NEWS JOURNAL

January 2006 | Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts | Volume 22, Issue 8

ASK THE GURUS ROUND TABLE

LCACE Meeting Dates 2006

14 January - Round Table

11 February - Shareware/Freeware

04 March - Anti-Virus Software

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Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
LCACE
c/o Group Ambassador
409 S. Elmwood Ave.
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Membership

Membership for 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 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

LCACE meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of each month 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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Dwight "J.J." Johnson
President
Lake County Area
Computer Enthusiasts

President's Notes

It's a new year; 2005 was certainly an eventful one for LCACE. As the oldest computer club in the Northern Illinois area, LCACE has survived where many other clubs have failed. Twenty-three years ago, I purchased my first Atari computer, only to realize that I would need some help understanding this new technology. Since I was unwilling to drive to Chicago to join a Users Group, I helped found Lake County Atari Users Group. Twenty-three years later, I'm still looking for help understanding this new technology.

We have faced many challenges in this evolving computer industry. Our goal has always been to keep our members in tune with this changing technology, although that is a daunting task. I am glad you like what we are doing. If you have any ideas for improving our club, please let us know!

Wow, what a great party, and what a great turn-out. I counted 42 people. We haven't seen attendance like that since our last party at the Waukegan Library. Mike and his holiday committee did a great job this year.

Let's give a big thanks to Donna, Dorothy and Winnie for getting everything set up in the kitchen and the food sorted out. In addition, let me thank Linda, Roger, Winnie, and Dorothy for handling the raffle, door prize and 50/50 ticket sales. Mike and Jim did an excellent job of conducting the raffles, and thanks to our past presidents, Steve Kostelnik and Corky Bell, for their help in drawing the main raffle tickets.

Although we only see them once a year, it's always good to see long-time members like Steve, Corky, Chicago Paul, and Bob Berry at our Holiday Party. I hope Jim's invitation letter helped convince these folks to come, and hope we see more of these faces from the past at future parties.

What I enjoyed most about seeing these old members was reminiscing about the Atari Days, and the trips we took to the computer shows in Detroit, Indianapolis, and Milwaukee. We were so well known at these shows that, when we arrived, the word was sometimes announced, "The Chicago guys have arrived" although we knew we weren't from "Chicago".

Congratulations to all our raffle prize winners: James Martin of Grayslake won the Toshiba Laptop; Terry McEnery of Merrick, NY won the Kodak digital camera and printer docking station; Minnie Beverly of Waukegan, IL won the 160GB external hard drive; and Anna Rogers from Trevor, WI won the 1-year LCACE membership. Jean Anderson of Grayslake was quite surprised when she won the special door prize-a desktop computer.

In keeping with the holiday spirit, I tried to get a few of the partygoers to do a little holiday caroling so I could video tape it, but it appeared that everyone was a little too full of the good food to sing. Oh well, maybe next year.

To top off an afternoon of fun, Mother Nature blessed us with a little snow, so I hope everyone got home safely. For a moment, I thought Linda ("I don't drive in snow") would be stranded, but I forgot her husband was driving.

Let us not forget that elections are only a few months away; nominations will begin in February. This will be your opportunity to nominate yourself or your favorite person to represent our club. Remember that all membership dues will be collected in April. If you want to renew early, see the membership director for your pro-rated dues.

Everyone
Thank you for another wonderful holiday party! Great company, great food, what a terrific way to spend our Saturday afternoon. A good time was had by all.

Thank you, too, for all that I've learned at LCACE meetings. Just realized tonight how much I've learned from small comments people have made--never mind our actual programs. A special thank you for all the friends I've made.

Best wishes to everyone for a happy holiday season, and a happy, HEALTHY new year!

Robin

I want to thank you for getting me involved with LCACE. I am having a blast thinking of ways to use my wife's new laptop, i.e. setting up my Podcasting radio show!!!

I will need to write some articles for the club as my next "push". The club forces me to think about the end customers in my business and has been a real good match.

Thanks again!
Jim Martin

SIDEBAR

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Thanks again!
Jim Martin

The Programs for the next months are:

14 Jan - Ask the Gurus
11 Feb -Freeware/Shareware
4 Mar - Anti-virus
1 Apr - Build Your Own PC
13 May - DSL
10 Jun - Camera/Photo

Places4Aces

(web)Sites4Soaring ah
PLACES4ACES (web)sites4soaring ah's

Back next month

Google Pack: A Big Move Beyond Search

Sebastian Rupley - PC Magazine
Sat Jan 7, 7:20 AM ET

At a late afternoon keynote address on Friday at the CES show, Google co-founder and president of products Larry Page made several new announcements on behalf of the company and painted a picture of how the consumer electronics industry—on the hardware side—could make life easier for everyone. Among the biggest announcements he made was Google Pack, a free download available now at pack.google.com, which installs a raft of software titles that "can make any PC run better."

There were a couple of things that Page appeared to not find humorous though. During an after-keynote Q&A session, an audience member asked when Google is going to ship " the Google PC with Google operating system?" Page appeared to bristle at the question, and did not answer it, moving to the next person in line. He gave a similar response to an audience member who asked when a Google Calendar will be delivered. While Google Pack can be interpreted as an attempt to move in on the PC software infrastructure that Microsoft primarily controls, it was clear that we do not get to hear about the existence or non-existence of a Google operating system yet, if at all.

Comment from excerpt of article:

J.Rutledge

Is Google going to go into head-to-head competition with M$? Hmmmm? With the breaking out of Google as a public owned company, the mother of all search engines, this is just a taste of what the company is doing. The last I checked, the stock was selling for way over $400 dollars a share. Money maker or money taker?

Rome: Total War Review

In this review, I will lead you through a historical gaming series. The creators of this game are forward thinking and strive for realism. This game is not for the faint-hearted as far as gaming. It is rated T – for TEEN.

I had first been watching the History Channel. They had shows on called "Decisive Battles". It was about battles during the Roman Era of history. It featured Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Spartacus, and others. It showed the formations of the battles. One once said "Hannibal knew how to win a battle, but not the war". What I drew from it was a system of moves that could have happened, if the Romans did not win, or the other countries would have won more.

We draw a lot of our language, culture and everyday things from the ancient Romans. What would have happened if say Hannibal would have won? If the Gaul's would of won? Would we still use Hieroglyphics if the Egyptians have conquered Rome?

Rome: Total War (referred to as RTW) followed Medieval: Total War (Referred to as MTW). They also had come out with Shogun: Total War (Referred to as STW). STW is about the feudal system in Japan. MTW is about the middle ages with feudal lords and knights. RTW takes place between 240 BC and about 12 AD.

Rome is a comparatively new society that has feuding families. There is the Julii, Bruti, and Scipii. And, of course, the Roman Senate. Obviously Julius Caesar was from the house of Julii. The game has a multitude of winning options. If you take out your foe and hold fifteen countries, you win. That is the short game. Another way to win is to take 50 countries and Rome, you become Imperator.

Battles have two fighting options. One is to use a campaign map. The other is to use a battle map screen with cinematic animation. That is what "Decisive Battles" used.

Before you start your game, you go through a walk-through. You are the Julii and the advisor helps you learn the keyboard function with mouse functions. The Julii start with three countries in the north of Italy. The Scippii start with one country in middle Italy. The Brutii start with two countries in the south of Italy. During the walk-through you obtain another country and you're ready for your own game.

You can choose between a campaign or battle. Campaigning gets you countries to conquer. Battles only are one battle to take on. You can choose your own or go with a historical one.

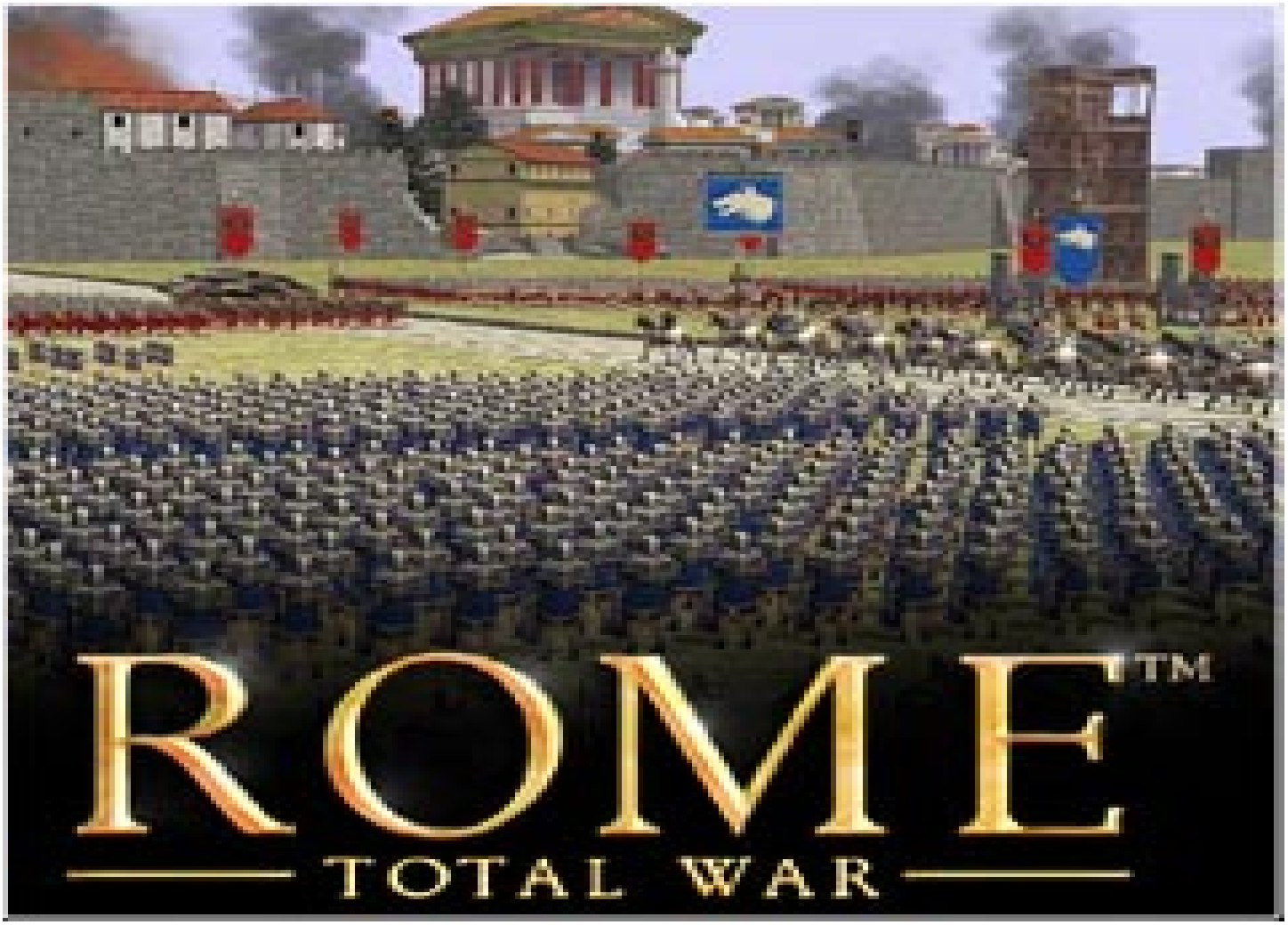
There is also online gaming. You can join a battle online. Of course, DSL/cable is required for that.

This brings me to the minimal:

- Microsoft Windows 98SE/ME/2000/XP
- Pentium III 1.0GHz or Athlon 1.0GHz processor or higher
- 256MB RAM
- 8x Speed CD-ROM drive (1200KB/sec sustained transfer rate) and latest drivers
- 300MB of uncompressed free hard disk space
- 100% DirectX 9.0b compatible 16-bit sound card and latest drivers
- 100% Windows 98SE/ME/2000/XP compatible mouse, keyboard and latest drivers
- DirectX 9.0b
- 3D hardware Accelerator Card Required - 100% DirectX 9.0b compatible 64MB Hardware Accelerated video card and the latest drivers

Please note that the graphics card needs accelerated card. I would suggest a minimal of 128MB for this. You can get hours of entertainment from this game. No blood, no bad language or abusive visuals. Just out and out fun for your time.

(Continued on page 6)



Battle Scene from Rome: Total War

(Continued from page 5)

High-Def Is the Word at Electronics Show

By GARY GENTILE, AP Business Writer
Sun Jan 8, 11:48 AM ET

LAS VEGAS - The wraps came off high-definition DVD players at this year's annual Consumer Electronics Show, offering the final component to replicate the movie theater experience at home.

And while a fierce DVD format war likely will delay the mass adoption of such devices, digital video is here to stay — the Consumer Electronics Association trade group estimates 25 million U.S. homes will have a high-def TV set by year's end.

But big, expensive flat-panel sets aside, this year's gadget show offered plenty of smaller screens for video featuring the works of a phalanx of celebrities — Tom Cruise and Robin Williams included — who came to Las Vegas to help hawk them.

They included handheld devices that can play live or stored TV, music videos and even NBA games — one of the offerings Google Inc. announced.

Yahoo Inc. (Nasdaq:YHOO - news), DirecTV, Starz Entertainment Group and Sony were also among the companies getting deeper into the business of trying to make it simple to watch recorded Hollywood movies, home video and even live streaming television wherever you may be, on all manner of device.

Not to be outdone, radio was out in force as well, including palm-sized satellite receivers that hold hours of recorded music. Digital radios, which promise a high-definition listening experience from traditional earth-bound stations, were also on display as that service begins a wider national rollout this year.

Among the more interesting gizmos on display at the show, which ends Sunday:

• The Inno, a portable combination XM Satellite Radio Holdings Inc. receiver/MP3 player with 1 gigabyte of internal memory.

The device, from Pioneer Electronics, allows users to store songs taken from their own CD collection, as well as 50 hours of XM programming. Playlists can combine songs from both sources.

Users can also bookmark songs they hear on XM, then buy the tracks for 99 cents from Napster. The device will be available in March and retails for $399. A boom box and car kit are also available.

• Samsung Electronics Co. also announced a line of portable satellite radio/MP3 players.

The Helix XM2Go player is similar to the Pioneer Inno and will also sell for $399 in March.

But an even smaller Samsung player, called the Nexus, works

(Continued on page 8)

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(Continued from page 7)

along with a portable XM antenna/receiver called the Passport. The Nexus receives satellite radio signals when connected to the Passport and can record XM programs along with a listener's own music collection. Removed from the dock, the Nexus plays back the XM tracks recorded earlier.

A player that stores 25 hours of music will sell for $199 in March, while the larger player that holds 50 hours will sell for $249.99.

• Several new handheld video options included the Gigabeat player from Toshiba, one of a series of devices running Microsoft Corp.'s portable media center software.

The device comes with either a 30- or 60-gigabyte hard drive and can store hours of music, videos, and TV shows and other content. The device displays the video on a 2.5-inch color screen. It also has a built-in FM tuner.

Both models will be available in March, with the 30 GB player selling for $299 and a 60 GB model retailing for $399.

• GPS devices were another hot item at the show. The units, designed chiefly to get drivers door-to-door on unfamiliar roads, are expanding to include DVD players and music files.

The AVIC-Z1 from Pioneer has a 30 GB hard drive, using two-thirds of that space to store navigation information and the rest to hold as many as 2,500 songs ripped from CDs.

The system also plays DVDs on its 7-inch screen and, with an adaptor, can be used to control an iPod music player.

The system includes voice recognition, so a command such as "Go to LAX" will produce a detailed map to the Los Angeles airport. A user's entire address book can be transferred to the device from a cell phone or PDA wirelessly using Bluetooth and can be accessed via the touch screen.

The AVIC-Z1 will be available in April at a cost of $2,250.

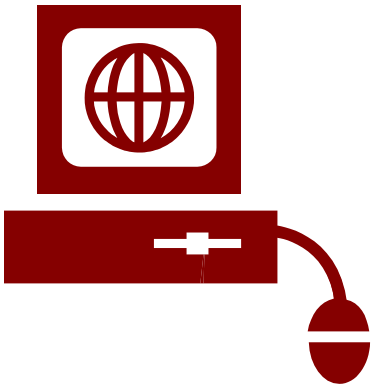
• New technology is also updating an old habit — reading.

Sony is betting more on a smaller number of key products, including its electronic book reader.

The slim device can store hundreds of books in its internal memory and boasts a long battery life, which the company claims will allow a person to read "War and Peace" without a recharge.

The screen is not backlit so it doesn't flicker. And the size of the text can be changed to accommodate aging eyes.

Sony will be selling books for download on its Connect online service. Users can also display their own documents on the device, making it an efficient place to store files for long business trips.



Local IT expert Donna J. Edwards has more than 20 years experience implementing and managing IT projects for companies including the Federal Judiciary, IBM/Lotus and Hamilton Beach Proctor-Silex, where she was the senior member of the New Enterprise Technology Team. She works for Tenax Inc., and consults businesses on the implementation of IT compliance programs in the U.S. and Europe. (www.tenaxcorporation.com). Read her column every other Tuesday on Richmond.com.

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NEXT MEETING

January 14, 2006

Grayslake Public Library

12:30 pm—3:00 pm

This month:

Ask the Guru's

Round Table

LCACE

Lake County Area Compuer Enthusiasts

409 S. Elmwood Ave.

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