Random Bits

Licking County Computer Society

http://lccsohio.org

http://lccsohio.org/meeting.htm

http://apcug.net/

SPECIAL NOTICE

September Recycling Event

The Recycling Committe members have been planning the event and are gathering the needed materials. Most members don't know the inside scoop on this event and I believe you will be interested in the details. You can read the story later in the newsletter.

This past spring we had to forgo a collection because the recyclers wanted to charge us for transportation of the collected material and would not pay us for the value of said materials. Our committee made the decision not to spend a sizable amount of club money even though the benefit to the environment is a major goal of our recycling events.

We are having the event at the usual location on 18 and 19 September.

The Banana Split Rauch family photo was taken at Ye Olde Mill on May 12, 2009, with the Canon A590IS in Auto mode. As an editorial note: No alcohol was involved and David lodged a protest when Mary got the vanilla.

Please send me pictures you might like to see here. I'll try to put them in as I'm able. A caption or story is helpful.   email newsletter@lccsohio.org

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News from APCUG

Robert Lee Vance (Bob), APCUG Region 3 Advisor, APCUG Representative (LCCS)
Licking County Computer Society

July 7th promo of the APCUG Annual event by one of the Licking County Computer Society personalities who has a blog talk radio show.
http://tinyurl.com/mnjt98
Check out her blog and listen for her promotion of the APCUG Annual Ohio Midwest Regional Computer Conference

Link to the APCUG Annual Ohio Midwest Regional Conference info center
http://ohiomidwest.apcug.org/

Welcome to the APCUG SharePoint Portal
The link to share point includes Announcements an Event Calendar and Documents for discounts and shared presentations.
http://sharepoint.apcug.net/default.aspx

On this web portal, you will find links to information about the APCUG and its member groups, along with tips and tricks shared by other community members. If you are interested in joining a group, or creating a new one, you can sign up by clicking the link or copy and paste it into your web browser address bar.
http://sharepoint.apcug.net/WebPages/Signup.aspx

A presentation about Live Meeting, using Live Meeting, was provided to 140 attendees of the APCUG/FACUG Spring Conference. You can replay the presentations at the following web site:
http://www.facug.org/ConferenceSpring/Presentations-S.asp

If you are curious about APCUG groups in Ohio you can go to:
http://cdb.apcug.org/locdtst.asp?LCID=OH
The site provides the location, group name, email contact, web site and date of meetings.

Current APCUG August Conference schedule

General Meeting Notes

The August meeting subject will be social networking... Facebook, Twitter, etc.

June 2009 General Meeting

I (Ken Bixler) presented three topics after the general business was completed. The three topics were: News Readers, Virtual Machines and Home Automation. The slide shows are available at the blue links below.

News Readers are applications or addons which poll your favorite sites for the newest news articles. Articles are listed as headlines and headlines with a short description of the content. Any subject under the sun can be found so, if you are into needlecraft, fly fishing or other, you can search for those sites and put them on your newsreader list.

Virtual Machines are software computers which run in the VMWare application. If you have seen some of the modern games you might imagine a simulated computer. The simulated computer can produce the same output as a hardware computer.

Home Automation is software that interfaces to your home, farm or business and monitors or controls lights and equipment. Your outside lights can come on at dusk and off at dawn without your assistance. The cat can be fed, plants watered or burglars photographed. If you can think of it, you can do it.

Speakers and Events

Annual Picnic

About 30 LCCS members and guests attended the Summer Picnic held on June 20, 2009, at the society's "home"; the A-Frame. LCAP was kind enough to loan us their portable grill (portable as in hooks to the back of a truck).

President Jim (aka "firemen") got the fire going on the grill, but was replaced as head griller this year by Dillon Lee Dunlap. He did a great job ensuring that the food got cooked, but not burned. Great job Mr. Dunlap.

LCCS provided chicken, hamburgers, and the all time favorite - brats, along with some soft drinks. Individual members brought extras ranging from various salads to many delicious desserts.

After the great meal, a few members took in a game of "corn hole" toss. We hope more of you can attend the next picnic and have as much fun as we did.

Click the captions for larger image.

Jim and Lee getting the grill ready

Getting the table filled with food

Lee at the grill, "I want mine well done"

Some of the members who attended

More members

Finally it's time to fill our plates

Computer Recycling Events

September Recycling Event

First, the business stuff:
The company who is assisting us will not be able to pay us for the scrap collected. Prices for material are quite low in the current economy so, this is understandable. They were able to agree to pick up our collected material without charge, which is an improvement on the situation we faced last Spring. There will be some small cost to the club for packaging material and incidentals. We are confident that monetary donations at the public event and refurbished equipment resale will provide ongoing financial support for the LCCS.

Work stuff:
We'll need help on 17, 18 and 19 September. The 17th will be a day of labor, hard and heavy at times. Several storage areas need to be stacked, packed and transferred to the collection point. If you are able to help for any amount of time, in any capacity, please contact Jim Amore at president@lccsohio.org

The 18th and 19th will be the public collection and your help is appreciated. I've had fun at the last several public collection days and plan on helping again this year.

The good stuff:
Our recycling partner will send in their trucks and pick up the material after the event is over. A certification of destruction will be provided after processing at the recovery site. The bottom line is: We can improve the environment and collect equipment for refurbishing.

The unseen actions:
I attended one of the recycling committee meetings and heard some of what has transpired to date. It sounded as if a few individuals have spent quite a few hours sorting and moving material. Multiple rental storage units have been sorted and rearranged. There have been meetings, phone calls and emails to arrange for the recycler, free storage units and packing material. Decisions have been made regarding the retention age/capacity of recycling material we have and will receive.

Digital Imaging SIG

Digital Imaging SIG, 12 May 2009
by Ron Sherwood

The Digital Image SIG meets on the second Tuesday of the month from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Zerger Hall.

After reviewing members' photos, SIG leader David Clement demonstrated a quick way to copy 35 mm slides. While his method may not produce maximum quality, it does result in very usable resolution and is VERY fast when compared to other methods.

By using a slide projector and a smooth white surface as a screen (think foam core board from Hobby Lobby), David simply took pictures of the projected image. He mounted the camera on a tripod and lined up as closely as possible to the axis of the projector's lens. This alignment reduces distortion of the image, which can appear as a "stretched" edge in the finished product. When set up properly he is able to digitize the slides as fast as he can press the shutter release after the projector has changed the slide.

David's second subject of the evening introduced the group to high dynamic range (HDR) processing, which produces an image with good detail in both light and shadow.

Creating an HDR photo requires multiple images, taken at varying exposures, with some frames capturing the lighter area details and other frames properly expose darker areas of a scene. Software allows a photographer to join the best areas of exposure from each photo, producing a scene with a wider range between the darkest and lightest objects in the photo. In this case the software used to process multiple images was Paint Shop Pro X2.

David closed the evening's presentations by demonstrating to the group a method to produce "out of bounds" images.

Digital Imaging SIG

In bounds (or frame) image

Out of bounds or out of frame photos have a frame around the subject and parts of the subject extend outside of the frame. Again using Paint Shop Pro, David put an oval frame around an image with parts of the subject extending outside the oval.

Out of bounds (or frame)

Digital Imaging SIG

Digital Imaging SIG, June 2009

SIG Leader: David Clement
Report submitted by Ron Sherwood

The Digital Imaging SIG (normally) meets at Zerger Hall on the second Tuesday of the month starting at 7:00 pm. Road trip! The Digital Imaging SIG left the confines of Zerger Hall and headed outdoors to Ye Old Mill near Utica for its June meeting. After a few members enjoyed ice cream treats, all wondered the grounds cameras in hand. Anything and everything were subjects for the evening, but several members focused on motion and dynamic range, topics discussed at the previous meeting. The rotating mill wheel provided a chance for members to try different shutter speeds to freeze action or to blur the moving wheel. The high conrast between the areas of shade and sunshine offered a wide dynamic range to use for HDR (high dynamic range) processing.

SIG members John Kennedy and Ron Sherwood brought laptop computers along so members could do a quick review of images on-site. Electrical outlets in the shelter house were an added convenience.

SIG leader David Clement asked members to pick four or five images from the shoot to bring to the July meeting so that the group may discuss various techniques used.

Above:
D. Clement, V. Atkins and M. Rauch review images in the camera viewfinder

Right:
John Kennedy and Gina Buckey take a photo through a telescope

LCCS/LCAP Teaching Program

SEPTEMBER CLASSES

The September Class registration is now going on and classes are filling up quickly. Course offerings for the September time frame are:

Windows XP – Beginners

Windows Vista – Beginners

Internet/Email – XP and Vista

Open Office Basic – XP and Vista

OpenOffice.org3 is the leading open-source office software suite for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, databases and more. It is available in many languages and works on all common computers. It stores all your data in an international open standard format and can also read and write files from other common office software packages. This class is great and everyone is clamoring to enroll in it. With one class already full we are forced to schedule another one.

If you have not taken a Beginners course at Zerger Hall, you must first enroll in
Windows XP-Beginners or
Windows Vista-Beginners
After completion of the Beginners Course, you may enroll in any other of our excellent courses. The course enrollment fees this September will be $20. This is to cover our operating and replacement costs for computer equipment.

Be sure to sign up ASAP for these classes before it is too late. Contact Janet Hill at 740-345-0821 or stop in at Zerger Hall, 745 E. Main St., Newark and sign up with your deposit.
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George Hreha

Linux SIG

Linux Sig, 07 June 2009
Seven members attended

Robert (Bob) Vance
Repurposed a donated Emachine during our afternoon meeting. These are inexpensive computers outfitted with a slow CPU (Central Processor Unit), a small hard drive and minimal RAM(Random Access Memory). Existing system parameters make the Emachine unsuitable for the Windows OS(Operating System), but they may be converted to useful computers using a Linux OS.

First, the 7.4Gb (Giga byte) hard drive was removed and a refurbished 40Gb drive installed in its place. Bob then added 128Mb of RAM for a total of 256Mb. Finally, the Ubuntu Linux OS was installed to finish the conversion.

A couple hours work produced a machine capable of office tasks, internet cruising, photo storage, skype phone communication and most other casual tasks. Intensive audio or movie creation and editing is probably too much to ask but, this is a perfect machine for the average person to use for daily tasks.

Jim Amore
Brought his new Windows Vista laptop in to have Linux added. After some discussion it was decided to install software from VMWare as a medium for adding Ubuntu Linux. Using a virtual machine http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_machine permits the user to switch back and forth from one operating system to another, without rebooting. Another advantage is the ability to try out or test run other operating systems without having to risk the existing OS in a multiboot situation.

Jim's installation of VMWare required the download and installation of the free (Other John, are you listening) VMWare Player software. Downloading and installation took only a few minutes. Next, we selected a variant of Ubuntu called Xubuntu as the Linux OS to install. The 500+Mb package took 20 minutes or so to download uncompress. Once uncompressed, Jim clicked the "Open" option, navigated to the Xubuntu directory and OK'd the default installation file.

CONTINUED -->

Linux SIG

Xubuntu is a compact version of Linux suited for laptops and associated system parameters. All software to cruise the net, play games, download and edit photos is included in the default installation. An "office" suite is not standard but is only about 10 clicks and one password away from download and install.

Jim had Open Office installed in short order. This completed the task of providing a second operating system on the laptop. Windows and Linux, side by side, with only a CTRL+ALT (simultaneous Control key and Alt key press) to go out of Linux and into Windows.

John Kennedy (Other John) Also brought his laptop in for a similar conversion; to install Linux as a second operating system on a Windows computer.

JC Deck, Vicky Atkins and Ken Bixler provided assistance and peeked over shoulders for learning. Ken Baker completed a repair of a Windows operating system.

Repair SIG

Repair SIG, 02 June 2009

Everett McKee
handled the single computer brought in for repair. He had a real challenge on his hands with a computer that wouldn't respond to the power on button. The computer had gone down in a thunderstorm and wouldn't restart...baaad news.

Everett began repair by opening the computer and just looking at the parts. Occassionally a problem will be evident when there is no response at all from the power switch. You might see a burned or broken wire, a swollen capacitor or a burned spot inside the computer housing.

After finding no obvious signs of damage we turned to checking the power switch. A simple voltmeter check indicated the switch was OK, so Everett asked if someone would look up the power connector wiring diagram on the internet. The wiring diagram indicated the green wire was the power wire so Everett grounded it to bypass all protections on the computer. The CPU (Central Processing Unit) cooling fan started and an LED (light emitting diode) lit but, no video output was produced.

A few more diagnostic checks proved fruitless, so we came to the conclusion the motherboard was damaged by the lightening strike. The choices at this point are:

1)Get a new motherboard, which must be identical
2)Get a new computer.

#2 was chosen and a copy of "My Documents" was made from the old drive for installation on a new computer. We offered to help set up the new computer when it has been purchased.

LCCS Members Speak

The other day I received a call from someone who needed to know where the "WORD Art" icon was. When I mentioned the DRAWING toolbar, they realized they did NOT have it showing. They needed to be reminded how to find the Drawing toolbar to checkmark and ACTIVATE it.

Yesterday, I wanted to use the "underline feature" that underlines each word, not a solid line under all the words. The old brain finally kicked in and I remembered you just highlight what you want underlined and click on CTRL>Shift>W et voila` there it is. "W" for each word underlined separately.

Tip or Treat

Change default formating in Word 2007
The first thing is to access the dialog box launch icon in the Styles section under the Home tab on the Ribbon. That is the little corner and arrow icon in the corner of the Styles section. You can also use the key combination of "Alt+Ctrl+Shift+S".
Now go to this web link where they'll walk you through the rest of the procedure.

The one newsletter I have kept over the years is the government US-CERT (United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team) newsletter. The most recent I received was an explanation of anti virus software. I usually receive alerts from this site before I read about it on the geeky/nerdy sites I read.
You can read the antivirus message at:
http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/ST04-005.html
You can sign up for newletters at:
http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/signup.html

Cleaning Inside your PC

Written by Gary Bentley, Editor,
SouthWest International Personal
Computer Club (TX) Throughput,
February 2009
www.swipcc.org
bentley.gary (at) gmail.com

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When I worked for GTE Lenkurt
(subsequently GTE Network
Systems) in El Paso 1978 – 1982 as
a technologist and supervisor of
electrical performance quality
assurance for their tele-
communications equipment
produced at that location we were
required to be very cognizant of the
risk of damage to integrated
circuits posed by static electricity.
 Even static charges that produce
no visible spark are sufficient to
destroy, or worse, cause subsequent
intermittent failure of high
impedance inputs on many PC's
(non catastrophic damage is more
pernicious because it may permit
equipment to pass performance
testing and fail later in the field,
also, intermittent hardware failures
are difficult to troubleshoot because
you have to be observing the device
while it is in failure
mode).

All personnel were required to wear
grounded wrist straps and work on
grounded conducting pads when
handling integrated circuit boards.
Unfortunately, the plastic tip of a
household or automobile portable
vacuum cleaner does not conduct
electricity and so can build up a
significant static electric charge
when there are large volumes of air-
borne dust particles swirling within
and without the plastic vacuum
cleaner nozzle (think of rubbing a
balloon on your head and recall the
immediate build up of electric
charge).
There are various brands of canned
dust removing gas with a form of
difluoroethane gas that is static
free. Combining blowing the dust
away with that gas and using a
cloth dampened with a dust
remover will assure that you do not
subject the integrated circuits of
your computer to static electricity.
Make sure to wipe or blow clean the
openings in the case for cooling
fans (to assure your system does
not overheat). Do not blow the dust
remover into a fan in such a way as
to spin the fan, or else hold the fan
while you spray it as you may create
an induced electrical current back
into the motherboard (remember
that a motor can be a generator).

Tip or Treat

You may get away with using a vacuum cleaner some of the time, or may think you have until you observe strange intermittent failures down the road (strange crashes, blue screen of death, corrupt files or boot failures). Such failures would require you to replace CPU, memory, motherboard, video graphics card, or power supply (and the failure of any of these components may have corrupted the hard drive and all your data) or simply junk the PC (since the cost of replacement and repair may equal the cost of a new PC tower).

If you unplug the computer prior to cleaning it, remember that the computer will no longer be grounded. So, if you are wearing a grounded wrist strap you should keep one hand on a metal portion of the PC case to maintain a ground path for static charges (or ground the case with a clip to your ground pad). Note of warning: If you still have an old CRT monitor, stay out of that monitor case as there are lethal voltages that remain in the CRT even when it is unplugged, a CRT being rather like a huge capacitor (unless you have been trained how to drain the CRT without electrocuting yourself).

If you must use a vacuum cleaner on your PC, use one specially designed for cleaning electronic devices containing static sensitive components. If folks tell you that standard vacuum cleaners, even small hand held devices, pose no actual danger to your PC, ask yourself why 3M Company, for example, sells a Service Vacuum (3M Service Vacuum and 3M Vacuum in a Tool Case) that keeps the motor portion (with high electromagnetic fields that could damage data on a hard drive) in the carrying case and permits the service technician to vacuum the inside of the PC or other electronic device with a long hose with static dissipative attachments (dusting brush, crevice nozzle, needle nose nozzle) "to prevent static buildup" for use "involving static sensitive electronic components such as circuit boards" (quoted from 3M Service Vacuum and Vacuum in a Tool Case Operating Instruction manual).

Paraphrasing Clint Eastwood in Dirty Harry, if you intend to use your home vacuum cleaner (portable or otherwise) inside your PC case you gotta ask yourself, "Do you feel lucky, well, do ''ya?"

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

William Bailey
Larry Baker
Catherine Blair
Robert Collins
Anna B. Cook
Ronald Crampton
Fred A. Davis
Dale Englehart, Jr.
Kimberly Friend

Douslse Fritter
James A. Giles
Lisa Goodman
Rebecca Holton
Kris Kasson
Christopher R. Nance
Ryan J. Prater
Shawn Riley
Sharon Ryan

Stephen D. Serveranie
Donald F. Smith
Elizabeth Snow
Denise Swartz
Chad Weirick
Chelly Wells
Kristal White
Robert Woods

RENEWING MEMBERS

Marc Atkinson
Ken Bixler
Shirleen Bowser

Kevin Clement
Jeffrey Eno
Wyndham Davies

Bobbi Meldahl
Rick & Dixie McManus
Phyllis Miller

Current members will receive a postal mail notice with a prorated dues billing. This is an effort to get everyone on a common due date. A complete explanation may be found online in the Forum.

Licking County Computer
Society, Inc.
PO Box 612
Newark, OH 43058-0612

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