NEWS JOURNAL

Reminder: The November meeting is scheduled for November 1, 2003 at the grays lake Public Library

Novembers Demonstration L.C.A.E. Roundtable

Don't forget to mark your calendar for December 6 and join us for the annual L.C.A.C.E. Holiday party

Visit us at our web site at:
Http://www.lcace.org

The L.C.A.C.E. News Journal is published eleven times annually. Members are encouraged to submit contributions and will be acknowledged in this newsletter.

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Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
L.C.A.C.E.
c/o Group Ambassador
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Waukegan, Illinois 60085-5219

Membership

Membership for L.C.A.C.E 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

L.C.A.C.E. meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at the Grayslake Area Public Library 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting location opens at 12:00 p.m.., 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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Places4aces

"(web)Sites4Soaring ah's"

Where I ferret out interesting, neat & great sites for **Elsie Acers**.

Howard Shaughnessy, site seeker

Links. I luv 'em! My original searches get side tracked to main lines so that I find all sorts of good stuff I can share.

The Langa List (www.langalist.com) celebrates six years of interactive computer discussions where I found the eldergeek (www.theeldergeek.com.) who releases a torrent of computer magic; way over my head, but donca just luv his URL?

Bloggers: Do you have your own web blog? Seems just about everyone does. If unknown to you a web blog is more or less a diary out on line for the world to read, and if you are a photoblogger you illustrate your blog with fotos. Best of these can be found at www.photoblogs.org however bloggers most usually have dozens of links to other bloggers as well as publications around the world. Link this!

Nancy Buttons (www.nancybuttons.com) and bumper signs will keep your smile lines intact with such gems as: Chocolate will never replace sex – unless it's VERY good chocolate. The last person using this keyboard had a terminal disease. Avoid computer viruses – practice safe hex. Two ROMS don't make a write. Funny, weird & wise – look under sick humor for some juicy bon mots.

Remember the Periodic Table of Elements when you were in school? www.uky.edu/Projects/Chemcomics/ connects comic books to each of the elements. Boyhood heroes such as Batman make learning these elements fun … well, I still want to be excused from this table.

Wikipedia: (www.wikipedia.com) started January 2001 from scratch, now has 163564 articles in English. Four main areas: Math & Natural Sciences, Applied Arts & Sciences, Social Sciences & Philosophy and Culture & Fine Arts. It's interactive so you can add your wisdom. Don't read English? Available in 16-other languages.

Daypop: Want to know the day's news/gossip/weather/sports/etc.? This is that site. Click onto www.daypop.com. Better than those "fare & unbalanced or "mostly trusted news" sources.

As the weather turns chilly it becomes a three dog night, however you'll want to visit Tudogs (www.tudogs.com/) to pick up free/share ware.

Tips & Tricks

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When your old LP player starts to skip, you almost certainly know what's making Rosemary Clooney repeat herself like, well, a broken record. It's probably a scratch on that song's track or a bit of fuzz stuck to the needle, you judge. You lift the needle from the record and blow a puff of air across it. Set the stylus back on the record, and "Little Josey" finishes playing without further trouble.

Problems with your computer's optical drive really aren't much different. You place CDs or DVDs into your CD-ROM, CD-RW (CD-rewriteable), DVD-ROM, or rewriteable DVD drive, just as you set vinyl records on your player. The optical drive spins the disc and reads its long, spiral track, just as a record player traces a vinyl record's groove. If your disc is scratched or dirty, you'll get skips in your audio or video.

Of course, your optical drive has more things that can go wrong than does your stereo. We'll talk about some of the most common problems in this article. Don't forget to check the drive's users manual and manufacturer's Web site for FAQs (frequently asked least 700MB free space for burning CDs and 5GB free for DVD writing. Consider adding more RAM if your system has less than 128MB. questions) and other information.

Playback Problems

An optical drive reads a spinning CD or DVD by shining a laser on the disc's underside. The drive senses changes in the way the disc reflects the beam and interprets this as audio, video, or other digital data. That's the reason scratched media and dirty discs cause most optical drive problems.

As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure. Always store your bare discs in their plastic cases (called jewel cases) or sleeves made for optical discs. Never just toss a disc on your desk; treat it as gently as you would a vinyl record. Handle it by the edges, too. Refer to the "Repairing Scratches" sidebar in this article for information on resuscitating a damaged disc.

"Pops and clicks are typically caused by a damaged or poorly produced disc, but occasionally can indicate a problem with the optics of a drive," says Keith Curts, director of engineering at Plextor (http://www.plextor.com), one of the premier manufacturers of rewriteable CD and DVD drives.

If you have other discs of the same type that play back fine, the disc with the playback errors is probably to blame, Curts says. However, "if the problem happens only with CD-R or CD-RW discs but not with stamped (prewritten) discs, it is more than likely that the drive is experiencing problems and would need servicing."

Dust. It's tempting to use an audio CD player cleaner, such as those sold for stereos, to clean an optical drive you suspect is dusty inside. However, Curts says, "use of lens-cleaning devices are not recommended and can actually cause damage to the drive mechanism."

Curts recommends you buy an inexpensive can of sterile, compressed air from an electronics store for a little quick cleaning. Open the disc tray on your drive, then blast the inside of the drive with the compressed air.

If your drive is old enough to have a collection of dust bunnies, don't take it apart to clean it out unless you are very sure you can reassemble it the right way. Opening a drive may void its warranty.

If your drive is the kind with the lens assembly mounted on the disc tray, as are some portables or notebook drives, avoid touching the lens. If you do accidentally touch it, Curts says, try wiping it with a cotton swab dipped in denatured alcohol or giving it a shot from your compressed air can.

Whatever you do, never use the air compressor in your garage to clean out your drive. Besides their potential for pressures high enough to damage delicate electronics, air compressors can easily spray condensed water and oil all over your drive.

Mounts and cables. If your optical drive started to act up after you moved your PC or changed something inside it, check to make sure that its data, power, and audio cables are still snugly connected. If a cable looks

kinked or pinched by some other component, replace it.

If you mount an optical drive in a computer with fewer than four screws, or at an angle, not flat, you're inviting vibrations and skips later. Leave some space above and below the drive for cooling, which can extend its life.

Burning Problems

Rewriteable optical drives, such as CD-RWs, DVD-RWs, and DVD+RWs (the last two are competing rewriteable DVD formats), can also burn (write) data to blank discs. If you're getting errors in the discs you create, try the tips in the previous section to get rid of dust and dirt. Next, turn your attention to the blank discs you're using. Stick with the brands the drive manufacturer recommends, such as Verbatim or Maxell. Make   sure you're using the specified speed of disc, too. For example, one manufacturer's 1X-4X CD-RW may have an entirely different recording dye formula than its 16X-24X media (a 1X disc can be burned at 150KB per second, so a 24X disc can be written at 3.6MBps).

You might also try writing your disc at a slower speed. Leave your computer alone as it burns a disc. If your PC is on a network, check to make sure that no other users will be accessing your system's hard drive until your disc is done. It may also help to defragment your hard drive before you burn and verify that it has at
Finally, check the manufacturer's site for an update to your drive's firmware (semipermanent programming) and install it according to the directions. Of the few drives returned to Plextor for servicing, Curts says, "most of these could have been fixed by an upgrade to the latest firmware." Your burning software, such as Roxio's Easy CD Creator

(http://www.roxio.com) or head's Nero Burning ROM (http://www.nero.com), might also have an update waiting for you online.

Same Old Song & Dance

If your drive is still having problems, contact the manufacturer. If the unit is still under warranty, the company may ask you to take your drive to a service center or return it. Actually, at today's prices, you might be better off with a new drive.

by Marty Sems

Repairing Scratches

Memorex's OptiFix Pro ($29.99) looks like a CD player, but it's really an automatic cleaner and polisher with a built-in timer. If you accidentally scratch a CD or DVD, you might be able to save it. Some products, ranging from simple sprays and cloths to motorized polishers, can buff out minor scratches in a disc's   plastic outer layer. However, we've had mixed results with such products. We used Memorex's OptiFix Pro ($29.99; http://www.memorex.com) to clean two scratched audio CDs, polish them, and clean them again. This motorized, time-limited gadget removed less than half the audible skips on the discs, but it's possible that a few more polishing sessions might have eliminated even more. Still, if the OptiFix Pro restores two audio CDs or one application disc, it pays for itself.

Here's the underside of our scratched audio CD before we cleaned and polished it with Memorex's OptiFix Pro ($29.99; top) and after. The treatment removed some, but not all, of the pops and clicks on the CD.

If you choose to try hand polishing a disc with a cloth, remember to always wipe the disc from the center hole toward the outer

edge, not round and round. Optical drives and players are somewhat tolerant of light scratches across their tracks, but not scratches that follow the data tracks.

If nothing fully gets out a scratch in a CD or non-copy-protected DVD, you might try copying its files or ripping its songs (converting them to a music file format, such as MP3 or Ogg Vorbis, and saving them to a hard drive) with the most recent optical drive you can find. Some quality optical drives are able to extract much data around the scratched parts of a disc, resulting in files that have few or no glitches. For ripping, use software such as Easy CD Creator, Nero, or a shareware utility. Once you've ripped an audio CD, you can burn a replacement CD-R (CD-recordable) with a CD-RW (CD-rewriteable) or rewriteable DVD drive.

On the lighter Side

You know you are addicted to the Internet when...

You kiss your girlfriend's home page.

Your bookmark takes 15 minutes to scroll from top to bottom.

Your eyeglasses have a web site burned in on them.

All your daydreaming is preoccupied with getting a faster \par onnection to the net: 28.8...ISDN...cable mo-dem...T1...T3.

And even your night dreams are in HTML.

You turn off your modem and get this awful empty feeling, like you just pulled the plug on a loved one.

You start introducing yourself as "Jim at I-I-Net dot net dot net

Your heart races faster and beats irregularly each time you see a new WWW site address in print or on TV, even though you've never had heart problems before.

You step out of your room and realize that your parents have moved and you don't have a clue when it happened.

You turn on your intercom when leaving the room so you can hear if new e-mail arrives.

Your wife drapes a blond wig over your monitor to remind you of what she looks like.

All of your friends have an @ in their names.

Your dog has its own home page.

You can't call your mother...she doesn't have a modem.

You buy a Captain Kirk chair with a built-in keyboard and mouse.

LAKE COUNTY AREA COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

Christmas Raffle

Tickets: $1.00 each
6 for $5.00

Winner need not be present.

1st PRIZE
Fujifilm A303 Digital Camera
w/ ScanDisk Reader

2nd PRIZE
HP PSC 1210
Printer/Scanner/Copier

3rd PRIZE
52X MicroAdvantage CD Burner

4th PRIZE
One Year's Membership to LCACE

Drawing to be held
December 6, 2003

From the News Journal staff

Mike
J.J.
&
Howard

Happy

Thanksgiving

I spent a day in a nursing home helping residents with an Arts & Crafts project. It turned out so well. I enjoyed it as much or even more than they did. The project we created used two CD's per resident. There are many other things that can be made from these "garbage" items.

I'm asking if you will save those CD's for free Internet service you receive in the mail for me. I would really appreciate it. Please ask your family, friends and co-workers also, I think everyone gets them!

Thanks,

Donna Kalinoski

Editors Note: If you would like to drop them off at the next meeting I will ensure Donna gets them.

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As much as we try, we do make errors. Please advise us if there is a mistake in your E-Mail address or if it is not included in this listing. Send E-Mail to editor@lcace.org with the additions and/or corrections. Thank you. **This listing last updated – April 1, 2002**

L.C.A.C.E. HOTLINE
Call: 847-623-3815
Web Site: http://www.lcace.org

Members' Web Sites

**If you have a
Web Site
and would like to
advertise it here
E-mail me at
editor@lcace.org**

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.

Your advertisement should have been placed here.

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See the CLUB PICTURES at:

Take a good look, you just might see yourself.

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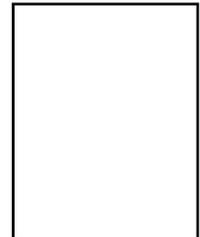
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- LCACE information
- LCACE history and pictures
- LCACE meeting, location and map
- LCACE member's e-mail addresses
- LCACE online membership application

NEXT MEETING

November 1, 2003

Grayslake Public Library

12:30pm—3:00pm

Meeting Room Opens at Noon

This month:
"Q&A Roundtable"
&
Special Interest Groups

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

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