The NEWS JOURNAL

January 1999

2000: The Year of Living Dangerously
by Lincoln Spector

Tick, tick, tick. That's the sound of your PC, counting down to the end of the century. And if you don't deal with your system's year 2000 issues, it could be the sound of a time bomb.

By now, everyone has heard the tales of digital apocalypse. From the mainframes that handle airline reservations to the logic chips that keep the local power plant online, millions of computer systems will be unable to roll over from 1999 to 2000. Nobody knows exactly what will happen when the clock strikes midnight, but estimated costs for fixing the problem range from $600 billion to $4.6 *trillion*. (In other words, it's a great time to be a Y2K consultant.)

If you think your PC is immune to the so-called millennium bug, think again. Like mainframes and embedded systems, most personal computers will encounter some kind of year 2000 glitch. The problem stems from the way computers have traditionally stored dates since the late 1950s. To save precious memory and storage space, programmers conventionally used only two digits to store the year--for example, 1/15/99 instead of 1/15/1999. That tradition lives on in the real-time clocks inside millions of PCs. When the calendar flips over to 1/1/00, many of those systems will see '00' and turn the clock back to 1900, not forward to 2000.

The problems for PC users range from annoying but trivial to potentially devastating. Here are just some of the things that can go wrong on January 1, 2000:

- You want to track interest payments on a Treasury bill that matures in 30 years. You enter 1/15/30 into your spreadsheet; the program interprets this date as 1930.

- Your PC produces the wrong system date when you power on. So your e-mail goes out with the wrong date stamp, and your scheduler doesn't notify you of appointments. Because your company files are organized by save date, you lose track of the latest revisions to your documents.

- Your custom accounting package sends out statements demanding 99 years of interest on bills mailed last week.

Even if you squash all the millennium bugs in your system, you risk reinfesting your PC when you import noncompliant data files. And if your network isn't Y2K ready, all bets are off.

Fortunately, you can solve most Y2K problems yourself--and for a lot less than $4.6 trillion. We've broken the Y2K problem down into four key areas: hardware (your PC's real-time clock and BIOS); commercial software (operating systems and off-the-shelf applications like Excel); custom applications (code written especially for your business or industry); and exchanging data (items such as networked spreadsheets and databases accessible by groups of users). We tested 19 freeware and commercial packages that claim to diagnose and/or cure your Y2K ills--and found several that really work (see " Software to the Rescue "). We also took a handful of PCs back to the future, advancing their system dates to January 1, 2000, to see exactly what would happen. In the following pages, we'll tell you how to identify, isolate, and defuse your Y2K problems--before they blow up in your face.

"Members Helping Members"
Since 1983

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
Board of Directors
1998-1999

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L̲ake C̲ounty A̲rea C̲omputer E̲nthusiasts

L.C.A.C.E.
c/o Group Ambassador
409 S. Elmwood Ave.
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 is now available on our WEB site at http://if-net.com/lace.

Meetings
L.C.A.C.E. meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at the Warren/Newport Public Library, 224 N. O'Plaine Road in Gurnee, Illinois. The meeting location opens at 11:30a.m, and the formal meeting begins at 12pm. 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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ARTICLE DEADLINE
The deadline for all articles being submitted for the News Journal is the 20th of each month. Send your articles via E-Mail to Corky Bell at corky@foxvalley.net or Vic Falkner at rvf@se-iowa.net

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NOTICE

If your E-Mail address is incorrect or missing or you want to add or change your WEB site url, please E-Mail us at lcace@inf-net.com with the correct information.

WEB Sites

The following are the addresses (URLs) of our members own WEB Sites.

Corky Bell   http://users/foxvalley.net/~corky

Nancy Larsen http:\\users\foxvalley.net\~mamanan
                     http:\\mall.lnd.com\larsen\

Time to Renew

If the mailing label on your News Journal is highlighted in YELLOW, this means it is time to renew your membership to L.C.A.C.E. This information will be published in the News Journal and will also be posted on the club's WEB site which is

http://inf-net.com/lace

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.

The following Member(s) need to submit renewal applications:

Richard Bollmeier - 01/99
Leslie Salsburg - 01/99

Arnold Gudyka 02/99

If you have already filed an application, please disregard this notice.

Y2K Info

THE MOST COMMON Y2K HARDWARE PROBLEM

Your PC's BIOS is responsible for providing the basic information your computer needs to boot, as well as being one of the critical clocks used by the PC.

The most common hardware problem presented by the Year 2000 has to do with the proper roll of the first two digits of the century portion of the date from 19 to 20. The PC real-time clock keeps track of the time and date. The BIOS receives time and date information from the real-time clock in a two-digit century format.

The BIOS then adds the necessary bits to store the date in four digits. When the date changes from 99 to 00 but the century bits do not change from 19 to 20, the operating system sees 1900 instead of 2000.

There are many tools for checking on and repairing this problem. Watch for information on some of these tools in the upcoming tips.

LEAP YEAR CALCULATIONS

One potential Y2K problem seems to be overlooked quite often. While everyone is searching for two-digit dates, many forget to address a potential problem caused by leap years.

Leap years are calculated by a simple set of rules. Unfortunatley, there are systems and applications that do not recognize the Year 2000 as a leap year. This causes all dates following February as a leap year. This causes all dates following February 29, 2000 to be offset incorrectly by one day.

The rules for leap year calculations are as follows: A year is a leap year if it is divisible by 4. But if it is also divisible by 100, it is NOT a leap year. If, however, it is divisible by 400, it IS a leap year. Thus, the Year 2000 is a special-case leap year that occurs once every 400 years.

Y2K TOOL- FIX2000

Here's a powerful software-testing tool that can assist you in locating potential failure points in your software: FIX2000PRO helps you quickly and easily identify and repair your software's Year 2000 bugs. Its unique search engine searches your system for potential Year 2000 conflicts and then recommends a course of action to fix it.

You can alllow FIX2000PRO to correct all potential conflicts or specify those changes you would like to have made and those you want left unmodified. No programming knowledge is needed. FIX2000PRO contains versons for MS-DOS, Windows 3.x, and Windows 95.

For more information on this tool, visit the Intelliquis Web site at the following address:

http://www.intelliquis.com

Y2K TOOL--ONMARK 2000 BIOS TEST

Here's a free tool that you can use to test your PCs:

The OnMark 2000 BIOS Test is a date-safe test of the real-time clock (RTC) and basic input/output system (BIOS) operation of a personal computer with respect to the Year 2000. The OnMark 2000 BIOS Test evaluates the ability of the system's RTC and BIOS to produce accurate dates as the clock rolls over from December 31, 1999, to January 1, 2000.

The test produces a simple, easy-to-understand report about the BIOS handling of the century rollover and recommends one of three courses of action to support the PC during the Year 2000 date change.

For more information on this tool, visit the following Web site:

http://onmark.viasoft.com

The PRESIDENT's RAM

Happy New Year to everyone. I want to take this time to thank everyone who attended our Christmas Party and hope that you had an enjoyable time. I also want to thank all those who assisted in either setting up the party and/or to clean afterwards. Special thanks goes to JJ for getting the supplies and of course, the ice cream, Linda, Terri, Paul, JJ, and Lester for helping to clean up. If I missed anyone I'm sorry (memory failure).

Congratulations to Linda Heinrich as our December 50/50 winner, Jim Rutledge as the winner of the four Computer Country Expo admission tickets (which were donated by Nancy Preistley from the Computer Country Expo - **THANK YOU VERY MUCH NANCY**), and last, Paul Schintgen, the winner of our Grand Prize Raffle of a 1 Year Membership to the Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts.

The Winner

With the holidays over and everyone receiving all those neat computers, hardware additions and software programs, I am anticipating some articles from the members about these items. The News Journal is full of articles, but I would like to see more input from the members, as this is your Journal. Arnie Gudyka is doing some excellent "investigative" work about the Y2K situation as it relates to the PCs. Our "Gumshoe" has gone to a few sources and has an article about his findings in this issue (see Page 7 - The Y2K Dilemma).

Another thing we need is some assistance with volunteers to man the L.C.A.C.E. booth at the Computer Country Expo. If it's just for an hour, that would be fine. JJ, Linda, Jim and a couple of others have been manning the booth and doing a great job. (I am guilty of not assisting, but am planning on it). The booth gives the club public exposure and you don't have to be proficient in complete knowledge of how the club is run, just general information such as the meeting dates, time and place. There is also an hourly raffle and L.C.A.C.E. takes care of the tickets and prizes. So if you are planning on attending the EXPO and would like to lend a hand, just let me or JJ know.

And speaking of the EXPO, Nancy has informed me that any L.C.A.C.E. member who presents their membership card at the door will receive an additional $1 off of the admission price. December's show was the first one I have ever attended and I had a very enjoyable, educational time. The demos were great. I believe the most popular one was done by a young man named Randell Durk, who, piece by piece, showed everyone how to build their own computer. I was there and ran into several of the other members who were taking notes, memorizing and one was even taking pictures. I understand that he will be doing this demo at each Expo, so if you want to know how to build a computer or just need to learn how to install a piece of hardware, come on out and watch.

This month's demo will be presented by Ernie Garner, who presented another demo at the Expo, demonstrating his musical talent (and this man is talented) using a computer. The meeting will start at 12pm with a new format and then we will proceed with the demo. Hope to see everyone there and until then, **GOOD COMPUTING TO EVERYONE**.

Corky

The Y2K Dilemma

by Arnie Gudyka

For the past many months we have been swamped with news of the coming disaster with computers because they will not be able to recognize the year 2000. We've been told to expect from complete chaos to absolutely nothing. The worst scenario states that banks will not be able to dispense your money, power outages will be occur, Medicare, Social Security, welfare, police and fire departments will be disrupted. Airports will cease to function, trains will be on collision courses and stop lights will cease controlling the traffic. Or, nothing will happen.

Well, we know that there would be plenty of problems if this problem with the computers were to be ignored. We are so dependent on computers and computer chips that we can never go back to a computer-less society again. That is, if we want to have the conveniences, safety and entertainment provided by the computer age.

The latest reports on correcting the various computers in the various industries and bureaucracies state that some computers are already in compliance, some are on schedule to be finished before year 2000, and some are just not going to make it.

So much has been written about the BIG computer systems and their Y2K problem, but what about us, the little guy, with his one computer in his bedroom (or any other place he could find the room.) I've yet to see anything written on the subject, though I'm sure there must be something somewhere.

So, I decided to do a little investigation on my own. I went to CDW and talked to one person that appeared to be knowledgeable on the subject. The answer I got was that if your computer is several years old, you will have some problems but just how much is everyone's guess. There will be some software out but this is going to be just a short duration fix. Best thing to avoid a problem would be to purchase a new computer as all the computers sold now are "fixed" for Y2K. Since I had no intention to

Top 10 Signs You Picked The Wrong Internet Service Provider

10 Their company logo is two tin cans and a length of string.

9. You check out their address, and it's a phone booth containing a Compaq portable and an acoustic coupler.

8. Their chief technical officer lives in a 10-foot-by-7-foot shack in the woods.

7. They proudly boast: "We've been on the Internet since it was CB radio."

6. Their promo materials use the words "information" and "superhighway" in the same sentence.

5. You order an SLIP/PPP connection, email, and 2MB of server space for your personal Web site, and the voice on the other end of the phone asks, "Would you like fries with that?"

4. "As seen in Better Business Bureau special reports."

3. "Access speeds up to 9,600 bps in most areas."

2. They hawk both domain names and Rolexes on the street corner.

1. They charge for downloads and e-mail by the word.

HEY, A NEW BROWSER

When you want to open a new Navigator browser, simply press Ctrl-N. The new browser opens, while the old one minimizes. This is a great way to load several pages while you go get a cup of coffee.

Famous Quotation

"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."

-- Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977

WINDOWS 98 TIP

TIPS ON MULTIPLE MONITORS
from TipWorld

You've probably read about Windows 98's multiple display support feature. The new Windows OS lets you add several graphics adapters and attach several monitors to one PC. With multiple monitors you can keep an eye on several applications (in full-screen mode) simultaneously.

You may, however, be confused by the many ways you can achieve this upgrade. Over the next few days, I'll discuss some tips that should help you make your way through all the choices.

First of all, remember that your monitors don't need to be the same. You don't even have to configure them to the same resolution. So to save yourself some money you could use a small, inexpensive monitor as your second tube. If you just plan to check your e-mail on it, it needn't be a large or expensive display.

Before you venture off to the computer store, do some research on your current video graphics card. Some video cards do not support Windows 98's multiple display scheme. Your product's manufacturer can tell you if your video card will work.

If you card does not work, you may want to reconsider your multiple monitor goal, because the solution will end up being quite expensive. You'll have to either buy two new graphics cards or a single card that supports two displays by itself.

Count your card slots before you sign on the dotted line for multiple monitor equipment. Most systems still have only a few open card slots. Do you want to sacrifice a slot for two displays? If you do, you may

KEEP OUT THE TRASH

Do you receive a lot of junk mail from a certain address? Does a certain someone continually pester you with e-mail? Use the Inbox Assistant to keep these messages from ever making it into your Inbox. This "bouncer" deletes any messages you receive from a certain address before they're downloaded from the server.

1. Choose Tools + Inbox Assistant.
2. In the Inbox Assistant dialog box, click the Add button to open the Properties dialog box.
3. In the From text box, type the offending address.
4. At the very bottom of the dialog box, select Delete Off Server.
5. Click OK. The new rule appears in the Description box.
6. Click OK again to close the Inbox Assistant.

Now, think smugly, "Go ahead, e-mail me all you want!" (Tip-in-a-tip: You can turn this rule off temporarily by deselecting its check box. To remove it altogether, select it and click the Remove button.)

FIND OUT HOW FAST YOU'RE CONNECTED

If you bought your computer any time recently, it probably has a 56Kbps-capable modem. But chances are that when you connect to your local Internet provider, your actual connection is much slower than that. We won't get into the reasons for this discrepancy, and we're not trying to make trouble; all we want to do is show you a fast way to see just how fast your current connection is:

1. In the "tray" at the far right of the taskbar, find the connection icon (it shows two little computer screens connected by a line).
2. Hold the mouse pointer over the connection icon.

In a second or two, a ToolTip appears, telling you how many bytes of data you've received, how many you've sent, and what your current connection speed is. Hope it's as fast as you expected.

Last month I forgot all about the "Captions Needed" for the pictures from the November Meeting. So this month here's what we will do.

Cut out each picture and write your "Caption" under it along with your name. After the demo I will read each "Caption" and we'll have a vote for the best one for each picture. Then I'll announce who the composer of the caption was.

The pictures and the captions will then be printed in the February issue of the News Journal. Just a little fun item, no awards however.

An artist, a lawyer, and a computer scientist are discussing the merits of a mistress.

The artist tells of the passion, the thrill which comes with the risk of being discovered.

The lawyer warns of the difficulties, "It can lead to guilt, divorce, bankruptcy. Not worth it. Too many problems."

The computer scientist says, "It's the best thing that's ever happened to me. My wife thinks I'm with my mistress. My mistress thinks I'm home with my wife, and I can spend all night on the computer!"

(Continued from page 7 - Dilemma)

spend a thousand dollars or so to fix this problem, which was only hypothetical at this point, I left the showroom more confused then when I went in.

I ambled over to Best Buy and went to the section where computers were being sold. Asking the same question, I was told not to worry, that Windows 98 was all I would need. But since my system is about five years old, it would be sensible to get a new computer to make sure I don't run into any such problems. But when again I expressed some doubt that the fix could be so simple as to load Windows 98 the sales person assured me it was.

Wow, I thought, as I left the premises, what a simple fix. How come everyone is so worried and spending 100 billion for something that Bill Gates has already solved. I hurried home to let everyone know about this...hence this article.

Our next meeting will be held on

Saturday
January 9, 1999
12pm until 2pm
at the
Warren/Newport Public Library
224 N. O'Plaine Road
Gurnee, IL

This month's demo will focus on computers and music and will be presented by Mr. Ernie Garner.
http://www.iconnect.net/home/egarner

Member Profile

January, 1999
The Gayomali Family

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Month of Birth: June
My Job Is: U.S. Navy Electrician
Family: Deope, JoAnn, DeAnna and Diamond
Hometown: Portland, OR
For Entertainment: Movies
Book/Movie Recommendation: Mulan
Favorite Meal: Fried chicken
My Prized Possession: Our Family
Someone I Admire: My Father
I Wish I Could Stop: Hunger
I Want People To Remember Me: As simple & friendly
I Use My Computer For: Word Processing and the Internet
My Favorite Computer Program(s): Print Shop
My Favorite Phrase or Expression: What's happening?

not have room for that new DVD-RAM drive or other new piece of hardware down the road.

Once you buy all you need for the multiple monitor upgrade, block out a good chunk of time for the installation procedure. You'll probably need to restart your system several times as you add one or more video cards and displays. Have the tech support numbers for your product manufacturers handy.

Finally, don't panic if you can't find your mouse once you've configured your two monitors. If you've set your two displays at different resolutions, you probably have a "dead" virtual space, which the operating system uses to connect the two screens virtually. This won't cause any problems during normal use, except that you may not be able to see your mouse pointer when it rests in this unseen area. If you want to fix the problem, set both displays to the same resolution. With matching resolutions, there won't be any virtual space that isn't visible.

WANTED

News Journal Articles
and
Demos

We need articles for our monthly News Journal, written by our members about anything pertaining to computer usage. This can include your online experiences as well as the installation of a new piece of hardware or something about your favorite piece of software. We also need demos for upcoming meetings.

If you can do a demo or have an article please contact Corky at one of the meetings, call him at home (815) 344-1271 or send E-Mail to him at corky@foxvalley.net or lcace@inf-net.com.

Computer Country Expo

January 23, 1999

Great prices!

Bargains galore!

Save up to 70% off retail on everything computer!

This is Lake County's <u>LARGEST</u> computer expo. The event is on Saturday from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. This show features computers, supplies, games, parts, software, accessories, CD-ROMs, monitors, diskettes, printers, keyboards, modems, disk drives, cables, expansion boards, services, and anything else in the domain of computers! And with that there are demos dealing with everything from building your own computer to the equipment and software you use with it.

<u>Location</u>

Lake County Fairgrounds
Route 120 (Belvidere Rd.) & Route 45
Grayslake, Illinois
Main Exhibit Hall Building #1
20,000 sq. feet of everything Computer!
<u>PLEASE</u> use the Rte. 45 entrance

<u>$6 Admission</u>
All L.C.A.C.E. Members who present their
membership card will receive a $1 discount.

See our WEB Site at

www.ccxpo.com/

or E-Mail us at

NPreistly@aol.com

for more information

Next Meeting!!!

L.C.A.C.E Online
View our Site
www.inf-net.com/lcace/

- ◆ **L.C.A.C.E. E-mail addresses**
- ◆ **L.C.A.C.E. information,**
- ◆ **L.C.A.C.E. history and pictures**
- ◆ **L.C.A.C.E. meeting location and map**
- ◆ **L.C.A.C.E. members e-mail addresses**
- ◆ **L.C.A.C.E. online membership application**

January 9, 1999

Warren/ Newport
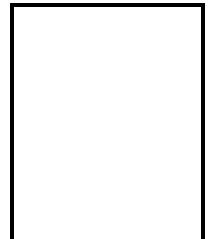## Public Library
224 N. O'Plaine Road
Gurnee, Illinois

McCullough Meeting Room B

11:30 am - 2:00 p.m.

This is the regular meeting location.

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED