



# NEWS JOURNAL

## UPCOMING MEETINGS:

**February 7th**

***Smart Computing***

**Featuring:**

**Stephanie Ellington**

**March 14th**

***Digital photography***

**Featuring:**

**J.J. Johnson**

**&**

***Quicken Starter  
Edition***

**Featuring:**

**Mike McEnergy**

# Smart Computing

By Robin Seidenberg  
President L.C.A.C.E.

As many of you know, the free tech support you get with your Smart Computing subscription is great. I recently had a computer problem that was driving me wild. My HP laptop has a LightScribe drive. I had done a *PowerPoint* genealogy presentation, and family members wanted copies. Of course, I wanted to do a special label on the disk. I couldn't get my Roxio software to make the kind of label I wanted, so I downloaded the free LightScribe software which offered a nice array of choices for designing labels.

I designed a very attractive label, and hit "preview and print". That's when the trouble began! It kept telling me "Could not load file for printing (file does not exist)". I figured I could handle this. I uninstalled the drive. I uninstalled the software. I downloaded the software again. No improvement. After spending a good deal of time trying to deal with the problem, I decided to call HP. They informed me that the warranty on my laptop had ended TWO days previously. If I wanted free support, I could use their online tech support.

I wasted close to three hours with their online support. The tech emailed a long list of suggestions to try to fix the problem. I knew the drive itself was not defective because I was able to use the Light-

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Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts  
LCACE  
c/o Group Ambassador  
"J.J." Johnson

**Membership**

Membership in 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 LCACE 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 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!

**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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*The LCACE News Journal* is published eleven times annually. Members are encouraged to submit contributions which will be acknowledged in this newsletter.

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*The News Journal* is produced using a Dell Dimension 8300, 512 Plus Troy MICR printer and MS Publisher 2007 software.

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Scribe feature with Roxio software. About this time I started saying a bunch of words I did not learn from my mother. I was not a happy camper!

I belatedly realized that my husband's HP laptop also had a LightScribe drive. I downloaded the software, designed the label, and ... it worked like a charm. I left town extremely annoyed that my one year and a few days old laptop was not working right. I spoke to a number of technical people while I was out of town. None of them could figure out what was wrong.

The morning after I got home, I called Smart Computing and asked the tech to take possession of my machine. I opened the LightScribe software, showed him the label I was trying to print, and got the same error message. In a minute the tech asked "Do you have an apostrophe in your user name?" When I said I did, he said that I would need to set up a new user account without an apostrophe in order to use the LightScribe software. He said that renaming the user account and removing the apostrophe would rename the account, but not actu-

ally remove the apostrophe from the underlying account file structure.

Since I already had another user name set up for my grandchildren, I downloaded the LightScribe software, set up the label using photos imported on a flash drive, hit "preview and print", and SUCCESS! Of course, I wanted to know how he figured it out so quickly. He told me he had googled the exact error message I received and added the word "LightScribe". Needless to say, I was extremely grateful to him for solving this very vexing problem.

Our club receives one free subscription for every five paid subscriptions to this wonderful magazine. To subscribe to Smart Computing, go to our website, <http://www.lcace.org>, and click on "Links". Click on "Smart Computing & CPU". Near the bottom of the page, click on "User group offers". Click on "User Group Subscription". When you get to the blank that asks for "User Group", click on the down arrow to Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts-Waukegan, IL". Enjoy!



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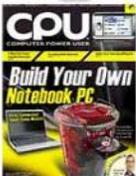
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## Robin's RAMblings

Nineteen hardy souls made it through the snow to attend our January 10<sup>th</sup> Show and Tell and Ask the Gurus meeting. Treasurer Winnie Frost supplied us with hot coffee and tea to ward off the cold; Lew Seidenberg brought cookies. Henry Henricksen just moved back to the area from Las Vegas, and came to see if we were still an active group. Lester Larkin told us about "Magic Jack", a new internet phone service. I discussed my new Palm Centro smart phone, and showed embroidery designs that can be made with an inexpensive embroidery machine. Fred Barnett reminded us of his favorite program to organize data, *Vault*. J.J. showed his new iPod (J.J., don't you think \$300 is a lot to pay for a "flashlight" ☺ ?).

J.J. keeps teasing that our club motto should be "Members helping members spend money". How many people bought Magic Jack, a new smart phone, or an iPod after the meeting?

Our upcoming programs are:

February 7-*Smart Computing Magazine*-Stephanie Ellington

March 14-Digital Photography-J.J. Johnson and *Quicken Starter Edition*-Mike McEnergy

April 4-Election, club party, Show and Tell, and Ask the Gurus

May 9-Best Buy-Mundelein will return to talk about the latest in technology

June 13-Skeletons in our Closet: Researching a Family Scandal-Robin Seidenberg

Our election process begins in February. We take nominations in February, March, and April, and elect our board at the April meeting. We elect our president from the board. Please be thinking of people to nominate. You can nominate yourself.

Happy computing!

# The Digital Mom

By Dorothy Sutherland



Here comes Digital Mom again. This time I assisted J.J. with his Digital Photography Class at Park Place Senior Center in Waukegan. The three two hour courses covered everything from basic camera features, functions, operation, composition, photo storage, organization, printing and file sharing. "Boy was it fun!"

One of the class members was so excited about what he learned in the first session that J.J. received a call while we were at his photography seminar in Indiana just to express his enthusiasm about the class. Everyone in the class had different digital camera models, and one class member joined the class to get insight into which camera to purchase. The class helped her with her decision and she purchased a camera before the class was over.

The final assignment for the class was to take five photos using what they had learned and bring them to the last class for a show n' tell. J.J. brought in his event photo printer to print everyone's photos for viewing and critique. It was clear that everyone was able to improve their skills even if they were doing a landscape scenery shoot at Illinois State Beach. It was also apparent that everyone enjoyed the class and they asked if there would be another similar or advanced class in the future.

## Recycling Center

The City of Highland Park has a recycling center for Lake County. It is at 1180 Half Day Road, next to their Public Works buildings. It is open some mornings. You can drop off your monitor, printers, mouse, keyboard, etc., for no cost.

For a business, if you call Vintage Tech (866-435-9223) and have over 25 pieces, they will pick it up for free. [www.vintagetechrecyclers.com](http://www.vintagetechrecyclers.com)

**Submitted by:**  
**Winnie Frost**  
**L.C.A.C.E. Treasurer**

# 1-800-GOOG-411

My compliments to Google!

Just leave it up to Google to come up with something like this!!! Here's a number worth putting in your cell phone, or your home phone speed dial: 1-800-goog411.

This is an awesome service from Google, and it's free -- great when you are on the road.

Don't waste your money on information calls and don't waste your time manually dialing the number.

I am driving along in my car and I need to call the golf course and I don't know the number. I hit the speed dial for information that I have programmed.

The voice at the other end says, "City State." I say, "Garland, Texas."

He says, "Business Name or Type of Service." I say, "Firewheel Golf Course."

He says, "Connecting" and Firewheel answers the phone.

How great is that? This is nationwide and it is absolutely free!

Click on the link below and watch the short clip for a quick demonstration.

<http://www.google.com/goog411/>

**Submitted by: J.J.  
L.C.A.C.E. Founder**

## Check it out!

If you receive an email offering you a free laptop or a warning about the latest form of impending doom, PLEASE check it out at [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com) before you send it to half the Western World. You can generally figure that when someone suggests that you send a message to "everyone you know" that it is more dangerous than the subjects about which you are being warned.

Please don't be an email pest.  
Check it out before you send it. Your friends will thank you.

**Submitted by: Angus MacTavish**  
Motto: When in doubt, check it out.

# Wireless from Your Neighbors

The Chronicles, October 2003, Palmetto PC Club

by Steve Bass  
One of Steve Bass' correspondents:

## From Toggle.org

I received a service request last week from a San Marino residential client that I hadn't seen in almost a year. He said he was having minor problems with his old and two recently added PC's and asked me to come over and clean things up. Upon arrival he added that he had installed a wireless network about six months ago and that it worked well but had frequent dropouts.

## Network Name

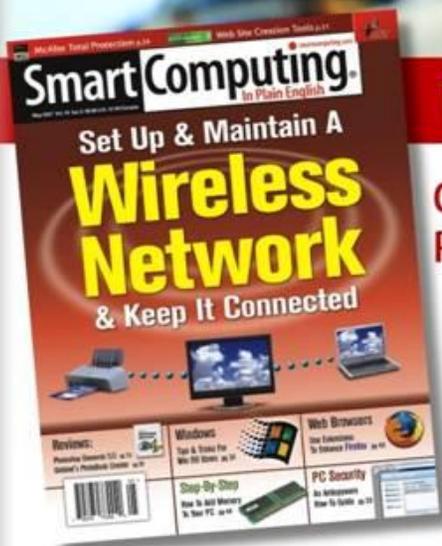
While addressing the primary issues, I was surprised to see that his network was named "apple-something" and no one in the family seemed to know why. As an experiment, I unplugged the power from their wireless base-station and, you guessed it, everything kept working. They had been tapping into a neighbor's network for over six months and didn't realize it.

## Another Network

Suddenly they remembered that the original name had "default" so I reset everything to "default" and it worked great until I realized that I still hadn't plugged in their base-station. They were now on a second neighbor's network. There's a lot more to this but you get the point -- lazy users, confusion, and a complete lack of security. BTW, I brought up the second neighbor's routers in my client's browser and, since they hadn't changed the default login, was able to look at all of their settings. Of particular interest was the DHCP table that showed twenty-five (25) assigned addresses. The poor guy who owns the system is providing connections to everyone on the block and is no doubt clueless as to why he has such low bandwidth. Steve Gibson of [grc.com](http://grc.com) commented: Isn't that a hoot?!

*(Continued on page 7)*

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Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts (LCACE)

**Saturday, February 7, 2009 at 12:30 p.m.**

Grayslake Area Public Library

100 Library Lane

Grayslake, Illinois 60030

**Smart Computing**  
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[www.SmartComputing.com](http://www.SmartComputing.com)

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## What's Not a Hoot ...

is wireless networking. Wireless networking makes me extremely uneasy. I don't use it and, despite the appearance of extreme convenience, I doubt I ever will. It's too much like running a connection from your network's hub or router out into the front yard with a sign saying: "Come on over and plug in." There's little difference, since a wireless network is broadcasting just such invitation. It may be theoretically possible to make it safe, I'm not saying that it's not. But it's also (obviously) theoretically possible to make absolutely 100% bug free software. But we all know how unlikely and how apparently difficult that is. With code built upon code built upon code, and few people writing anything from scratch anymore, and with critical bugs being found in widely used core libraries, no rational person who understands the complex nature of Security would trust wireless networking. I don't, and my standing advice is: Use it if you really must, but never trust it, and don't use it unless you truly would not mind running a wire out into the front yard connected to your system.



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**View Classic Start Menu in Vista:** To get back to a more recognizable Start menu, right-click an open space on the Taskbar, select Properties, click the Start Menu tab, select the Classic Start Menu radio button, and then click Apply. For a little more control over what appears in the Start menu, click the Customize button to add or remove items. Click OK when you're finished.

**Affordable Smartphones:** Even consumers with a limited budget can afford a smartphone, thanks in part to new low-cost smartphone offers from many carriers and manufacturers that offer a pleasant ar-

ray of features. These smartphones often have the basic functions you'd expect, including phone, email, Web, contacts, calendar, and task-management capabilities.

Sometimes you'll find an older, more full-featured smartphone offered at a tremendous discount. These phones can also be great options for consumers who don't want to pay for the latest and greatest phones but still want a decent amount of power and functionality.

**Go Beyond Point And Shoot:** You don't have to have a high-powered camera to improve your photographs. At the very least, adjust White Balance settings according to lighting conditions. Even if you use a flash, ambient light will affect the background of your image, so set the white balance to tungsten when the scene is lit by regular light bulbs and Fluorescent for fluorescent

**Check Those Requirements:** Before you purchase computer software, such as a game or a greeting card creator, be sure to check the system requirements, which are generally listed on the side or bottom of the software box. Oftentimes, you will see two lists of system specifications: minimum system requirements and recommended system requirements. Verify that your computer meets the minimum system requirements for the software, but try to take the recommended requirements into account. If you meet the recommended settings, the program will run more smoothly. Attempting to run the program on the minimum settings may result in slow response times, reduced graphics settings, and difficulty using the software's most advanced features. bulbs, for example.

**Computer Maintenance Practices:** There are some easy ways to help keep your computer running healthy. First, configure your antispyware or antivirus program to run at least once a day. Most protection programs give you the option of choosing when the scan will occur, whether it's when the computer starts up, or at a specific time of day. Second, defragment your hard drive on a regular basis. Defragmenting combines fragmented files when possible, ultimately cleaning up your hard drive and making file access, and overall computer use, faster. Lastly, keeping your computer healthy means keeping your files safe. Regularly back up your most important files on an external hard drive or DVD, which ensures less data loss if something should happen to your computer.

# Tales From The Trenches



Yes, Yes, Yes, I Accept

Do you rush headlong into commitment, caught up in the thrill of new potential, heedless of long-term consequences and “minor” details? Forget about whirlwind romances and impulsive pet store purchases. I’m worried about commitments we make far more often than those big decisions. I’m talking about installing software. Too many of us blindly stroll along the garden path of accepting every proposal, every suggestion, and every (legally binding) agreement that comes our way. I’ve learned that there’s a lot to gain by taking your time, paying attention to details, and knowing what you’re getting into. If you’re similarly cautious, you’ll save yourself lots of reconfiguration, troubleshooting, and support headaches in the long run.

My first advice is the most obvious. It’s also the guidance we’re most likely to ignore. Pay attention to details. Read the fine print. How are you going to know whether you’re agreeing to let the company selling (or giving away) that cool new utility sell your email address unless you read their licensing agreement? How can you tell exactly how long your trial software will last and what happens to the files created during that time unless you read the demo agreement? I understand that reading every dry word of every excruciating EULA (End-User License Agreement) is beyond the endurance of mere mortals. But at least try to skim through, looking for anything unusual or suspicious. And there’s no good reason not to pay close attention to the small amounts of text on the other screens. Every once in a while, I find myself reflexively clicking OK without even looking at what’s on-screen. At times like these, I invariably notice that, three clicks ago, I agreed to add yet another useful Internet Explorer toolbar or signed away my firstborn in exchange for “promotional considerations.” Don’t get caught napping (and childless). Slow down and pay attention to what you’re putting on that expensive machine.

While you’re reading each of those options, think about what a few of them mean. The choice between Standard and Custom (or Advanced) installation is one of the most important. Sure, you might

save 30 seconds and three clicks by setting up that application exactly the way its manufacturer’s marketing department recommends, without even looking. I think you’re better off taking the time to keep an eye on what they’re up to. I always, without fail, take the custom installation path—despite any scary warnings about them being for “advanced” or “experienced” users. You’ll be amazed at what you find. Even if you don’t change a single default, you’ll learn something about where the software resides and how it integrates with other parts of the system. You might even discover useful options or configuration choices that you didn’t know you had.

While reviewing the choices provided by a custom installation, watch out for a few traps. I always—always—refuse to add new things to my Desktop. We’ve all seen those Desktops cluttered with files, folders, and icons. How anyone ever finds anything in those messes is beyond me. You already know where and how to get at your programs—it’s called the Programs menu. Avoid extra toolbars like the plague, as well. I’ve never found an add-on toolbar I prefer to just customizing IE, but if you find a browser toolbar you like, then stick with it. Letting programs add extra toolbars only slows things down and makes things harder to find.

Finally, don’t be afraid to walk away. When you discover required add-on “components” that look suspiciously like spyware—and you will—cancel the installation. When you notice that there’s no way to complete the setup without providing your email address and signing up for spam, decline the agreement and find another application. Don’t get roped into a situation that’s bad for your computer just because you’re afraid there are no other options. No useful software is ever without some kind of competition. Or, as my dad used to tell me, there are always more fish in the sea.

by *Gregory Anderson*

Gregory Anderson is a regular contributor to *Smart Computing* and several other technology publications. He keeps a sharp eye (with the help of thick glasses) on computing trends and enjoys working with geeks of all stripes—most of the time. Share chronicles of careful commitment at [gregory-anderson@smartcomputing.com](mailto:gregory-anderson@smartcomputing.com)

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## TIME TO RENEW

**All** memberships are now renewable annually on April 1st. This change in the payment of annual dues will allow the treasurer to budget our money more closely. If you haven't already renewed your membership, see Linda Busch or Winnie Frost.

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**NEXT MEETING**  
**January 10, 2009**  
Grayslake Area Public Library  
**at 12:30 pm.**

Visit us @ <http://www.lcace.org>

Next meeting February 7, 2009

***SMART COMPUTING***

March 14, 2009 Meeting

***DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY & QUICKEN***

***STARTER EDITION***

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