

# News Journal

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts



## PC Computer Evolution

By Wil Wakely, President, Seniors Computer Group, California

November 2011 issue, Bits and Bytes

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With the sad death in October 2011 of Steve Jobs of Apple fame, it seems appropriate to review the history of the personal computer in which he was so instrumental in its evolution. In 1970 he was only 15 years old when the micro-computer, as it was then called, stirred to life. Prior to that time, mainframes and mini-computers dominated the scene, requiring large installations and huge capital expense. IBM 360's required a special air-conditioned room and cost up to \$5.5 million each. Our smart cell phones now have more computing power than they did.

The invention of the transistor at Bell Labs in 1947 and the Integrated Circuit invented in 1958, concurrently by Texas Instruments and Intel allowed miniaturization and cost savings that revolutionized future computer designs. One of the first affordable micro-computers was the Atari, essentially an arcade game machine that played PONG, a tennis simulation. It had no programming language and used a joystick for control and a TV for a display. The Commodore 64, VIC-20 and PET were the largest selling small computers in 1976. It did have a programming language and a multitude of applications. Other computer models appeared briefly on the scene: the Osborne, a "luggable" portable computer; RadioShack TRS-80, (Trash80); Heath H-89, a kit; Sinclair ZX80, a miniature inexpensive powerhouse from England; KayPro, by Andy Kay, owner of a local Solana Beach company; IMSAI, a computer that actually looked like one with 22 front panel switches and 40 blinking red lights.

Steve Jobs and his friend, Steve Wozniak, were computer club buddies and got together in 1976 to design the Apple I. During a visit to PARC ((Palo Alto Research Center, a Xerox company) Jobs saw their development of the GUI (Graphical User

Interface that we now call Windows) and the mouse that controlled the cursor. He immediately realized that it was a great idea. No keyboard required! He borrowed (?!) the idea and implemented it in the Apple II. Later, Microsoft borrowed (copied?) the Apple GUI for their Windows and, not surprisingly, legal actions became rampant among the three.

In 1979 a killer application called VisiCalc came on the scene. It was a rudimentary spreadsheet that was first incorporated in the Apple II. Now a personal computer could actually do some work as opposed to just playing games. VisiCalc went on to inspire Lotus 1-2-3 and Excel which are much more powerful spreadsheet programs. WordStar, a word processing (WP) program, also appeared in 1979.

Several WP programs already existed, but WordStar quickly dominated the field. Typewriters became instantly obsolete.

Also about that time, an IBM manager in the Boca Raton, FL, facility developed the prototype IBMPC. It was a tough sell to upper management because of the fear of it cannibalizing the mainframe business, but he persevered and the IBM-PC was born. However, it had no operating system (OS).

Rather than create a new one, they sought out Gary Kildall, the owner of Digital Research Inc. (DRI) in Pacific Grove, CA. He had developed CP/M which at that time was a widely used operating system for small computers. When IBM personnel flew to the West Coast for their ap-

*(Continued on page 5)*



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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

LCACE's computer help desk providing one on one assistance met for the second time on Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. Our gurus are standing by ready to assist you! Tell your family and friends that the help desk is open to everyone at no charge from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on meeting Saturdays. Special thanks to Linda Koudelka, Lester Larkin, and Fred Barnett for staffing our February help desk.

Dick Eisenmann brought Robert and Judith Fesus who became our newest members. Welcome to LCACE!

We owe a special thank you to program chair Lester Larkin for stepping in to present "Email programs and Google Voice" at the last minute for our February meeting. Lester is a real trooper.

If you weren't there, you really missed quite a presentation. The best part was when Lester told how he deals with spammers. He engages them in lengthy email discussions. Someone in Nigeria thinks Lester is going to help them by taking two large boxes of \$100 bills off their hands. He even got them to send him photos! The delivery address he provided is on the east end of Kenosha (Lake Michigan). Everyone was in stitches. Lester said that if ten percent of the population did this, the spammers would be so busy answering emails that they wouldn't have time to send more spam. You had to be there.

Lester showed us how Google Voice works. The voice recognition software is excellent when it comes to transcribing messages -- provided that the messages are in English! Everyone laughed again when Google Voice attempted to render French sounds into English. A good time was had by all.

We have exciting programs scheduled for 2012:

March 3, 2012-Staples of Mundelein will present the latest in technology

Staples will bring two techs to the meeting to perform free PC tune-ups. If your computer is running slower than you think it should, bring it to the meeting. Staples' techs will speed up start up and shutdown times, clean up unnecessary files, and scan your computer for viruses. If you have a desktop, just bring your tower.

March 31, 2012-Elections, club party, show and tell, ask the gurus

May 5, 2012-Costco of Mettawa will talk about Ooma phone service and their other technology

June 2, 2012-Terri Hanlon will present "Genealogy". The Grayslake Area Public Library will co-sponsor this program.

July 14, 2012-Picnic at Liz and Fred Barnett's house

August 4, 2012-

December 1, 2012-holiday party at State Bank of the Lakes-Save the date!

Have you recently tried an interesting website or program, or seen an interesting tech "toy"? Tell us about it. Our club motto is "Members helping members". Write an article or a paragraph for the News Journal so we can all learn.

LCACE has a three step election process. Richard Eisenmann very ably conducted the nominations at our February 11th meeting when Liz Barnett, Linda Busch, John Colossimo, Winnie Frost, Linda Koudelka, Lester Larkin, Mike McEnery, Ken Savage, and Robin Seidenberg were nominated for board positions. Nominations will continue March 3, and March 31. We will elect our seven member board at the March 31<sup>st</sup> meeting, and then choose our president from the people elected to serve on the board. In order to serve on the board, members must be in good standing (have paid their current dues). Please think of who you would like to nominate. You can nominate yourself.

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Happy computing!



# Historian Commentary

## L.C.A.C.E. Club Historian

History Report, 2/11/12 meeting

By Les Larkin

historian@lcace.org

Good thing Linda Koudelka was there to do the Help Desk, because I was spending most of my time getting ready for my Email Strategies and Google Voice presentation. Thanks, Linda!

We had nominations for the upcoming election of the L.C.A.C.E. Board of Directors. There are now 9 nominees. Richard Eisenmann conducted the nomination process in a fine manner. And contrary to the axiom "no good deed goes unpunished", Richard won the door prize of a USB mouse and a keyboard! Is there some kind of fracture of the space/time continuum? If there is, let's not fix it just yet.

One of our newer members, John Colosimo, won the 50/50 prize of \$7.50. Congratulations, John.



Doreen Lagoni demonstrated her MobileHelp medical alert system, and described some of its advantages. Thanks, Doreen.



Presenting some facet of computing to our members is always a hoot. True, it takes some work, but the reward is always worth the ef-

fort. Hopefully, some folks who are currently just using webmail will consider some of the advantages of using an email client. An email client isn't for everyone, but it is good to know what our options are.

I used OpenOffice Impress to create the slideshow, which is now on our website. It is in Microsoft's PowerPoint format, because Microsoft can't import files in the Open Data format yet. OpenOffice doesn't have that kind of limitation. You can access the slideshow, along with any other L.C.A.C.E. presentation, at our new Presentation page via the new Presentations button on our main website page. If you know of any presentation slideshows that should join the 2 that are currently up there, let's talk.

Thanks to Bobby Jacobs who filled me in on some info that I needed for this article.

See you all at our next meeting!

## LCACE's Help Desk

Do you have computer questions or need help with your computer?

Visit the Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts' help desk for one on

one help 11:15 a.m.-12:15

p.m. at the

Grayslake Ar-

ea Public Li-

brary Lane,

Grayslake, on

Saturday, March 3, Saturday, March

31, Saturday, May 5, Saturday, June

2, and Saturday, August 4.

This free service is open to anyone

with an interest in computers so in-

voke your family, friends, and neigh-

bors.



(Continued from page 1)

pointment with Kildall, they were told he was off flying his airplane. He was obviously not impressed with IBM. Justifiably miffed, IBM approached Bill Gates at Microsoft for an OS.

Gates and his partner, Paul Allen, had been together since 1975 writing the BASIC programming language. Bill quickly agreed to provide an OS to IBM. He called a local friend, also a programmer, who had developed QDOS (Quick & Dirty Operating System) based upon DRI's CP/M OS. After they agreed to minimal financial terms, Gates modified it slightly for IBM and named it MS-DOS (Microsoft Disk Operating System). IBM further cleaned out 300 bugs and called it PC-DOS, with Gates retaining all the rights. Brilliant negotiation! At the time, computers were sold without the OS, which had to be purchased separately. So in 1981 IBM launched the IBM-PC followed by 11 upgrade models. The XT model had the first internal hard drive.

Apple and Microsoft continue to fight for market share with supporters who are strongly opinionated lined up on each side. Apple has kept both the hardware and software proprietary, whereas PC is "Open Source," so third party suppliers can participate, increasing competition which ultimately reduces cost and increases availability of components. Also, because of Open Source, many more software applications are available for the IBM-PC than the Apple.

A second battle over the CPU (Central Processing Unit), the brains of the computer, pits Intel against AMD and Motorola. Again, competition favors the customer with perhaps Intel having a slim lead in performance, but not price.

Video displays have evolved from TVs to CRTs (cathode ray tubes), offered in either white, green or orange characters, to high resolution LCDs (Liquid Crystal Displays aka Flat Screens). OLED displays (Organic Light Emitting Diodes) are on the horizon with the promise of lower cost and better features.

Internal memory in early computers cost \$125 for 8KB. Now, 4GB, which is 500,000 times larger, only costs a fraction of that. Storage memory has evolved from punched paper tape to magnetic tape to floppy disks in sizes of 8", 5" and 3.5". Now hard disk drives, flash drives, CD/DVD/BlueRay burners, and Internet Cloud sites offer huge storage capability at minimal cost.

So what is next? Probably a major breakthrough will occur that we can neither predict nor even envision. There will be many exciting PC developments ahead, so stay tuned.



## LAKE COUNTY CAMERA CLUB

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## Staying Technologically Young

By Darry D Eggleston

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The challenges for me are increasing as I strive to remain technologically young. What used to take years to change now occurs in a matter of months. So many new products are appearing in such rapid order that, unless one reads, observes, and communicates with like-minded friends, one ends up talking about the “good old days” of technology way back in 2009.

Someone referred to technology’s growth in “dog years” and I suspect she might be right. Technology now leaps in one year where we would expect it to take seven years in the past.

One need only look at cellphones, cameras, and notebook computers to see that devices are shrinking while their capabilities are exponentially increasing.

Just yesterday, a conversation between two neighbors awoke me to this fact again. Both are my age in the 60-to-1,000-year-old range. One neighbor extolled finding a new restaurant quickly because of his car’s trusty dashboard-mounted global positioning device (GPS).

The other, without hesitating, replied, “Oh, I got rid of my old GPS six months ago,” as he pulled out his cellphone. “Mine’s in here.” Proudly, he showed us his Nokia N8:

“Unlocked GSM touchscreen phone featuring GPS with voice navigation and a 12 megapixel camera.”

Even my research for this simple article relied on technology that I wish was available when I was younger:

1. I Googled to learn more about Dave’s cellphone. (Nokia’s website boasts that N8 phones can connect to social networks, web TV programs and Ovi Store apps. It has Carl Zeiss optics, Xenon flash, HD-quality video recording, film editing software, and Dolby Surround Sound.)
2. I used FastStone Capture to take a screenshot of the Nokia description, pasted it into OmniPage which scanned the image and converted it into plain text, which I copied and pasted it into WordPerfect.

You can either ride the waves of innovation rushing to the shores of your existence or you can be swept out into the sea of ignorance. You can stay technologically young or die in place at a pace that’s more fitting for an old folk’s home.

Choices, my friend, it’s all about choices.



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# Next Meeting

Saturday

March

3

Meeting Agenda: <http://lcace.org/agendas.htm>

## Meeting Agenda

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