LCCS/LCAP Teaching Program

A Ten-year History
by Phyllis M Hartroft

In September of 1994, Delbert Stroud had arranged to have our general meetings of The Licking County Computer Society **(LCCS)** held at the county Senior Center, Newark, Ohio, under the auspices of Licking County Aging Program **(LCAP)**. This solved the problem of where our user group could meet on a permanent basis — the location and facilities suited our needs. Delbert Stroud said they wanted us there and that they would also like us to set up computer classes for the Aging Program.

From this early start, a lasting collaboration with LCAP began and has developed over the years into the teaching program we have today. A portion of a large conference room was made available to LCCS for both refurbishing old computers and for teaching purposes. The first few years of the LCCS teaching program were dependent upon our refurbishing program.

In the spring of 1995, Delbert enlisted the help of a few of us, namely Phyllis Hartroft, Fred Himebrook, Tom Johnson, and Don Furnish (Fig.1), and we began a small class with several computers. The computers had been donated by individuals who had acquired new computers upgraded to the Windows operating system. So we started out teaching the MS-DOS operating system and then programs that were designed for DOS. A single class consisted of up to 14 students (senior citizens, 55 years or older) sharing 7 computers. Later, we went from one to two classes a week and as word got around, we were faced with the unhappy task of refusing to take more. That was when our waiting lists started.

Fig. 1. *Captured from video tape. Three of the instructors after one of our computer classes which have been held every Tuesday morning for the past several months at LCAP in The Senior Center. Shown are Fred Himebrook, Phyllis Hartroft, and Delbert Stroud. They were looking at the projection TV to which the camcorder was attached. Missing are Tom Johnson and Don Furnish. June 1995.*

Those of you who remember the "DOS days" realize that you first had to memorize and learn how to use the many DOS commands. Some of the DOS applications had their own GUI's (Graphical User Interface) but their use depended upon knowing procedures. Otherwise, at times you were left with a screen that left you in the dark — "now what? But a number of students kept with it. As Delbert Stroud reported in the December, 1995 issue of our newsletter, *The computer classes for senior citizens at Zerger Hall [the Senior Center] are progressing very well. Of the 24 original students, 14 attended the 10th week. ...some did not return after classes were cancelled during installation of room dividers in the conference room. This installation did help the class since one room is now set up permanently for use by the computer class.*

Other potential students were anxious to learn Windows but it wasn't until 1997 that we were able to acquire enough computers capable of running Windows. In 1997, our Recycling/Refurbishing program expanded when Denison University was upgrading their computers and offered to donate the old ones to our society for recycling. Most of these computers had MS-DOS version 3.3-5, but none had Windows nor were they capable of running Windows.

However, later that year that we had a windfall when Arvin Meritor Automotive Corp (formerly Rockwell Corp) donated 10 computers (486's) that were capable of running Windows 95. Thanks to Microsoft Corp and to Dave Lantz, who contacted them, we received 10 licenses for Windows 95 at no cost for our 10 student computers. After they were cleaned up and free of oil and dirt, the Arvin Meritor computers were put into service for teaching. Some of the LCCS members who were active in making this happen were Paul Hauenstein, Dave Clement, Delbert Stroud, Jon Luzio, Phyllis Hartroft, Allan Isham, and Fred Himebrook. The Repair Special Interest Group (SIG), which had been started earlier by Delbert Stroud and Dave Clement, also helped with the cleanup project. As each computer was cleaned, software was installed and soon all 10 were ready for new classes.

Fig. 2. *Above, left: John Dovjak explaining content of the Windows 95 outline.*
Right: Some of the students. Three of them later became aides in the computer classes. These were Charlie Wilson (top, third from left) ,and Mary Ann and Joe Higginbotham (lower photo).

The Arvin Meritor computers were used for the next two years, using Windows 95. Our teaching outline followed a textbook, Dummies *101: Windows 95*, which was the only cost assessed to senior citizens signing up for the classes.

In 1997, tables were arranged against the walls and the instructor was at one end of the room (Fig.2). A projection TV was used for video tutorials. The number of classes increased, as more LCCS volunteers were ready to donate their time in our teaching endeavors. Several classes (up to 5) were run per week for six weeks in an effort to keep up with the demand. Each class had an instructor and 2-4 aides who could help those students having trouble keeping up with the rest of the class.

All of the teaching personnel were LCCS volunteers and the equipment belonged to LCCS. LCAP provided the room, tables, support from staff, and made other facilities available to us. Although some of the personnel have changed throughout the years, the healthy cooperation of these two organizations has remained the same.

Some of the better students expressed a strong desire to go on after they finished the 6-7 weeks of beginning instruction. To satisfy this need, Phyllis Hartroft, Alan Isham, and Tom Johnson started a class on Microsoft Works in 1999. The version was 4.5 and of course there was a *Dummies* book available for that, too, but not a "101" book. For the teaching outline, each of us took one part of Works — word processing, spreadsheet, and database — and then got together to produce the final outline.

Fig. 3. *The three original instructors for classes on Microsoft Works. From left to right: Tom Johnson, Allan Isham, Phyllis Hartroft.*
Later, Dave Bibler and Mary Frances Rauch and, currently, George Willey are teaching this class.

Although it has been modified as versions changed over the years, it is essentially the same outline we use today.

We encouraged students who were anxious to learn more to consider our Special Interest Groups (SIGS). At the time (1999), these were: *PC Repair/Maintenance*, Dave Clement and Delbert Stroud, co-leaders; *Novice*, Rosanna Moore, leader; and *Windows*, Phyllis Hartroft and Jon Luzio, co-leaders. These groups were certainly part of the overall educational goals of the Licking County Computer Society (LCCS). Participants could have questions answered and share experiences with the group in an informal, relaxed atmosphere. Two of the SIGs were held at the leaders' homes. One (Repair SIG) met at the Senior Center. These meetings were in addition to our general meeting which is held once a month at the Senior Center. Later, the Novice SIG, Word/Works SIG, and Web SIG were held in the computer room, led by George Willey, Mary Frances Rauch and Gina Buckey, respectively.

In the fall of 1999, thanks to a donation from an interested member, we were able to purchase 11 new computers that were assembled by a local computer store, TCR Personal Computers. Monitors for each and 5 printers were included (one for each table, shared by two students). The arrangement of tables in the room was changed so that students did not have to turn their chairs around to watch the instructor and display. We were now using a 32" multimedia monitor as shown in the illustration. The new computers were running Windows 98 SE, so now the teaching program was up-to-date. The old computers were offered to members who could not afford new ones. In most cases, a nominal donation was given in return to LCCS.

Fig. 4. *Arrangement of the computer room in Nov, 1999, at The Senior Center.*

The computers running Windows 98SE were used for five years with some updates in accessory equipment. In particular, we updated from the 32" multimedia monitor to a multimedia projector which gave a much sharper display. Another major addition was the installation of an ACS system in the computer room which allowed the instructor to control the students' monitors — the available options were: 1) no control so the students displayed what they were doing on their own monitors, 2) blacken the monitors while the instructor was displaying video or procedures on the instructor's computer, or 3) display on the students' monitors what was being demonstrated on the instructor's computer. This helped keep the students' attention and was one more improvement in the teaching program. Both the ACS system and the projector were purchased with funds from LCCS' treasury.

Progress during this period (1995-2001) was best expressed by Allan Isham as outgoing president of LCCS. The following is an excerpt from his article, *Isham's Insights*, in the January, 2001 issue of *Random Bits,* our newsletter.

...During those five years [as president], we have all seen many changes in the programs that the LCCS conducts. Our teaching and educational outreach to the senior citizens of Licking County has expanded many times. The motley group of old donated computers, pulled together by Del Stroud and his helpers, were replaced by new desktops in November, 1999. The classes have been expanded in number, from one group to as many as seven groups each week. Literally hundreds of citizens in Licking County began their trek to computer literacy through our programs at The Senior Center. We all owe a big "thank you" to all the LCCS members who have participated in this effort over the years. Thanks to them, the teaching program will continue unabated into 2001.

One of the backbones of every user group are the SIGs. These small groups of members meet during the month in order to share their experiences in their Special Interest Groups. Over the past few years, the number of SIGs has grown from one to five. Members can choose from a variety of subjects and pick the level of involvement which suits their needs and lif style. ...

John Dovjak became coordinator of the teaching program, taking over from Paul Hauenstein in 2000. Delbert Stroud could no longer continue in this capacity because of illness and, sadly, he passed away in early 2001. John continued as coordinator until 2003 when Bob Porter filled in for a year.

Fig. 5. Coordinators of the Teaching Program

Delber Stroud	*Paul Hauenstein*	*John Dovjak*	*Bob Porter*
1995-1997	*1997-1999*	*2000-2003*	*2003*

At that point, in the spring of 2004, the LCCS Executive Committee decided it was too much responsibility for one person and set up a committee for the teaching program. Phyllis Hartroft was appointed chairman and in turn, she set up (volunteer) subcommittees. These were: 1) Phoning, scheduling, publicity and prerequisites, led by Dave Bibler, Executive Director of LCAP and past LCCS President, 2) Preparation and availability of class materials chaired by Mary Ossa and Phyllis

Hartroft, 3) Instructors and aides, chaired by Mary Frances Rauch, and 4) Computer setup and maintenance, chaired by David Rauch and David Clement.
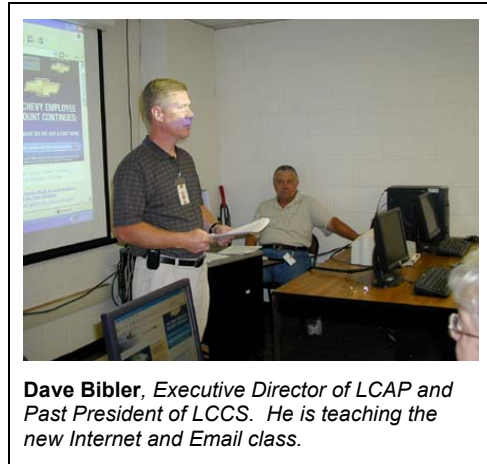
Each subcommittee has several volunteers who have given freely of their time. All are members of LCCS. This arrangement is essentially the same today except that Mary Ossa is now chairman of the full committee as of the June, 2005. Phyllis is still very active in subcommittee #2 and is a member of subcommittee #4.

Mary Ossa, *Current Chairperson of Teaching Committee.*

In the summer of 2004, we updated the computers again so that we could teach Windows XP. This time, proceeds from the recycling /refurbishing program covered most of the cost and another private donation covered the rest, including accessories and other improvements. Of note, we were now able to purchase two new projectors, one of them securely attached to the ceiling and a second one for our general monthly meetings, which are held in another larger room in the Senior Center. This was a significant improvement because we had to share the old projector so could not easily have it ceiling mounted. Also the new projectors are much brighter. Another improvement, thanks to Dave Bibler, Dave Clement and Dave Rauch, was the installation of DSL connections in the classroom routed to all 11 computers for internet access.

The classes were expanded to include one on Internet and Email, taught by Dave Bibler. George Willey and Mary Frances Rauch are now teaching the Word/Works class. The beginning classes for seniors have also been improved. For example, we have created an outline/tutorial in large type, suitable for seniors, and which is peppered with illustrations in context. The printed outline in loose-leaf binders and information on a CD are given to each student. They have the option of buying a "textbook," *Dummies for Windows XP*. The outline is essentially a stand-alone tutorial. We strongly encourage the students to practice the

Dave Bibler, *Executive Director of LCAP and Past President of LCCS. He is teaching the new Internet and Email class.*

material at home and for that reason, we require that they have access to a computer at home. A list of teachers and aides with phone numbers and email addresses is provided in case a student has trouble following the tutorial or for other computer problems at home.

Students now are assessed a non-refundable registration fee. This helps assure that they are serious about the classes and will show up for the first week of class. The fee also helps pay for class materials.

For each class of 10 senior students there are an instructor, computer operator, and several aides. Currently, there are 7 classes per week and each session lasts 7 weeks with 7 sessions each year — January-February, March-April, and September-October. We estimate that between 1500 and 2000 seniors have been through the teaching program since it started in 1995. There is always a waiting list.

The challenge of teaching senior citizens, most of whom have never used a computer, can be daunting. Some have children or grandchildren who may have tried to help but show procedures too quickly or become impatient. Our teaching personnel are older, many senior citizens themselves, so are more understanding. Whatever the reason, our teaching program is one of the most popular at Licking County Senior center.