

# LEWA Line Drops

A monthly publication for the Solidworks Users in the Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Midwest Area



## Where to go when you don't know

Ever wish you had one of those direction devices from your car in your computer? Hertz SolidWorks rental. Wish you could hit a button and hear: "OnStar, I'm reading you have an extrusion problem, how may I help? Or just ask the question, "Tom-Tom, where do I find help on this problem, or Tom-Tom how do I get rid of this error, Tom-Tom, why doesn't this model extrude?" If anyone from SolidWorks is reading this, think about voice activated help on software, it's a market just begging to be exploited. But since this is only in the theoretical stage, we SolidWorks users have to go about things the hard way. Now think about this long and hard before you answer this question, when you don't know something, or can't figure something out, where do

you go? Help files? Naw, too hard to find anything in there, VAR? Naw, they tend to know less than you do. Internet, hmmm it has potential, while I'm out there I can check out how the Cubs did last night too! Or do you call for your handy neighborhood know-it-all guy? Ding Ding Ding, we have a winner! Every Department has a know-it-all guy. Maybe you're that know-it-all



**"Tom-Tom: where do I find help on this problem?..."**

guy or gal for your Company. When you can't figure out why it won't extrude, you call the know-it-all guy. He's there with a happy smile on his face, a can-do attitude and usually a way to fix it, work around it, or get through it solution. What happens when the know-it-all guy doesn't know it all? Uhhhhh, the know-it-all guy knows everything, this wouldn't happen. Oh, but it does. Now the problem isn't yours, it's the know-it-all guy's problem. Well, when the know-it-all guy needs to find the answers he's got several places to go. Most of them he has found through trial and error, hard work, hours spent on the internet combing through clues, or just plain dumb luck, but the know-it-all guy won't admit to the last one, he's like *(con't page 2...)*

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### Special points of interest:

- Got something to contribute, want to write an article, upset with what's in here, SPEAK UP!
- What do you want to see in LEWA Line drops. Drop us a line (pardon the pun)
- We still need ideas for our usergroup meetings, no idea too crazy, no subject off limits. Send us your ideas!

## SolidWorks Standardization: Part 3 Service Packs

Service pack, a couple of simple words that are not so simple. Let's break this down, service-assistance or help, pack-a collection of items, a bundle. Together they should mean that there is a bundle of help coming your way. Why isn't

this the case? As with most software released on the market today, Solidworks is released with it's fair share of bugs, bings, blomps, and other things that don't quite work right. Here comes the service pack to the rescue. To me a

service pack is a fix for all the things that either didn't work right or were screwed up to begin with when the software was released. Service packs are good right? I wish I could say yes to that, but I can't. *(con't page 2...)*



## Where to go con't...

(...cont'd from page 1)

Scotty from Star Trek, when you ask how long it will take. If the know-it-all guy says 20 minutes, he'll have the answer in 10 minutes. Looks better that way, like he just pulled off another miracle. SHHH! Don't let the know-it-all guy know you're on to him. Nod, smile and let him know he's the man, or woman, whatever the case may be. Here's some options for the rest of us when the know-it-all guy isn't around.

1.) Help files, yeah I know they're a pain, but a lot of simple issues such as settings, procedures, and creating features can be found in the help files, type in a word that will get you into the ballpark and start narrowing down your search from there. You'll find lot's of informative how-to's in the help files. This is generally where the know-it-all

guy starts.

2.) VAR, if you absolutely can't get something, or it's completely blown up, call the VAR, they're usually pretty good at answers for simple things, but be prepared to wait or pay for the help. Complex problems will need files transferred and time to "Look it over" Be prepared for an answer like... "We don't know why it's doing that, it shouldn't do that" or "I've never seen this error before" or my favorite, "It works on our computers!"

3.) The internet. Here's the proverbial jack-pot, everything is on the internet, you just need to find it. Here's some of the places to make your searching faster.

**FAQ's:** (frequently asked questions) Believe it or not, Solidworks has a pretty decent help

page:

[www.solidworks.com/pages/services/GettingHelp.html](http://www.solidworks.com/pages/services/GettingHelp.html). From here type in FAQ in the search button and start wading through the information.

**Forums :**The best place to find answers is from the experts, other SW users. Here's where I hang out: [www.eng-tips.com](http://www.eng-tips.com).

**Publications:**

[www.caddigest.com](http://www.caddigest.com),  
[www.cadalyst.com](http://www.cadalyst.com),  
[www.cadcamnet.com](http://www.cadcamnet.com) (paysite), or  
[www.caddepot.com](http://www.caddepot.com)

These are the places to start looking when you don't know where to go.

## Service Packs con't...

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Here's the story. Our Company is a very large company, we have at least 4 areas within the company that use SolidWorks, and then we have different plants located around the country and the world also using SolidWorks. Not too bad, but let's up the ante a little bit. Throw in our PDM software SmarTeam, ahhhh things are getting interesting now. Two pieces of software, two sets of service packs. How does this all work together? Poorly at the best of times.

Person in country A updates a service pack. Person B using the same software without service pack is doing modeling. But for some reason they can't get the same functions to work. Probably all do to different service packs.

If you've have ever had issues with SolidWorks not working and have called your VAR, you have no doubt heard..."This is a known bug and will be fixed in the next service pack" So you've patiently waited and when the next service pack came out then loaded that it to have your initial problem now fixed but

**"Solidworks is released with it's fair share of bugs, bings, blomps, and other things that don't quite work right"**

in the meantime several other things no longer work because the new service pack has hashed them up. Very frustrating, very common amongst SolidWorks users. Another common question you might get from the VAR is... "Are you on the latest service pack?" That can be maddening as you don't want to go to the latest service pack because you've heard it's made things worse, or can't because of company policy. Throw in several pieces of software that must function together and this can be quite a mess and horribly confusing when only certain versions of software work with certain other versions of different software. Was SolidWorks 2005 SP5.0 compatible with SmarTeam V5 R14 SP 3.0 or was it only compatible up to V5R14 SP 2.1. What if I upgrade and I can't get anything out of our vault? Can I roll the installation

back? I have to have Microsoft Office SP2 to be able to use the BOM functionality in SolidWorks. Anyway, why do software developers like SmarTeam not rev their software with SolidWorks? It seems as of late that we are always waiting to see if the new version of SolidWorks will be compatible with the current version of SmarTeam. Which puts us even further behind when the rest of the industry is on the latest release we can guarantee that we won't be upgrading for at least six months to a year.

As of right now, our IT Dept has a standing order that no service pack is installed in SolidWorks until it hits 3.0. The thought behind this is that by the third service pack SolidWorks should have all the major bugs worked out. I do see the wisdom in this, though the smartass in me has posted this question to our IT people, "What if the current version of SolidWorks never gets to service pack 3?" Funny thing is that they have never answered that question. Go figure! But on a serious note. I personally do download all the service packs as they are

(con't page 3...)

# SolidWorks Certification

I've been certified for over a year now, wait, let me re-phrase that. I've been certified in **SolidWorks** for over a year now. I can't give you the answers (well I could but I want you to suffer like I had to) But I can recount the story of the first time I took the SW Certification test.

**2 months prior to test:** had our VAR come down and give our Department a pre-test, thought I knew everything, found out I didn't. Panic started.

**Next two months:** Studied at work, studied at home, cut myself off from the outside world. Only asked questions pertaining to SW Certification to anyone. Alienated fiancé at the time, getting married in 4 months. Panicked even more. Lost lots of hair.

**Week prior to test:** Didn't sleep much, dreamed of SW problems, stomach hurt a lot. Found more hair in sink.

**Night before test:** Myself and 5 others drove up to VAR and stayed overnight in hotel. Ate steak that night, last meal of the condemned. Stomach really hurt. No hair fell out, nothing left to fall out.

**Day of Test:** Woke up with everyone, drove to VAR 45 minutes early, place was locked up, no one in yet. Panicked.

**9:10am:** Started test late, got second highest grade on written part of test. Saw a glimmer of hope.

**10:00am:** Started hands-on portion of test, first problem went OK, second problem started train-wreck, third problem, the train went off the tracks, collided with a nuclear waste container, blew up and then was sucked into black hole.

**Noon:** Ate sandwich, looked for Tums in backpack, remembered I forgot the Tums, went back in and tried to put the fire out.

Failed badly. Panic in full bloom, stomach has detached itself and filed for separation. Glimmer of hope snubbed out by evil SW Certification test.

**12:30-3:00:** Listened to various groans, and screams of terror from others, tried to contain inferno and finish third problem.

**3:05:** Gave up on third problem, thought about killing creator of SW, VAR, Boss and anyone else I could think of.

**3:30:** Started Advanced hands-on test, aced it (go figure!).

**4:30:** Got results of test, failed.

**6:00:** Stopped for dinner with group, drank large amounts of beer. Stomach and I now back on speaking terms.

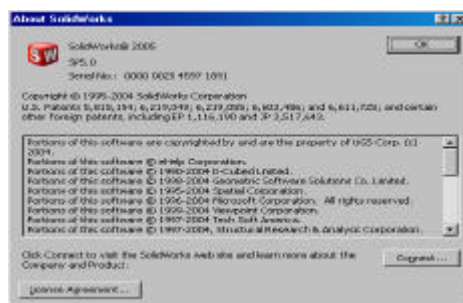
**2 months later:** Re-took test, aced it and become certified. Married fiancé. All is good!

# Service Packs con't...

*(...con't from page 2)*

released. I don't install them but to have them on hand is never a bad thing. I do run SolidWorks at home and there I do install the service packs as they come out and help test SolidWorks stability and look for any potential problems that we could have at work if we did upgrade. Our company also utilizes a test box between our department and the IT Department. We load the latest version of SolidWorks and SmarTeam and do testing to see if problems have been fixed in the service pack. (as we've been told that they have) This also insures that we don't have any surprises such as having something broke in a new service pack release that was working in the prior one. We also use the test box to test new equipment such as video cards to see if there are any improvements over the current ones we use. As a side

note, we just got a top of the line AlienWare computer with dual core



Processor, 3 Gig of RAM and top end Nvidia video card to test. I can't wait to get my hands on that little gem and see what it can do!

Another thing you can never do enough of is testing of the service pack. We've learned the hard way that by assuming the service pack will fix things and just blindly installing it has caused problems. Either the service pack didn't do what it was supposed to (which we told SolidWorks and SmarTeam, they replied it would be fixed in the next service pack) or something else broke that was worse than what the original problem was. As a wrap-up, when installing Service packs, be careful! Look where you step before doing so and be very sure of what's going to happen after you step. Good luck and may the force be with you!

[www.LEWAUSERGROUP.org](http://www.LEWAUSERGROUP.org)

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**Quote of the day:**

“...when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.”

-Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  
(Sherlock Holmes)

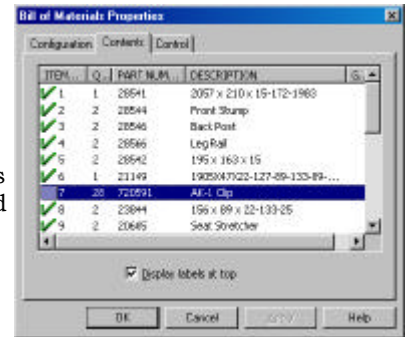


The LEWA User group is a non-profit organization of Wisconsin and Minnesota area Solidworks professionals and VARs that meets 4 times a year to discuss and enlighten each other of the use of the Solidworks modeling software. During these meetings we have presentations by our local VARs and users on a multitude of Solidworks topics. Topics have ranged from API training to Photoworks, sheetmetal, and other interesting topics that cover the many facets of Solidworks. Our membership is also as varied as our topics. We have a wide membership area covering cities as far North as Rice Lake to South of the Winona area and as far west as Rochester. Our group's area covers almost two states and we have people who drive several hours to attend our meetings. Anyone and everyone are welcome! Come take in the food, prizes and fun atmosphere.

## SolidWorks Tips & Tricks of the month

### Tip of the month: Renumbering BOMs in Solidworks

How many people have created a BOM for an assembly that they have just finished and realized that they need to turn off some of the items from showing. I currently do on my assemblies where we don't want certain components such as clips to show on the BOM. When this is done and you switch back to your drawing you realize that now your numbering sequence is out of order, instead of going 1, 2, 3 etc, your numbers now go 1, 3, 4, 10, 18, 19 etc. How can you get around this problem? Here's the answer. Go to the table properties of the BOM manager and move the lines that you turned off to the very bottom of the list. You can do this by right clicking on the item and selecting "Row Down". Now I can't take credit for this solution but it sure makes the problem go away. The person who came up with this fix is jksolid from the Engineering-Tips webpage.



## Member Close-up: A LEWA profile

Brian Carl Bahr

I was born in England on a US base. I came to the US as an infant and spent my early years in Washington State. I moved to Wisconsin as a child and have been here ever since. I originally went to school at CVTC for Mechanical Drafting in the early 90's. I am about to receive a degree in Industrial Engineering Technician from CVTC. I work for Wisconsin Metal Fab as a Solidworks drafter. I am mainly using Weldments and Sheetmetal to draw difficult shapes that are hard to create in AutoCAD. I have been using Solidworks since 2003 and have become well versed in many Sheetmetal tricks.

I have recently been delving into



*Brian Bahr-Entrepreneur and International man of mystery.*

surfaces more. In addition I enjoy creating macros to automate many tasks and customizing

Solidworks behavior (Which is easy to get away with in a one man show). I am now using 2006 SP 2.1. I am also the owner of a small Drafting business called Carlbahr ([www.carlbahr.com](http://www.carlbahr.com)) It is for people who only need blueprints, but need them quickly. Of course when it comes time to build the blueprints

is no one I can better recommend than Wisconsin Metal Fab ([www.wisconsinmetalfab.com](http://www.wisconsinmetalfab.com)).

Carlbahr is planning to upgrade to Solidworks in the future.

## LEWA meeting:

The LEWA meeting is this week. Here's the details:

**Agenda:**

1:00 - 1:15 Opening Remarks/Introductions

1:15 - 2:00 Decals and PhotoWorks presentation by Tim Newton, Symmetry Solutions

2:00 - 2:15 Break

2:15 - 3:00 Tips and Tricks presentation by Tim Newton, Symmetry Solutions

3:00 - 3:15 Type 3 presentation by Craig Bacon, Ashley Furniture

3:15 - 3:45 SolidWorks Question and Answer Session

3:45 - 4:00 Closing Remarks/Door Prizes