Programs | Tools. When you open the folder in XP you can find the following programs:

- ▶ CHARACTER MAP, which allows you to copy and paste letters and symbols from other fonts into your document without switching fonts.
- ▶ DISK CLEANUP, which frees up space on your hard drive by eliminating unused and temporary files.
- ▶ DISK DEFRAGMENTER (Defrag), which speeds up your computer by reassigning or eliminating stray bits of data.
- ▶ FILES AND SETTINGS TRANSFER WIZARD, for transferring files and data from one drive to another.
- ▶ INTERNET EXPLORER (NO ADD-ONS), which allows you to access the internet without any Explorer addons interfering with it.
- ▶ SCHEDULED TASKS, which allows you to schedule a specific time to run updater, defrag, and other system programs.
- ▶ SYSTEM INFORMATION, which tells you the basic ram, processor, etc., of your system.
- ▶ SYSTEM RESTORE, which will restore your Windows system to an earlier time.

In Vista and Win 7 you can find all of the above and more. Check it out.

Templates

A template is a prepared form or pattern within various programs such as document and spreadsheet programs. They allow a user to develop a form that allows for easy entry and automatically formats and calculates data.

If you are a user of the Microsoft Office suite you are probably aware of them as Microsoft makes mention of templates and even has a folder of them within their suite.

But are you aware that there are literally hundreds located on the internet? But that is not all.

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Julie Bell
Henry Henriksen
Carolyn Lewis
Eric Rehberger
Roy Reinholds

The logo for Pegasus Event Photography features the word 'Pegasus' in a stylized, blue, vertical font. To the right of the text is a blue silhouette of a Pegasus, a mythical winged horse. The background of the logo is a blurred image of a camera lens.

Event Photography
5 Minute PHOTOS
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eBay Adventures

"So what gives?"

By Rick Eblaw, Vice President, Southern Tier Personal Computing Club, NY
August 2011 issue, Rare Bits
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If you spend some time on eBay, you'll find all kinds of interesting stuff offered for sale. There's lots of collectibles, some of which would be hard to locate unless you were willing to travel the country going to flea markets. There are items that you can find in stores that are sometimes offered at a substantial discount. And then are some items that are hard to explain...

Here's a recent example. There's a fellow in China who is currently selling a lot of "Mini USB 2.0 Wireless Bluetooth Adapter Dongle" items, which you can readily find by searching eBay for "usb

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There are even templates designed for the free suite put out by Open Office. Just Google open office templates and find body mass calculators, ovulation schedules time cards, shift scheduling and so much more.

You do not have to reinvent the wheel every time you sit at your computer. One little caveat though, these are usually presented by users and sometimes do not cover all you would like to find in a template. But do not lose heart, once downloaded you can continue to tweak the form until it does what you want the way you want it.



Tracking the latest information on anything

By John Weigle, Editor, Channel Islands PCUG, CA

August 2011 issue, The Outer Edge

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If you want to keep track of the latest news and Web postings on specific subjects, give Google Alerts a try.

I've been using the feature for some time to track three subjects I'm interested in: UFOs, Annette Funicello and Sally Field. I've been interested in UFOs since the early 1950s, a fan of Annette since the Mickey Mouse Club Days and a fan of Field since her first TV appearance as Gidget. So now you know three of my not-very-secret "secrets."

Google explains its alerts this way at <http://www.google.com/alerts>: "Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic."

"Enter the topic you wish to monitor, then click preview to see the type of results you'll receive. Some handy uses of Google Alerts include:

- monitoring a developing news story
- keeping current on a competitor or industry
- getting the latest on a celebrity or event

- keeping tabs on your favorite sports teams."

When you create an alert you'll be asked to choose the topic for it, the type of information you want (everything, news, blogs, videos, discussions); how often you want alerts (as-it-happens, once a day, once a week); volume (only the best results, all results); and your email address so you can get the alerts. The fault choices are everything, once a day and only the best results. Consider starting with the defaults and then tweaking them if the results you get aren't what you expected.

You might also have to tweak your selected topic. My search for Annette is "Annette Funicello" (in the quotes). That limits results to items with her full name. On the other hand, my Sally Field search is just that (no quotes around the name), so I get everything with Sally and Field, which results in a few unexpected results. My UFO search results in news about unidentified flying objects, my intent, and the musical group UFO.

I haven't set up searches for computer-related items because I get several electronic newsletters that keep me informed about most of the technical subjects I'm interested in, but it's easy to establish queries for any subject you're interested in. For instance, you could use "Linux, Ubuntu," Microsoft, "Steve Jobs," "Bill Gates."

Or you could try your own name or the name of your business if you wanted to know what people are saying about you or your business.

And if you're a sports fan, you might want to track everything said about your favorite team(s). You'd need to set up a separate alert for each team name.

The site lets you set up an alert and then shows sample results for it. Just for kicks, I tried my first and last name (in quotes) and got references to my Facebook page, an obituary for a John Weigle of Augusta, Ga. (I still get spam about real estate deals in Augusta), and the Weigle Music Ministries, which I had never heard of.

A search for CIPCUG showed only the CIPCUG Web site.

Not surprisingly, a search for "Los Angeles Dodgers" resulted in more hits than any of my other test searches. Topics that get lots of news coverage, such as the Dodgers, are obviously going to have

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more results than people or topics that are seldom in the news.

All the results have live links to whatever the alert finds.

The alerts tool isn't for everyone, but it's useful if you have any interests you want to track regularly.



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wireless" and sorting by "Price + Shipping: lowest first." That in itself isn't interesting, there's no shortage of sellers offering USB Bluetooth adapters. What's interesting about this one is that the minimum bid is \$0.01 (one penny) and free shipping is offered. You don't have to be a financial genius to see that if only one person bids on one of these auctions, the seller is going to lose money. Since the seller is in China and presumably has direct access to the manufacturer of these devices, he's probably paying just a few pennies for each one. But he still needs to pay the international postage, and if you check the feedback you'll see a number of folks who did get their device for just \$0.01. So what gives?

I had \$1.08 in eBay Bucks "burning a hole in my pocket," so I figured I'd give this a shot. On my first attempt I set my maximum bid to \$0.99, and a couple of people tried to outbid me in the last few seconds of the auction, but the highest attempt was a \$0.50 bid, so I won with an automatic \$0.55 bid. I then tried to bid on another, but I was only allowed to bid on one of these items from the seller in a 10-day period — so the seller was not going to allow someone to buy a whole bunch of these for \$0.01 each in a short period of time. So I found another seller of the same item for the same price and put in a maximum bid of \$0.53, figuring that at worst I'd use up my eBay Bucks (which is "bonus money" based on how much you bought on eBay in the previous month). Again, I had someone else bid, but they only tried up to \$0.36, so I won my second dongle for \$0.41. When I paid the sellers using my eBay Bucks, I discovered that both "sellers" had the same PayPal account, so there was really just one seller using multiple eBay accounts.

Back to the "So what gives?" question. I see at least 3 possible ways to explain this:

1. The seller is hoping that the \$0.01 price will bring in bidders, but there will be enough people bidding on these so that the final bid will be high enough to make a profit, on average, over a large number of sales. This doesn't seem to be happening, I see lots of people getting these for \$0.01, and even my two quick attempts on this didn't raise the price to a point where the seller could break even.

2. The seller is offering these dongles as a "loss leader," just like a retail store, in hopes that you will buy from the seller again when you want something that is being sold at a reasonable profit. While the "loss leader" concept has shown some success in the retail store market, on eBay and the Internet you have many choices available instantly so I don't think this concept is going to work.

3. This is my best guess to explain these auctions: The seller is trying to quickly raise his total number of feedbacks, his positive feedback percentage, his detailed feedback ratings, and to be a "Top-rated seller." To understand why these measures are important, you have to be familiar with the eBay rating system and the preferences of most eBay buyers. I'm not going to go into the details here, but it's clear that the majority of eBay buyers want to buy from the "Top-rated sellers," they like seeing big feedback numbers, and they want to see positive feedback near 100%. Normally, to achieve these sorts of numbers you have to sell a lot of items over a fairly long period of time, which is why most buyers feel that they can trust a "Top-rated seller" -- they've got a "proven track record." This seller is effectively trying to "buy" a solid reputation in a short period of time at a relatively low cost -- the loss on each individual sale of these dongles is the business cost of building his reputation -he's basically giving away USB Bluetooth dongles to get a large number of positive feedback ratings.

You might wonder why a seller would use multiple eBay accounts. If a seller gets too many negative feedbacks in a short period of time, eBay may ban the account, or require the seller to take specific actions to "repair their reputation." Even a handful of negative feedbacks in a week will turn off buyers even if eBay doesn't take any action, so many of the "big sellers" have multiple accounts so that they can "throw away" an account that has been "poisoned" by negative feedback ratings.



Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

"Members Helping Members"
(since 1983)

HOLIDAY RAFFLE 2011

1st Prize:

HP 17" Notebook

- Phenom II Quad-Core Mobile Processor
- 4GB of RAM
- 500GB hard drive
- Webcam and microphone
- Super Multi Dual layer DVD±R/RW
- Windows 7 Home Premium



2nd Prize:

Apple iPad 2 16GB Wi-Fi Tablet-White

- 1GHz dual-core Apple A5 chip
- Front and back cameras
- Built-In Wi-Fi (802.11a/b/g/n) and Bluetooth
- Up to 10 hours battery life

3rd Prize:

HP Laserjet P2035 Printer

- 30 pages per minute



4th Prize:

1-Year's Membership LCACE

"Members Helping Members"

Tickets: \$1 each, 6 for \$5, or 25 for \$20

Drawing December 10, 2011

WINNER NEED NOT BE PRESENT

Members' E-mail Addresses



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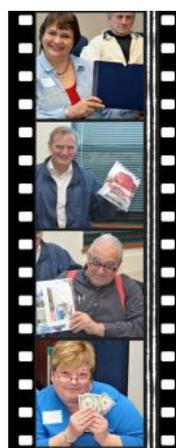
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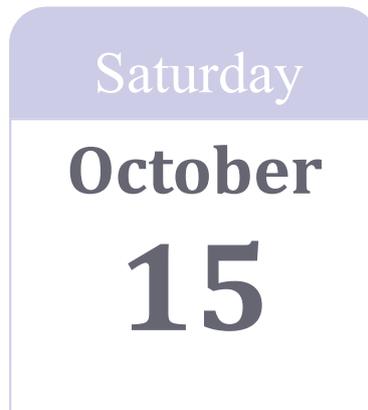
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Next Meeting



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Meeting Agenda

Skype Phone service presented by Charles Magez



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